

(12) STANDARD PATENT APPLICATION (11) Application No. **AU 2009201818 A1**
(19) AUSTRALIAN PATENT OFFICE

(54) Title
Gamble game for gaming machine

(51) International Patent Classification(s)
A63F 13/10 (2006.01)

(21) Application No: **2009201818** (22) Date of Filing: **2009.05.06**

(30) Priority Data

(31) Number **2008902418** (32) Date **2008.05.15** (33) Country **AU**

(43) Publication Date: **2009.12.03**

(43) Publication Journal Date: **2009.12.03**

(71) Applicant(s)
Aristocrat Technologies Australia Pty Ltd

(72) Inventor(s)
Walker, Samuel James

(74) Agent / Attorney
Freehills Patent & Trade Mark Attorneys, Level 38 MLC Centre Martin Place, Sydney, NSW, 2000

2009201818 06 May 2009

ABSTRACT

A gaming machine adapted to provide a main wagering game in response to a wager placed by a user is provided. The main wagering game involves the selection and presentation of a plurality of symbols on a display and if a winning combination occurs, the gaming machine determines an award associated with the winning combination. The gaming machine is further adapted to provide the user with the choice of gambling the determined award on a gamble game, wherein the expected return of the gamble game to the user is greater than 100%.

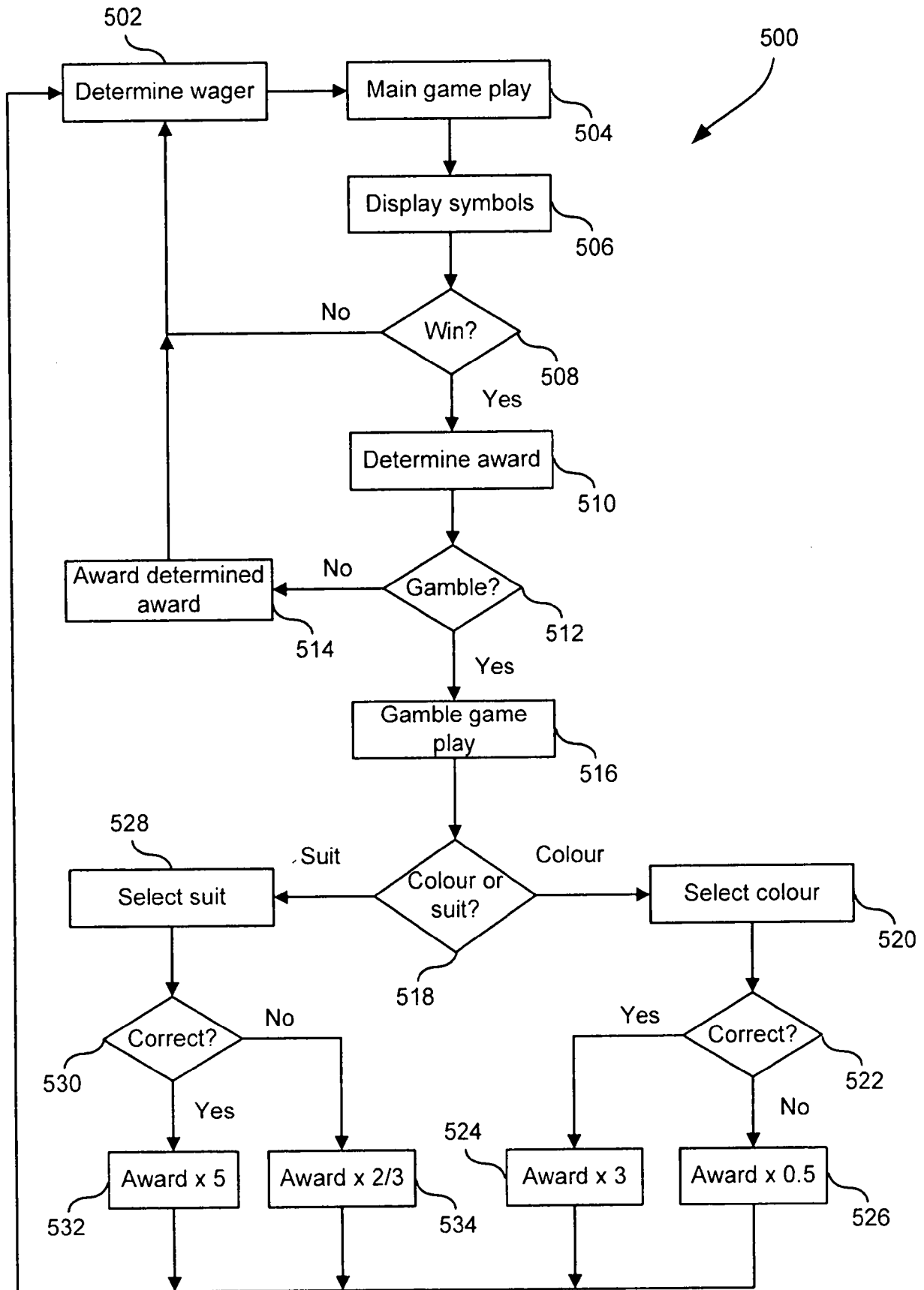


Figure 5

2009201818 06 May 2009

P/00/011
Regulation 3.2

AUSTRALIA

Patents Act 1990

COMPLETE SPECIFICATION STANDARD PATENT

Invention Title: **Gamble game for gaming machine**

The following statement is a full description of this invention, including the best method of performing it known to us:

Gamble game for gaming machine

Field of the Invention

The present invention generally relates to gaming machines and methods of gaming. A particular embodiment of the present invention relates to a gamble game for a gaming machine.

Background of the Invention

With the increase of gambling at gaming venues has come increased competition between gaming venues to obtain a larger share of the total gambling spend. Gaming venue operators have therefore continuously looked for new variations and types of games in order to attract both new and return customers to their venues.

In response to this need, suppliers of gaming devices and systems have attempted to provide the sought after variety, while still developing games that comply with the relevant regulations in the jurisdiction of the gaming venue operator. Suppliers of gaming devices therefore are faced with restrictions on the types of games and gaming machines that are allowable, both in terms of the prevailing regulations and in terms of providing a return on investment to the gaming venue operators.

Summary of the Invention

In a first aspect the present invention provides a gaming machine adapted to provide a main wagering game in response to a wager placed by a user, the main wagering game involving the selection and presentation of a plurality of symbols on a display and if a winning combination occurs, the gaming machine determines an award associated with the winning combination, the gaming machine further adapted to provide the user with the choice of gambling the determined award on a gamble game in which the user can gamble the award, wherein the expected return of the gamble game to the user is greater than 100%.

According to a second aspect the present invention provides a method for operating a gaming machine, the method including: providing a main wagering game in response to a wager placed by a user, the main wagering game involving the selection and presentation of a plurality of symbols on a display and if a winning combination occurs, the gaming machine determines an award associated with the winning combination; providing the user with the choice of gambling the determined award on a gamble game, wherein the expected return of the gamble game to the user is greater than 100%.

In the gamble game the gaming machine may prompt the user to guess the value of a characteristic of a hidden symbol and if the guess is correct the gaming machine may multiply the award by a winning multiplier, and if the guess is incorrect the gaming machine may multiply the award by a losing multiplier, wherein the winning multiplier is greater than one and the losing multiplier is greater than zero.

The characteristic may have two possible values, the winning multiplier may be three, and the losing multiplier may be 0.5.

The hidden symbol may be a symbol representing a playing card and the characteristic value may relate to the colour of the playing card.

The characteristic may have 4 possible values, the winning multiplier may be five, and the losing multiplier may be two thirds (0.6 recurring).

The hidden symbol may be a symbol representing a playing card and the characteristic value may relate to the suit of the playing card.

The gamble game may only be provided to the user if a trigger event triggering the gamble game occurs during play of the main wagering game.

According to a third aspect, the invention broadly resides in instructions executable by a game controller to implement the method as described in the immediately preceding paragraphs and to such instructions when stored in a storage medium readable by the game controller. The instructions and data for controlling

operation of the computational device may be stored on a computer readable medium from which they are loaded into the gaming machine memory. The instructions and data may be conveyed to the gaming machine by means of a data signal in a transmission channel. Examples of such transmission channels include network connections, the Internet or an intranet and wireless communication channels.

Further aspects of the present invention and further embodiments of the aspects described in the preceding paragraphs will become apparent from the following description, given by way of example and with reference to the accompanying drawings.

