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Nottke

(10) **Patent No.: US 8,348,741 B1**
(45) **Date of Patent: Jan. 8, 2013**

(54) **THREE CARD VIDEO POKER**

(76) Inventor: **Timothy G. Nottke**, Toledo, OH (US)

(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/470,542**

(22) Filed: **May 14, 2012**

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation-in-part of application No. 12/368,319, filed on Feb. 10, 2009, now Pat. No. 8,177,617.

(60) Provisional application No. 61/029,043, filed on Feb. 15, 2008.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
A63F 9/24 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **463/13**; 273/292

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 463/13, 463/20, 25, 42; 273/292
See application file for complete search history.

(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

2002/0187823 A1* 12/2002 Khal 463/13
2007/0152402 A1* 7/2007 Schmidt et al. 273/292

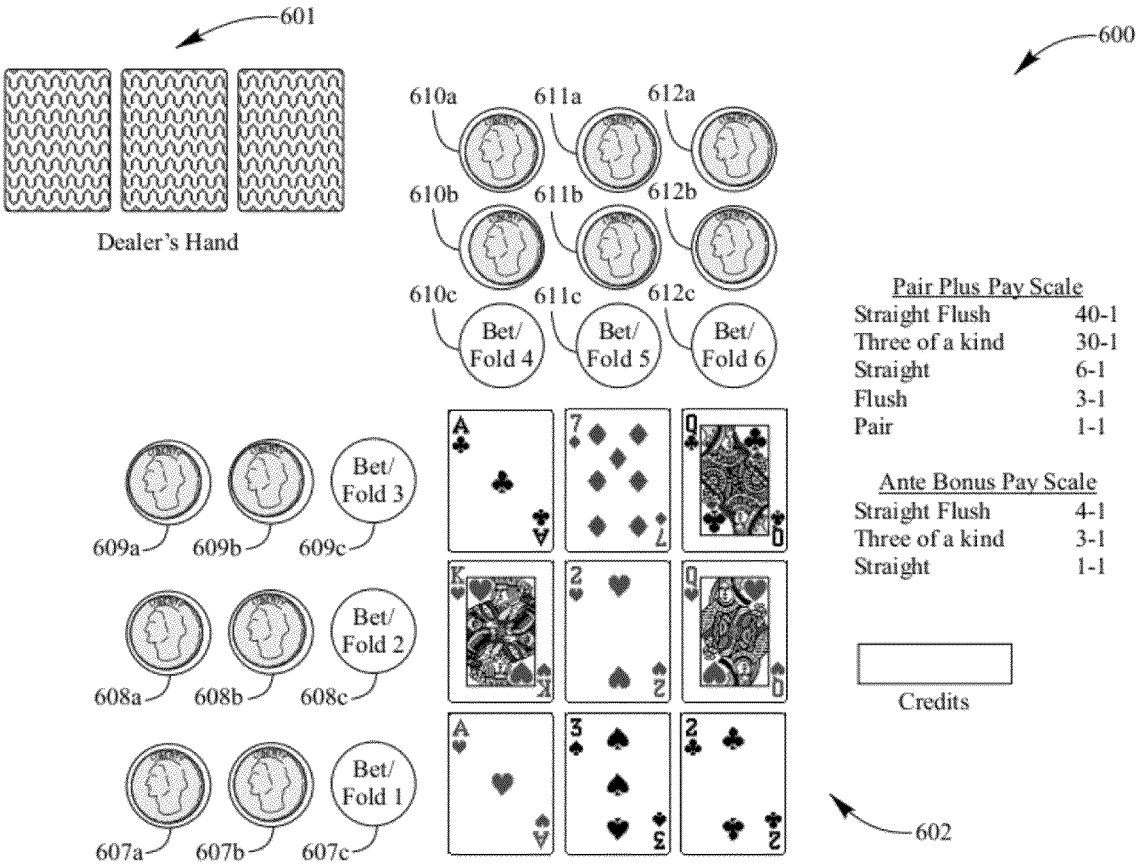
* cited by examiner

Primary Examiner — Brook Kebede
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm* — Donald K. Wedding

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A poker game which comprises generating a row-column grid or matrix of three cards by three cards, a total of nine cards, such that there are three horizontal rows of poker hands, three vertical columns of poker hands, and two diagonal poker hands, a total of eight poker hands. The nine cards and any replacement cards may be dealt or generated from a special or custom deck or a standard deck of 52 cards. Multiple standard 52 decks may be used.