Brief Description of the Drawings

10 Figure 1: shows diagrammatically, a view of a gaming console suitable for implementing the present invention.

Figure 2: shows a block diagram of gaming machine suitable for implementing the present invention.

15 Figure 3: shows a block diagram of components of the memory of the gaming machine represented in Figure 2.

Figure 4: shows diagrammatically, a network gaming system suitable for implementing the present invention.

Figure 5: shows a flow diagram of a process performed in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

20 Figure 6: shows an example screen shot of a main wagering game in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 7: shows an example screen shot of a decision screen in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 8: shows an example screen shot of a gamble game in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention.

Figure 9: provides a screen shot showing an example outcome of a play of the gamble game show in figure 8.

5 Figure 10: provides a screen shot showing an example outcome of a play of the gamble game show in figure 8.

Figure 11: provides a screen shot showing an example outcome of a play of the gamble game show in figure 8

10 Figure 12: provides a screen shot showing an example outcome of a play of the gamble game show in figure 8.

Detailed Description

In Figure 1 of the accompanying drawings, one example of a gaming console that is suitable to implement the present invention is generally referenced by arrow 114.

15 The gaming console 114 includes two displays 106A, 106B on one or both of which is displayed representations of a game that can be played by a user and a bank of buttons 107A and/or a touch screen 107B to enable a user to play the game. The displays 106 may be video display units, such as a cathode ray tube screen device, a liquid crystal display, plasma screen, any other suitable video display unit, or the visible portion of an electromechanical device. The display 106B may display artwork, including
20 for example, pay tables and details of bonus awards and other information or images relating to the game. In alternative gaming consoles the display 106B may be omitted, optionally replaced by a static display.

A credit input including a coin input 110A and/or bill collector 110B allows a user to provide credit for wagering and a coin output 111 is provided for cash payouts from
25 the gaming console 114. A card and/or ticket reader 108 and a printer 109 may be

provided to provide user tracking, cashless game play or other gaming and non-gaming related functions.

Figure 2 shows a block diagram of a gaming machine, generally referenced by arrow 100, suitable for implementing the present invention. The gaming machine 100 may include the gaming console 114 shown in Figure 1 and accordingly like reference numerals have been used to describe like components in Figures 1 and 2.

The gaming machine 100 includes a game controller 101, which in the illustrated example includes a computational device 102, which may be a microprocessor, microcontroller, programmable logic device or other suitable device. Instructions and data to control operation of the computational device 102 are stored in a memory 103, which is in data communication with, or forms part of, the computational device 102. Typically, the gaming machine 100 will include both volatile and non-volatile memory and more than one of each type of memory, with such memories being collectively represented by the memory 103. The instructions to cause the game controller 101 to implement the present invention will be stored in the memory 103. The instructions and data for controlling operation of the computational device 102 may be stored on a computer readable medium from which they are loaded into the gaming machine memory 103. The instructions and data may be conveyed to the gaming machine by means of a data signal in a transmission channel. Examples of such transmission channels include network connections, the Internet or an intranet and wireless communication channels.

The game controller 101 may include hardware credit meters 104 for the purposes of regulatory compliance and also include an input/output (I/O) interface 105 for communicating with the peripheral devices of the gaming machine 100. The input/output interface 105 and/or the peripheral devices may be intelligent devices with their own memory for instructions and data.

In the example shown in Figure 2, the peripheral devices that communicate with the controller are the displays 106, bank of buttons/touch screen 107, the card and/or ticket reader 108, the printer 109, a bill acceptor and/or coin input 110 and a coin output

111. Additional devices may be included as part of the gaming machine 100, or devices omitted as required for the specific implementation.

The bank of buttons 107A and/or touch screen 107B together with one or both of the displays 106 may provide a user interface 115 through which the gaming machine 5 100 and user communicate. If a card/ticket reader 108 is provided, this may also form part of the user interface 115.

In addition, the gaming machine 100 may include a communications interface, for example a network card 112. The network card 112, may for example, send status information, accounting information or other information to a central controller, server or 10 database and receive data or commands from the central controller, server or database. The network card 112 may also enable communication with a central user account, allowing cashless gaming. One or more of the peripheral devices, for example the card/ticket reader 108 may be able to communicate directly with the network card 112. The network card 112 and the I/O interface 105 may be suitably implemented as a 15 single machine communications interface.

The game controller 101 may also include a random number generator 113, which generates a series of random numbers that are used by the computational device 102 to determine the outcomes of games played on the gaming machine 100.

The game controller 101 may have distributed hardware and software 20 components that communicate with each other directly or through a network or other communication channel. The game controller 101 may also be located in part or in its entirety remote from the user interface 115. Also, the computational device 102 may comprise a plurality of devices, which may be local or remote from each other. Instructions and data for controlling the operation of the user interface 115 may be 25 conveyed to the user interface 115 by means of a data signal in a transmission channel. The user interface 115 may be a computational device, for example a personal computer, used by a person to play a game provided from a remote game controller 101.

Figure 3 shows an exemplary block diagram of the main components of the memory 103. The RAM 103A typically temporarily holds instructions and data related to the execution of game programs and communication functions performed by the computational controller 102. The EPROM 103B may be a boot ROM device and/or
5 may contain system and game related code. The mass storage device 103C may be used to store game programs, the integrity of which may be verified and/or authenticated by the computational controller 102 using protected code from the EPROM 103B or elsewhere.

Figure 4 shows a gaming system 200 in the form of a network of devices. The
10 gaming system 200 includes a network infrastructure 201, which for example may be in the form of an Ethernet network. Alternatively, a wireless network and/or direct communication channels, or a different type of network may be used to link the gaming machines to a server, each other and/or other devices. Gaming consoles 114, shown arranged in three banks 203 of two gaming consoles 114 in Figure 4, are connected to
15 the network infrastructure 201. The gaming consoles 114 may form part or all of a gaming machine 100. Single gaming consoles 114 and banks 203 containing three or more gaming devices 202 may also be connected to the network infrastructure 201, which may also include bank controllers, hubs, routers, bridges to other networks and other devices (not shown).

20 One or more displays 204 may also be connected to the network 201. The displays 204 may, for example, be associated with a bank 203 of gaming consoles 114. The displays 204 may be used to display representations associated with game play on the gaming devices 202, and/or used to display other representations, for example promotional or informational material.

25 Servers may also be connected to the network 201. For example, a game server 205 may generate game outcomes for games played on one or more of the gaming consoles 114, a database management server 206 may manage the storage of game programs and associated data in a database 206A so that they are available for downloading to, or access by, game controllers 101, and a jackpot server 207 may
30 control one or more jackpots for the gaming system 200.

Further servers may be provided to assist in the administration of the gaming system 200, including for example a gaming floor management server 208, and a licensing server 209 to monitor the use of licenses to particular games. An administrator terminal 210 is provided to allow an administrator to manage the network 201 and the devices connected to the network. The different servers depicted can be distinct physical servers or logically distinct server processes running on a single physical server.

The gaming system 200 may communicate with other gaming systems, other local networks, for example a corporate network and/or a wide area network such as the Internet through a firewall 211.

Figure 5 shows a process flow diagram of a process 500 performed in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention. The process may be performed by the gaming system 200, in which the gaming consoles 114 each include game controllers 101 to form gaming machines 100 and the following description assumes this implementation. However, those skilled in the relevant arts will appreciate that the process will also be able to be implemented by other gaming systems.

In step 502, the game controller 101 monitors the bill acceptor and/or coin input 110 and/or information received by the card/ticket reader 108 or network card 112 for a deposit of credit and in response causes the hardware meters 104 to increment according to the denomination of the game. The game controller 101 then monitors the user interface 107 for the input of a wager.

If there are sufficient credits in the meters 104 to support the wager, play of the main wagering game is commenced in step 504 by the game controller 101. The main wagering game may be of any type known or unknown.

By way of non-limiting example, the main wagering game may involve the game controller 101 selecting and presenting a plurality of symbols on the display in step 506. The symbols may, for example, be displayed and arranged as virtual or mechanical spinning reels.

In step 508 the game controller 101 determines whether step 506 resulted in a winning combination and/or arrangement of symbols. If a winning combination and/or arrangement is determined to have occurred, the game controller 101 determines an award associated with the winning combination and/or arrangement (step 510) and offers the user a chance to gamble the determined award determined in a gamble game (step 512). The award may, for example, relate to:

- a number of credits (either set or determined in relation to the wager placed by the user);
- a cash payout (either set or determined in relation to the wager placed by the user);
- a number of free games (either set or determined in relation to the wager placed by the user);
- a multiplier value to be applied to one or more subsequent games (either set or determined in relation to the wager placed by the user); and/or
- a number of entries into a jackpot (either set or determined in relation to the wager placed by the user).

If the user declines the offer to gamble the award the user is awarded with the determined award in step 514. If the user accepts the offer to gamble the award, the game controller 101 launches a gamble game in step 516.

In the gamble game the game controller 101 displays a hidden symbol to the user and in step 518 allows the user to guess as to the value of a characteristic of the symbol.

In the present embodiment the symbol is in the form of a face down card (as shown in figure 8) and the user may either gamble on the colour of the card or the suit of the card. By gambling on the colour of the card the user has a 50% chance of

guessing correctly (i.e. red or black). By gambling on the suit of the card the user has a 25% chance of guessing correctly (i.e. spades, clubs, hearts, or diamonds).

5 If the user elects to gamble on the colour of the card the user selects a colour in step 520. The game controller 101 then displays the previously hidden card and compares the colour selected by the user to the colour of the card (step 522). If the user correctly guessed the colour of the card the gaming machine 101 multiplies the award gambled by the player (i.e. the award determined in step 510) by 3 and awards that award to the player (in step 524). If the user did not correctly guess the colour of the card the gaming machine 101 multiplies the award gambled by the player by 0.5 and awards that award to the player (in step 526).

15 If the user elects to gamble on the suit of the card the user selects a suit in step 528. The game controller 101 then displays the previously hidden card and compares the suit selected by the user to the suit of the card (step 530). If the user correctly guessed the suit of the card the gaming machine 101 multiplies the award gambled by the player by 5 and awards that award to the player (in step 532). If the user did not correctly guess the suit of the card the gaming machine 101 multiplies the award gambled by the player by $\frac{2}{3}$ (i.e. 0.6 recurring) and awards that award to the player (in step 534).

20 The following table outlines the possible outcomes for a user electing to gamble their award (in this case 2) on the colour of the card:

Award gambled	User guess	Actual result	Final award
2	Red	Red	6
2	Black	Red	1
2	Red	Black	1
2	Black	Black	6

The following table outlines the possible outcomes for a user electing to gamble their award (in this case 3) on the suit of the card:

Award gambled	User guess	Actual result	Final award
3	Spade	Spade	15
3	Spade	Club	2
3	Spade	Diamond	2
3	Spade	Heart	2
3	Club	Spade	2
3	Club	Club	15
3	Club	Diamond	2
3	Club	Heart	2
3	Diamond	Spade	2
3	Diamond	Club	2
3	Diamond	Diamond	15
3	Diamond	Heart	2
3	Heart	Spade	2
3	Heart	Club	2
3	Heart	Diamond	2
3	Heart	Heart	15

As will be appreciated, by using the particular multipliers described in the above embodiment the expected return to the user from the gamble game over time (regardless of whether the user elects to gamble on the colour of the card or the suit of the card) is 175%.

As will also be appreciated, the game controller 101 may offer alternative gambles to the player with alternative odds of success and alternative award multipliers for correct/incorrect gambles. Importantly, however, the expected return of the gamble game to the user will be greater than 100% of the award gambled.

As an alternative to the embodiment described above, the game controller 101 may be configured to only offer the user the gamble game in step 512 if a particular trigger condition has occurred. The trigger condition may, for example, be:

- an amount of time spent by the user at the gaming machine;
- a cumulative amount of money wagered by a user on the gaming machine;
- the occurrence of a specific winning combination and/or arrangement of symbols; and/or
- a random event.

Game play example

An game play example will now be described with reference to figures 6 to 12.

Figure 6 provides a representation of a screen 600 shown to a user during play
10 of the main wagering game. In this particular screen 600 (though, of course, many other arrangements are possible) the game controller 101 displays the following:

- a credit meter 602 showing the number of credits remaining,
- a wager display 604 for displaying the wager placed by a user on the game,
- 15 • an award display 606 for displaying any award determined by the game controller 101 during game play, and
- a symbol display area 608 in which the game controller 101 displays symbols during game play.

Turning to figure 7, if during play of the main wagering game a winning
20 combination and/or arrangement of symbols occurs, the game controller 101 determined the award and displays this in the award display 606. In this case the hypothetical determined award is 600. The game controller 101 then displays a question

610 asking the user whether they would like to gamble the award. The user may respond to this question via the user interface 115.

If the user elects to gamble the award, and referring now to figure 8, the game controller 101 displays a further screen 800 relating to the gamble game. In the gamble game the game controller 101 displays the following to the user:

- a gamble display 802 showing the user the amount they are gambling;
- a face down image of a card 804, the characteristic of which the user is attempting to guess;
- a black colour selection button 806 and a red colour selection button 808 by which a user can guess the colour characteristic of the card 804;
- a spade selection button 810, a club selection button 812, a diamond selection button 814, a heart selection button 816 by which a user can guess the suit of the card 804; and
- an award display 818 for displaying the award to the player on completion of the gamble game.

The game controller 101 is configured to allow the user to select one only of the colour selection buttons (806 and 808) or the suit selection buttons (810 to 816) via the user interface 115 (e.g. by a touch screen interface). Once a user has selected a button 806 to 816 the game controller 101 reveals the value of the card 804 and determines and displays the award in the award display 818. Alternatively, once a user has selected a button 806 to 816 the game controller 101 may prompt the user to confirm their selection and only once confirmed reveal the value of the card and determine the award.

Figures 9 to 12 depict screen displays 900 of various player gambles and outcomes.

Figure 9 shows an example screen display of a user who has gambled on the colour black by selection of button 806. As can be seen, the game controller 101 has disabled the remaining selector buttons and the card 804 has been turned over to reveal a black club. In this case the user has won the gamble and (according to the
5 above award multipliers) the game controller 101 displays an award of 1800 (600×3) in the award display 818.

Figure 10 shows an example screen display of a user who has gambled on the colour black via button 806 and the card 804 has been turned over to reveal a red diamond. In this case the player has lost the gamble and the game controller displays
10 an award of 300 (600×0.5).

Figure 11 shows an example screen display of a user who has gambled on the suit heart by selecting button 816 and the card 804 has been turned over to reveal a heart. In this case the player has lost the gamble and the game controller displays an award of 3000 (600×5).

15 Figure 12 shows an example screen display of a user who has gambled on the suit heart by selection of button 816 and the card 804 has been turned over to reveal a diamond. In this case the player has lost the gamble and the game controller displays an award of 400 ($600 \times 2/3$).

20 On completion of the gamble game the game controller 101 returns the user to play of the main wagering game.

While the foregoing description has been provided by way of example of the preferred embodiments of the present invention as presently contemplated, which utilise gaming machines of the type found in casinos, those skilled in the relevant arts will appreciate that the present invention also may have application to internet gaming
25 and/or have application to gaming over a telecommunications network, where handsets are used to display game outcomes and receive user inputs.

Where in the foregoing description reference has been made to integers having known equivalents, then those equivalents are hereby incorporated herein as if individually set forth.

Those skilled in the relevant arts will appreciate that modifications and additions to the embodiments of the present invention may be made without departing from the scope of the present invention.

It will be understood that the invention disclosed and defined in this specification extends to all alternative combinations of two or more of the individual features mentioned or evident from the text or drawings. All of these different combinations constitute various alternative aspects of the invention.

CLAIMS

1. A gaming machine adapted to provide a main wagering game in response to a wager placed by a user, the main wagering game involving the selection and presentation of a plurality of symbols on a display and if a winning combination occurs,
5 the gaming machine determines an award associated with the winning combination, the gaming machine further adapted to provide the user with the choice of gambling the determined award on a gamble game, wherein the expected return of the gamble game to the user is greater than 100%.
2. A gaming machine according to claim 1, wherein in the gamble game the gaming
10 machine prompts the user to guess the value of a characteristic of a hidden symbol and if the guess is correct the user is awarded the award multiplied by a winning multiplier and if the guess is incorrect the user is awarded the award multiplied by a losing multiplier, wherein the winning multiplier is greater than one and the losing multiplier is greater than zero.
- 15 3. A gaming machine according to claim 2, wherein the characteristic has two possible values, the winning multiplier is three, and the losing multiplier is 0.5.
4. A gaming machine according to claim 2 or claim 3, wherein the hidden symbol is a symbol representing a playing card and the characteristic value relates to the colour of the playing card.
- 20 5. A gaming machine according to claim 2, wherein the characteristic has 4 possible values, the winning multiplier is five, and the losing multiplier is two thirds (0.6 recurring).
6. A gaming machine according to claim 2 or claim 5, wherein the hidden symbol is a symbol representing a playing card and the characteristic value relates to the suit of
25 the playing card.