12 Claims, 15 Drawing Sheets



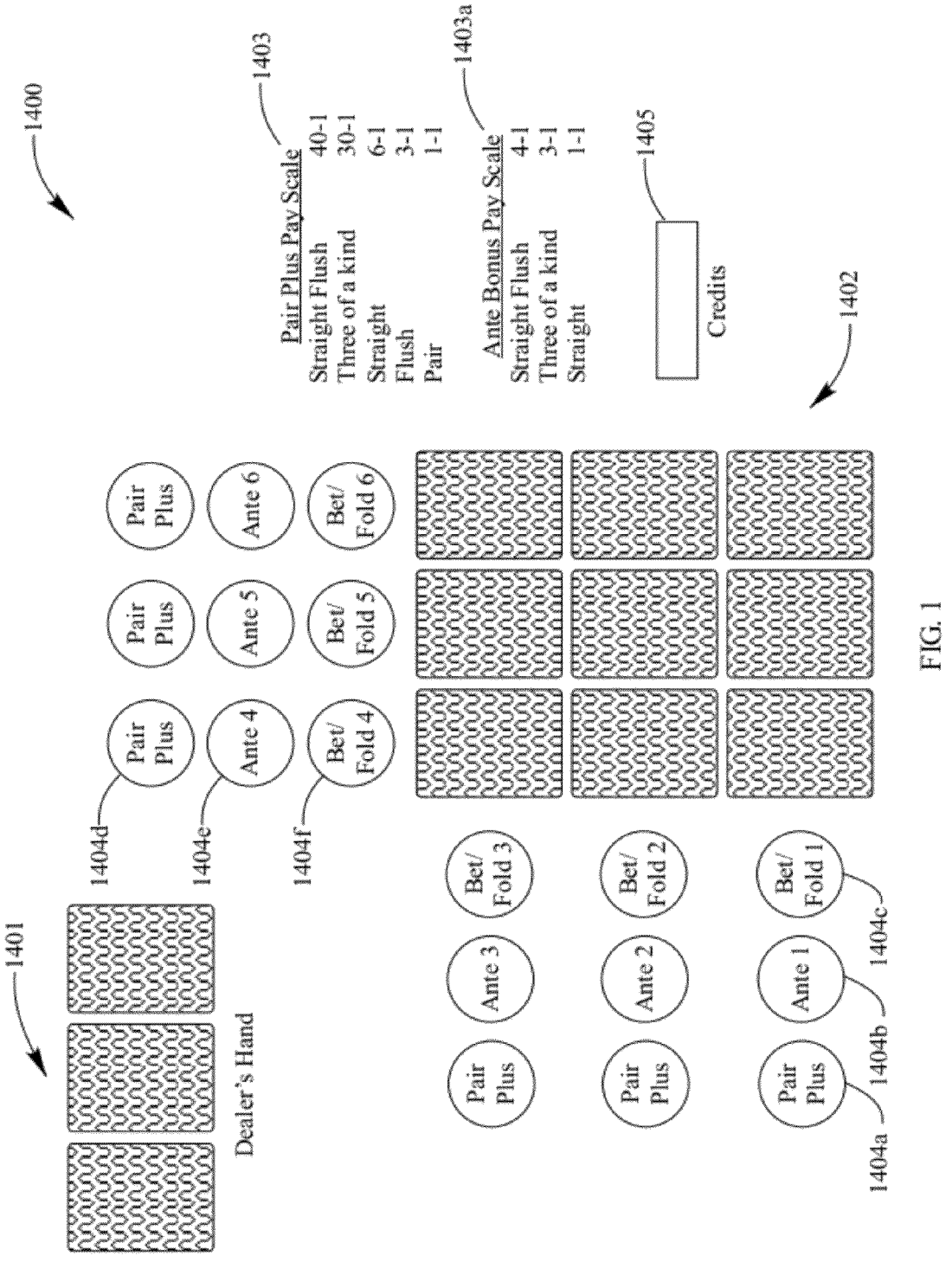