7. A gaming machine according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the gamble game is only provided to the user if a trigger event triggering the gamble game occurs during play of the main wagering game.

8. A method for operating a gaming machine, the method including:

5 providing a main wagering game in response to a wager placed by a user, the main wagering game involving the selection and presentation of a plurality of symbols on a display and if a winning combination occurs, the gaming machine determines an award associated with the winning combination;

10 providing the user with the choice of gambling the determined award on a gamble game in which the user can gamble the award, wherein

the expected return of the gamble game to the user is greater than 100%.

9. A method according to claim 8, wherein in the gamble game the gaming machine prompts the user to guess the value of a characteristic of a hidden symbol and if the guess is correct the gaming machine awards the user the award multiplied by a winning multiplier, and if the guess is incorrect the gaming machine awards the user the award multiplied by a losing multiplier, wherein the winning multiplier is greater than one and the losing multiplier is greater than zero.

10. A method according to claim 9, wherein the characteristic has two possible values, the winning multiplier is three, and the losing multiplier is 0.5.

20 11. A method according to claim 9 or claim 10, wherein the hidden symbol is a symbol representing a playing card the characteristic value relates to the colour of the playing card.

12. A method according to claim 9, wherein the characteristic has 4 possible values, the winning multiplier is five, and the losing multiplier is two thirds (0.6 recurring).

13. A method according to claim 9 or claim 12, wherein the hidden symbol is a symbol representing a playing card the characteristic value relates to the suit of the playing card.

14. Instructions executable by a game controller to implement the method as
5 described in any one of claims 8 to 13.

15. A storage medium readable by a game controller, the storage medium storing instructions according to claim 14.

16. A data signal carrying the instructions of claim 14.

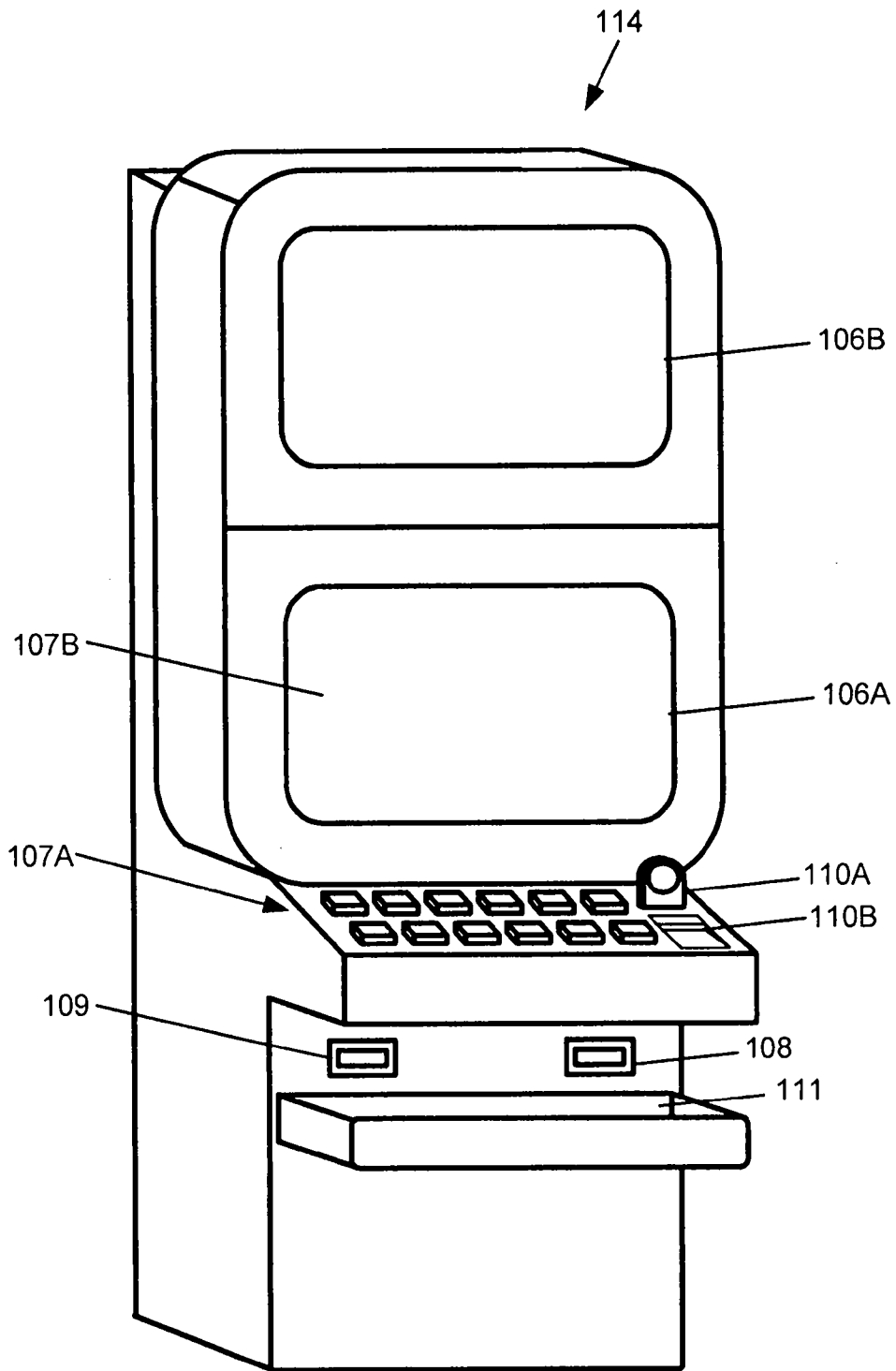


Figure 1

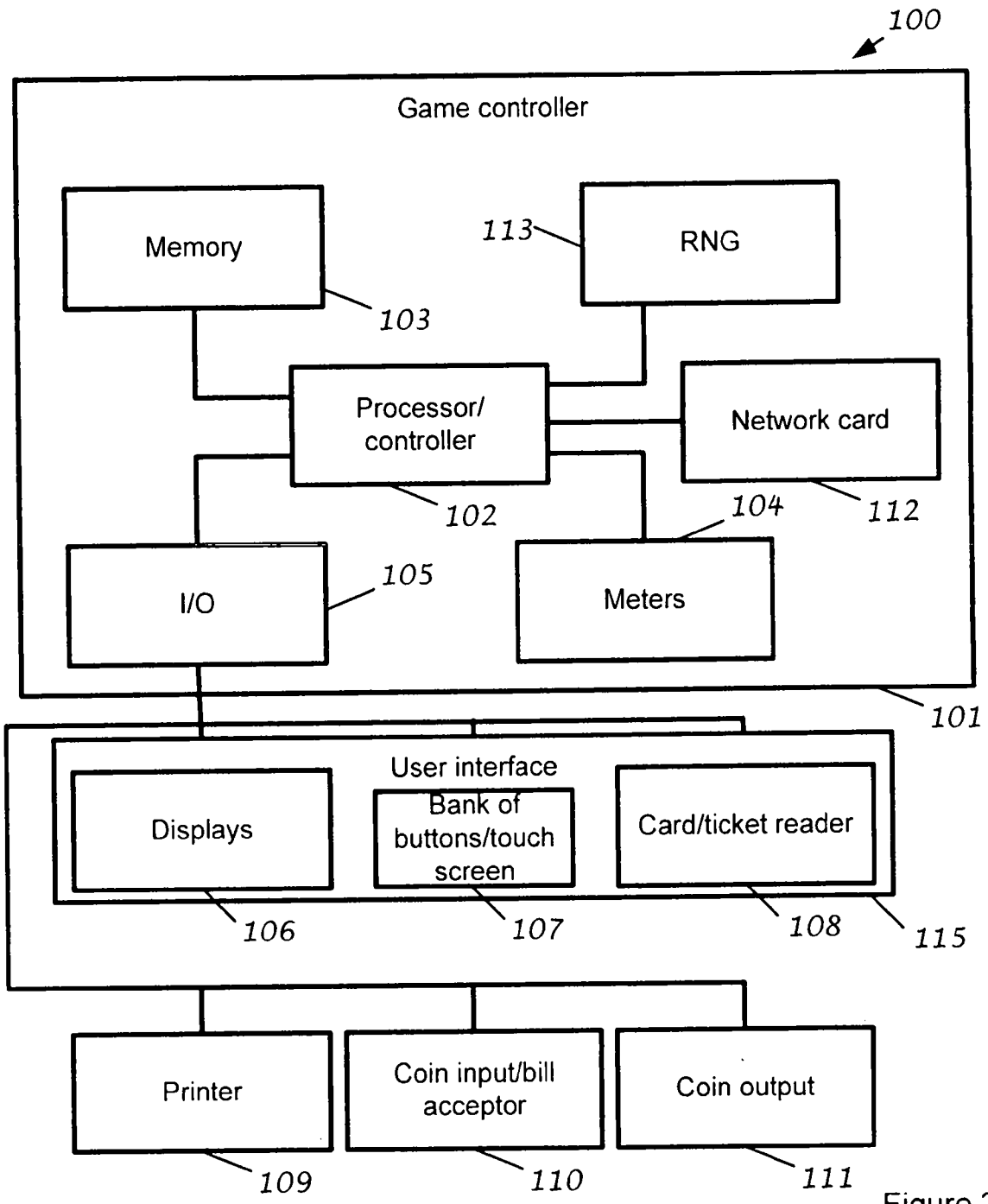


Figure 2

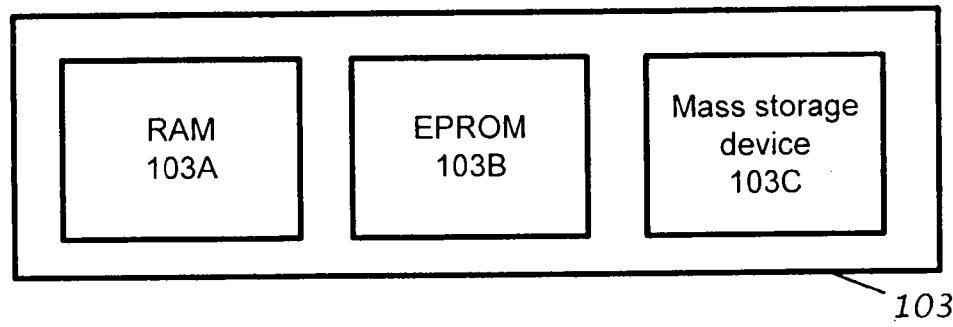