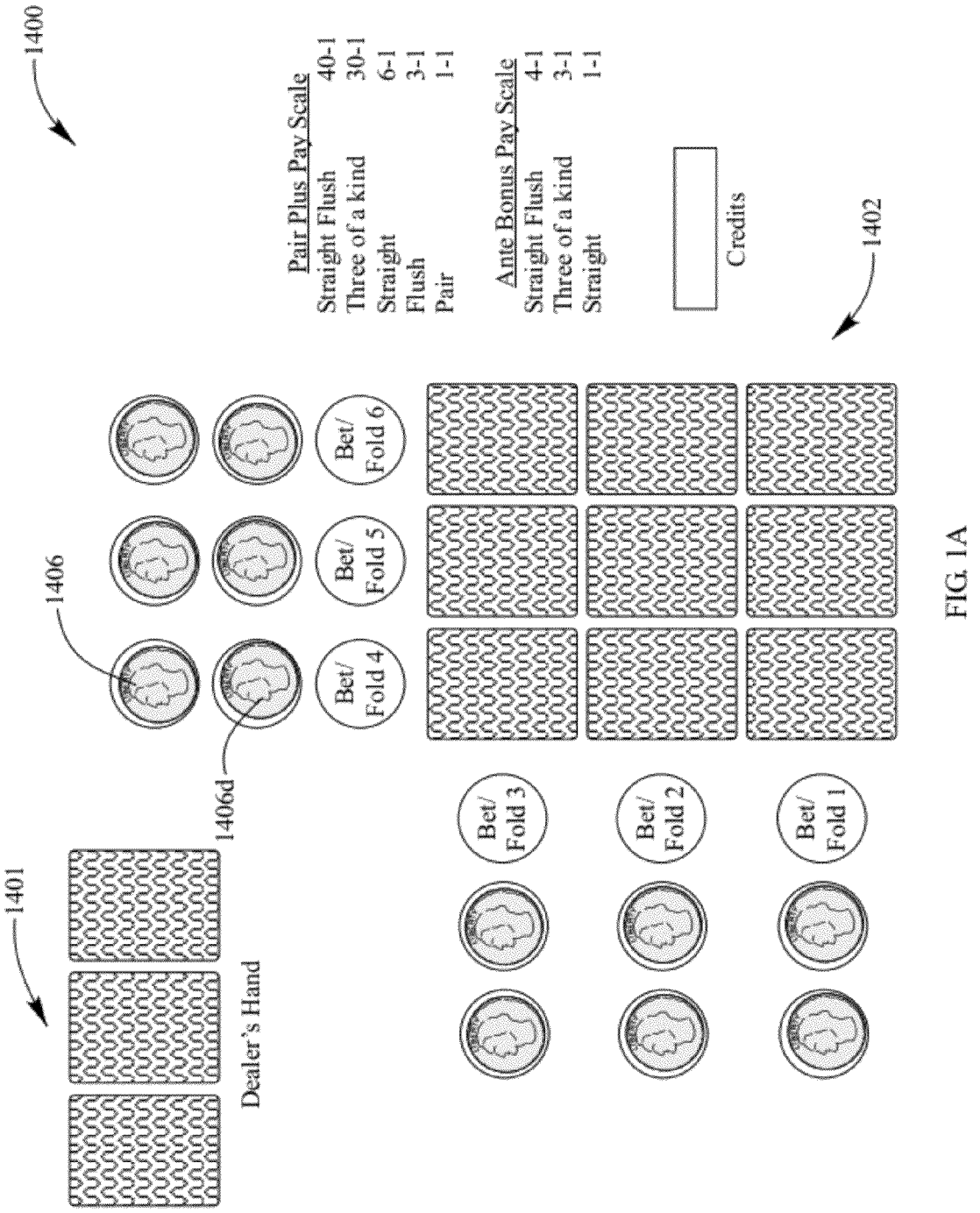