Figure 3

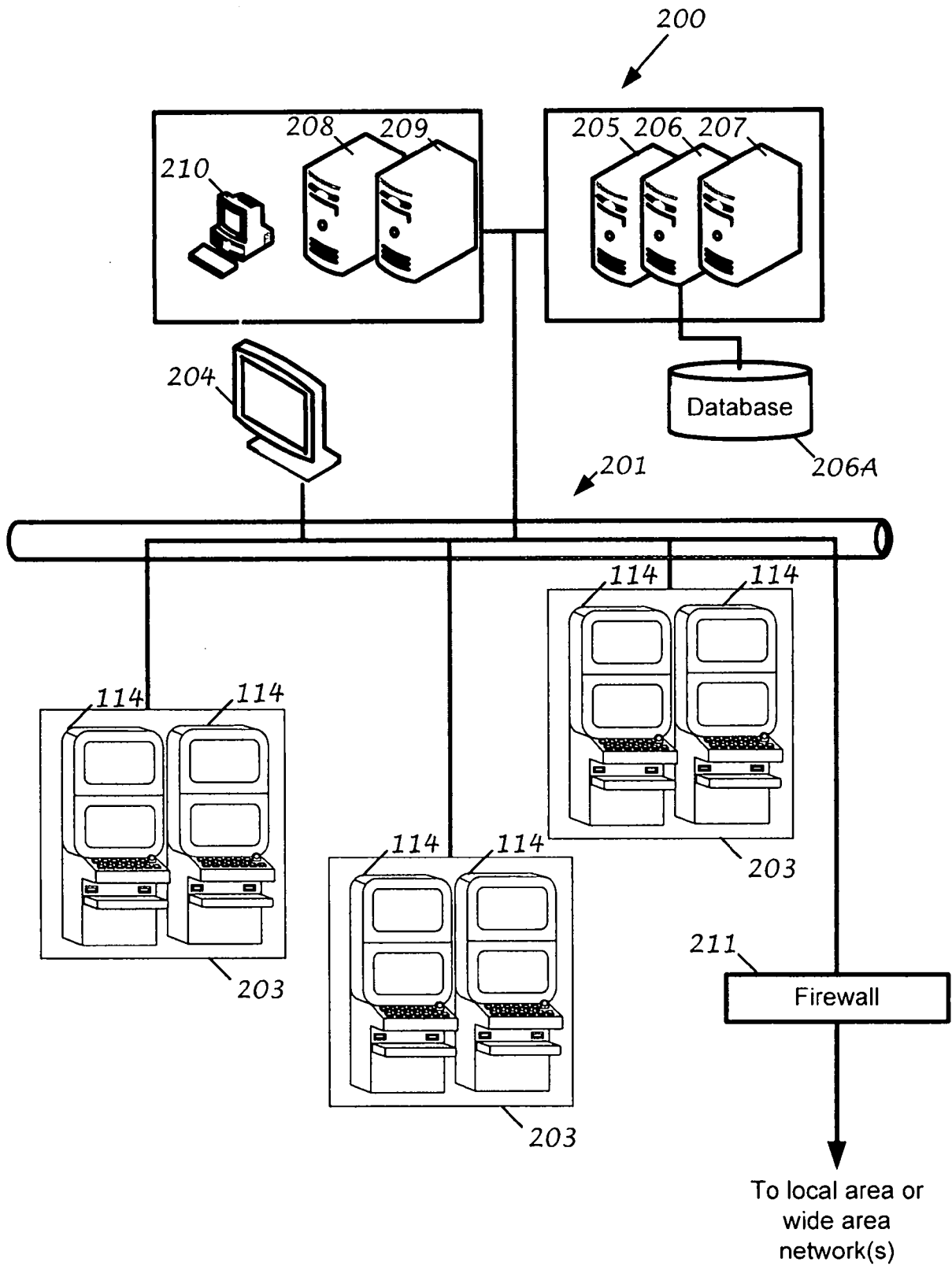


Figure 4

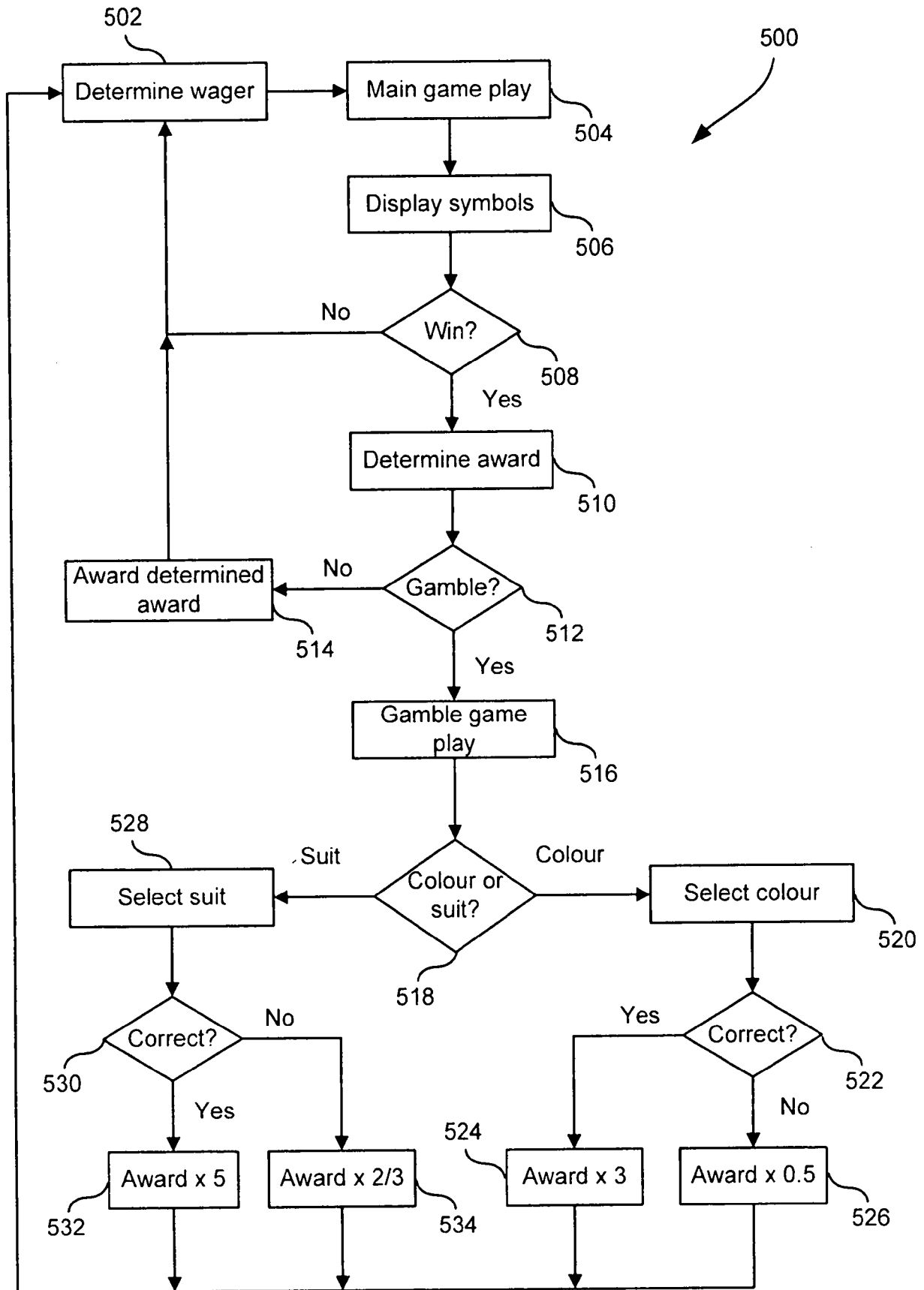


Figure 5

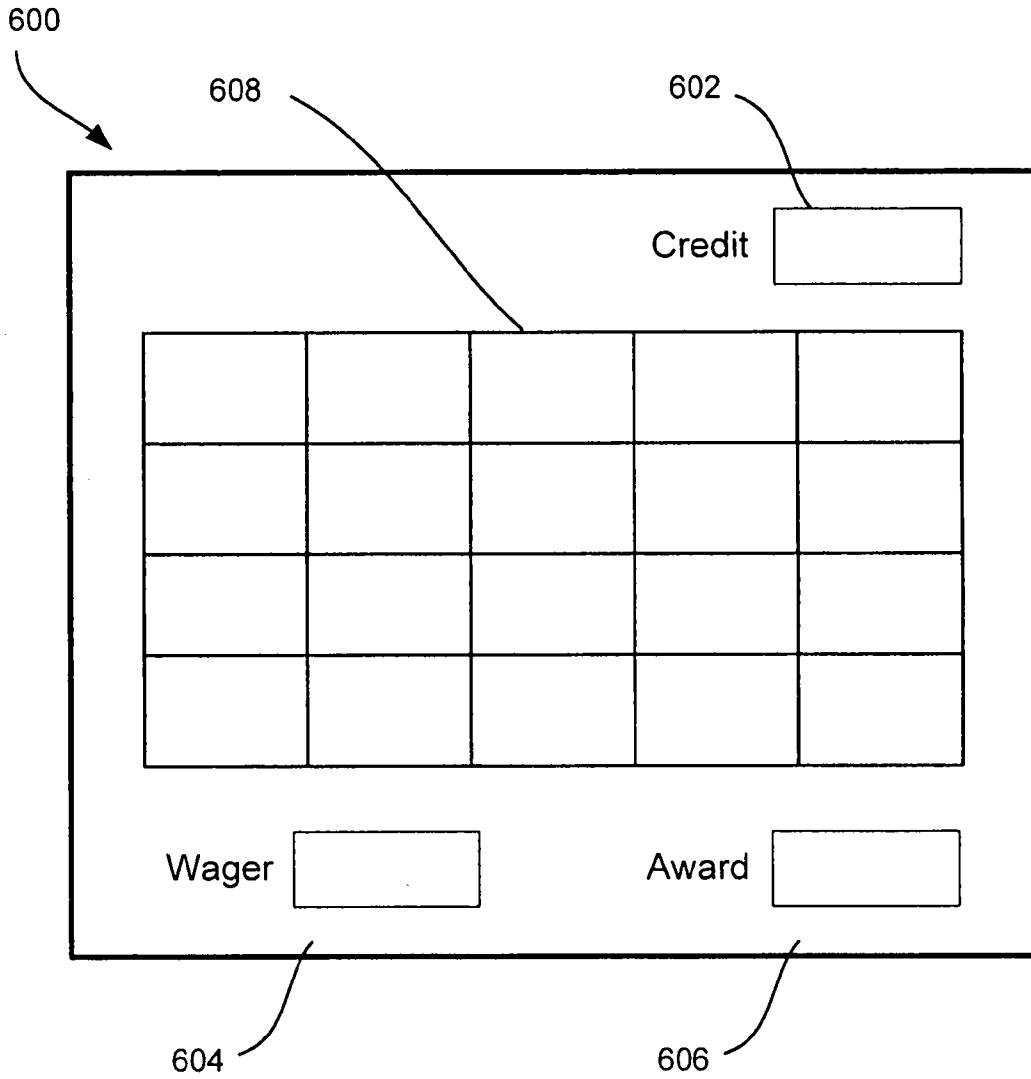


Figure 6

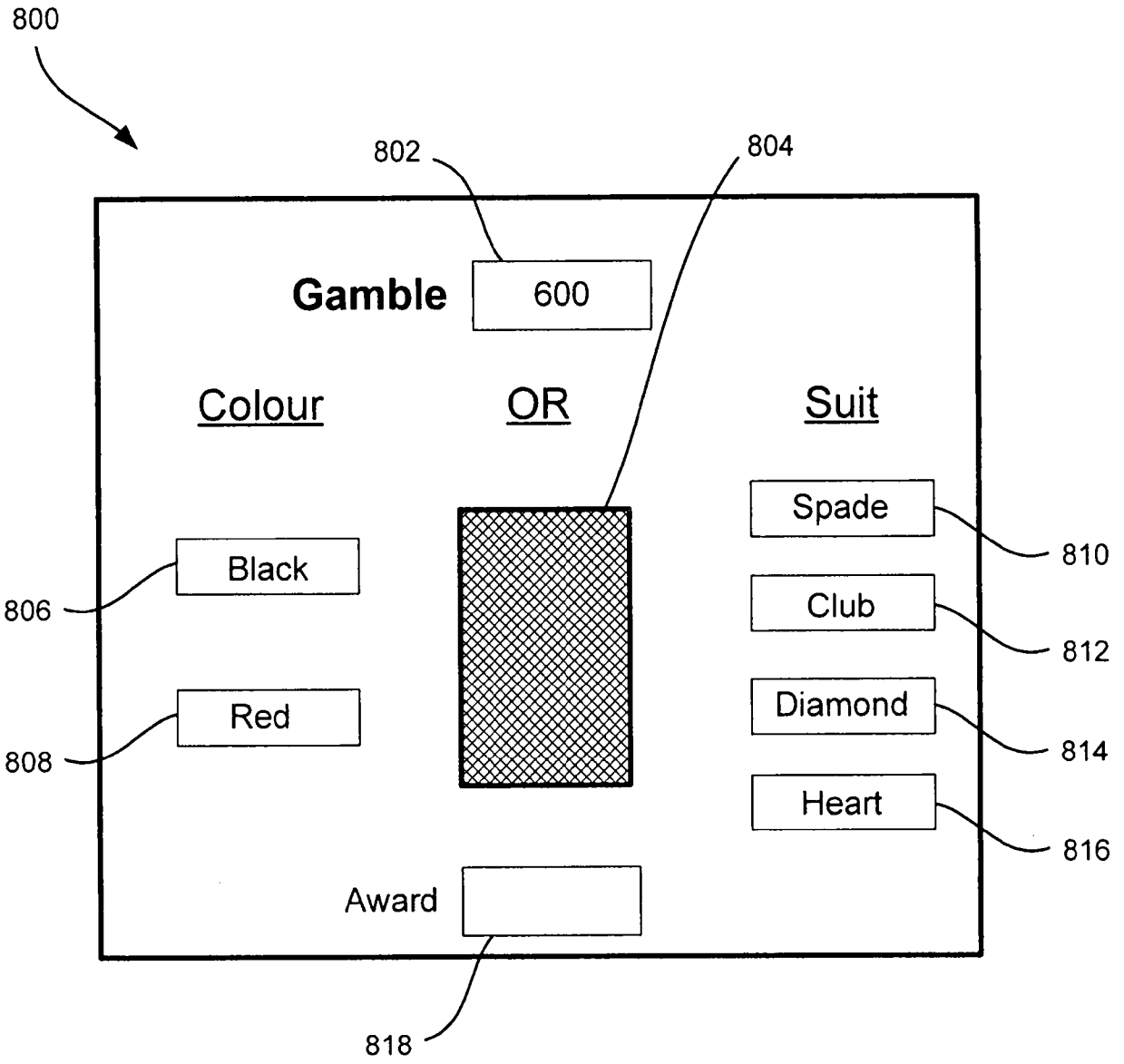


Figure 8

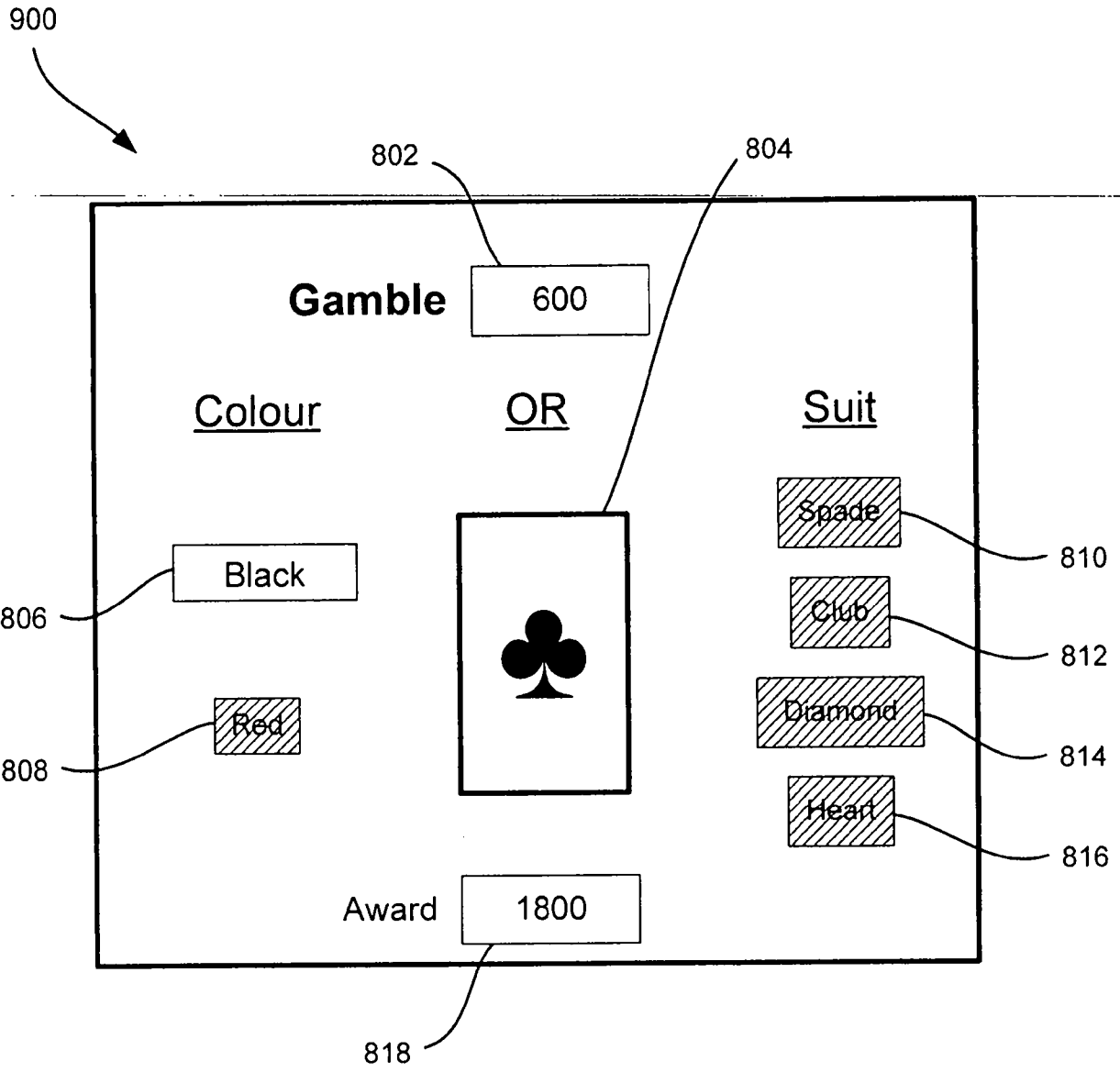


Figure 9

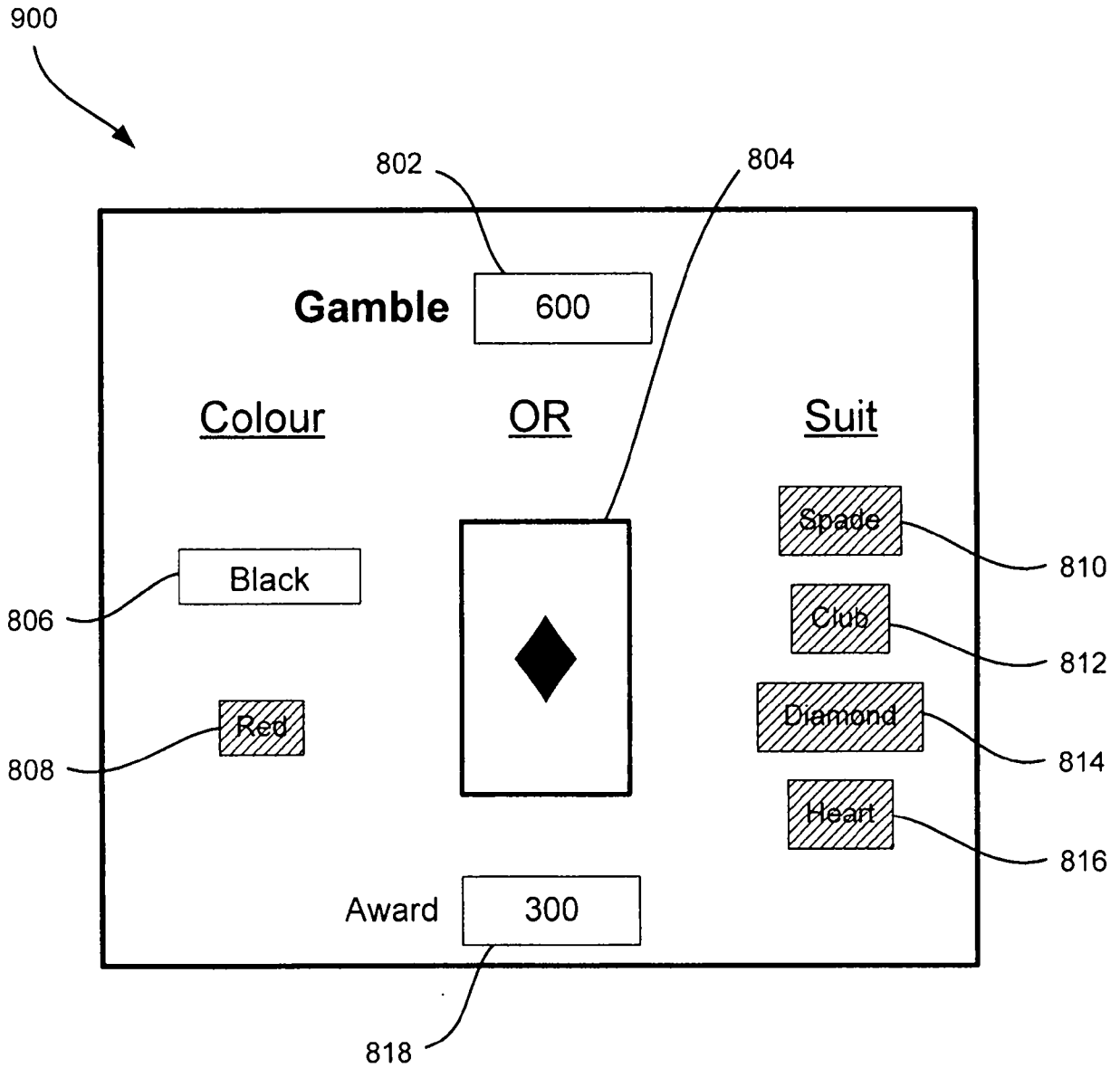


Figure 10

900

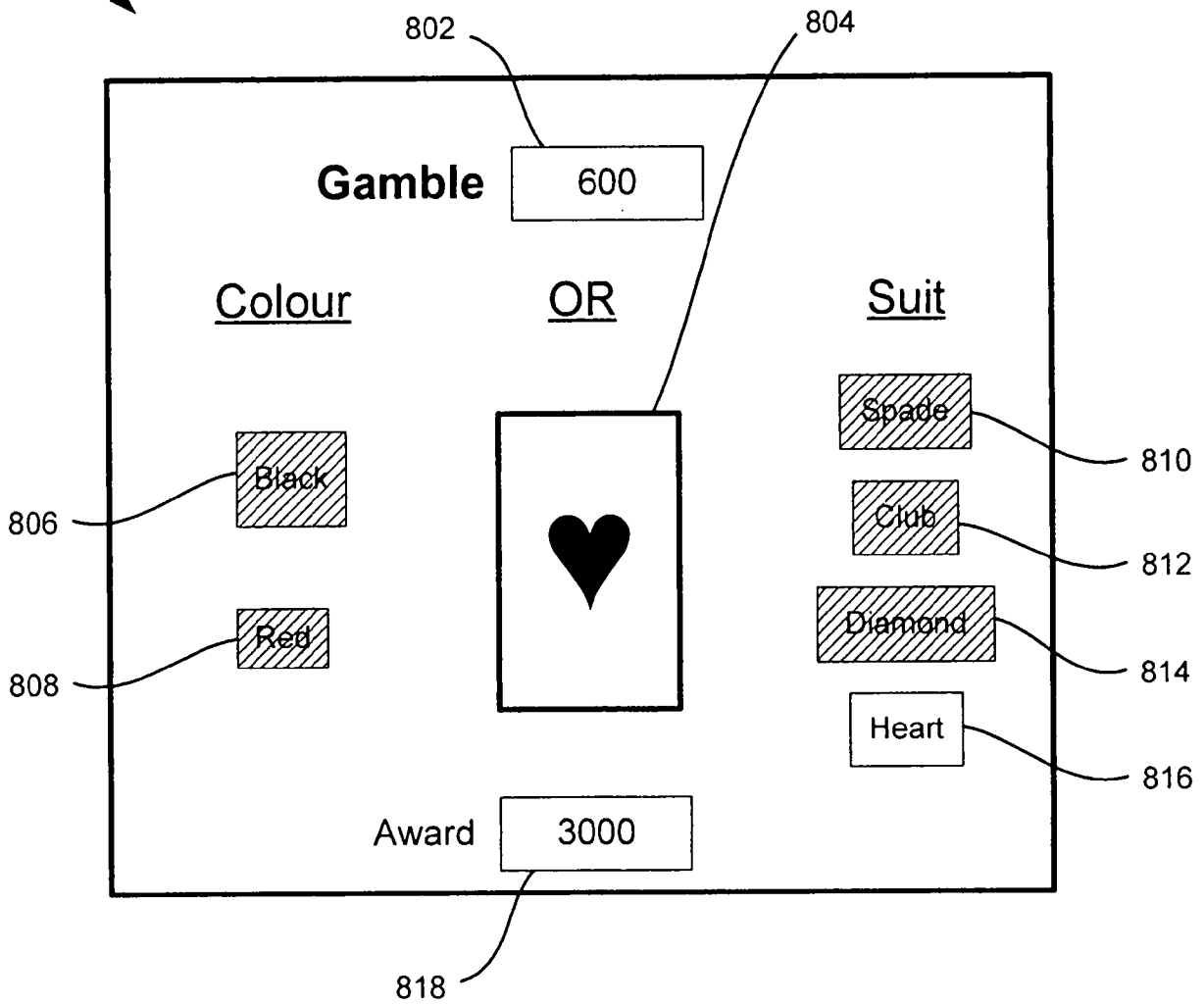


Figure 11

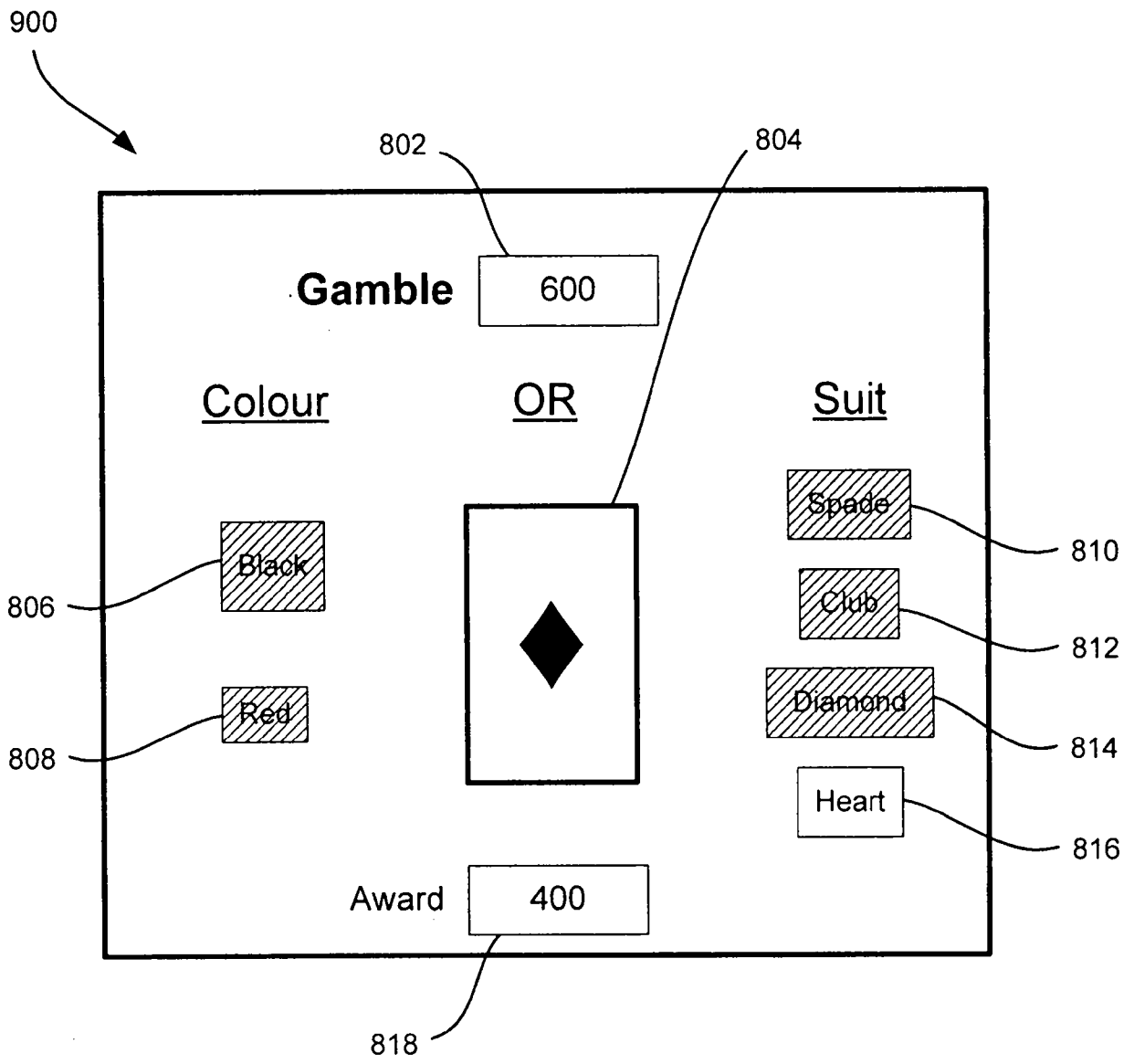


Figure 12