1400
1403
Pair Plus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 40-1
Three of a kind 30-1
Straight 6-1
Flush 3-1
Pair 1-1
1403a
Ante Bonus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 4-1
Three of a kind 3-1
Straight 1-1
1405
Credits
1402
1401
Dealer's Hand
1404d
1404e
1404f
Pair Plus
Ante 4
Bet/ Fold 4
Pair Plus
Ante 5
Bet/ Fold 5
Pair Plus
Ante 6
Bet/ Fold 6
Pair Plus
Ante 3
Bet/ Fold 3
Pair Plus
Ante 2
Bet/ Fold 2
Pair Plus
Ante 1
Bet/ Fold 1
1404a
1404b
1404c

FIG. 1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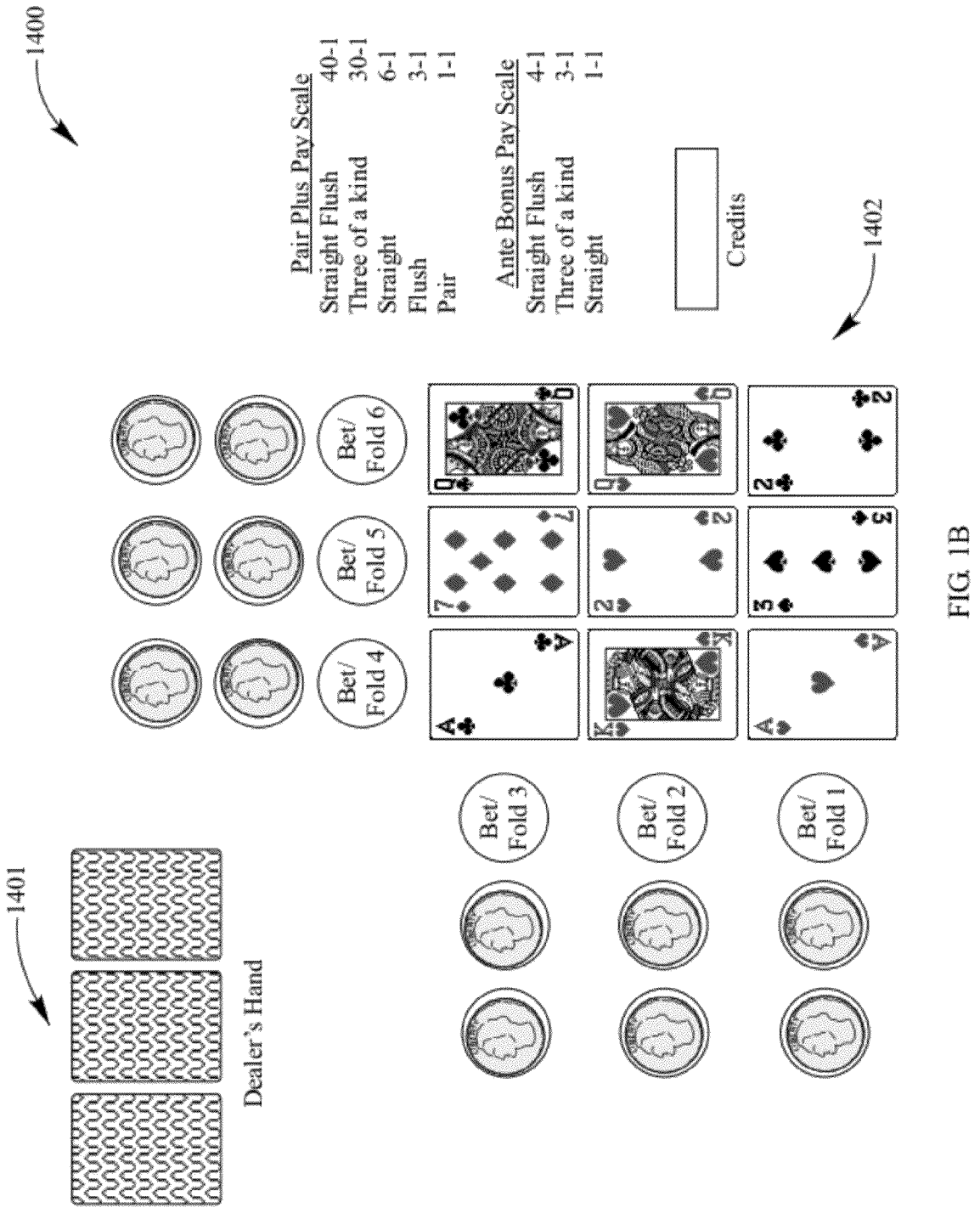
Three of a kind 30-1
Straight 6-1
Flush 3-1
Pair 1-1
Ante Bonus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 4-1
Three of a kind 3-1
Straight 1-1
Credits
1402
1406
1406d
1401
Dealer's Hand
Bet/ Fold 6
Bet/ Fold 5
Bet/ Fold 4
Bet/ Fold 3
Bet/ Fold 2
Bet/ Fold 1

FIG. 1A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Three of a kind 30-1
Straight 6-1
Flush 3-1
Pair 1-1
Ante Bonus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 4-1
Three of a kind 3-1
Straight 1-1
Credits
1402
1401
Dealer's Hand
Bet/ Fold 1
Bet/ Fold 2
Bet/ Fold 3
Bet/ Fold 4
Bet/ Fold 5
Bet/ Fold 6

FIG. 1B

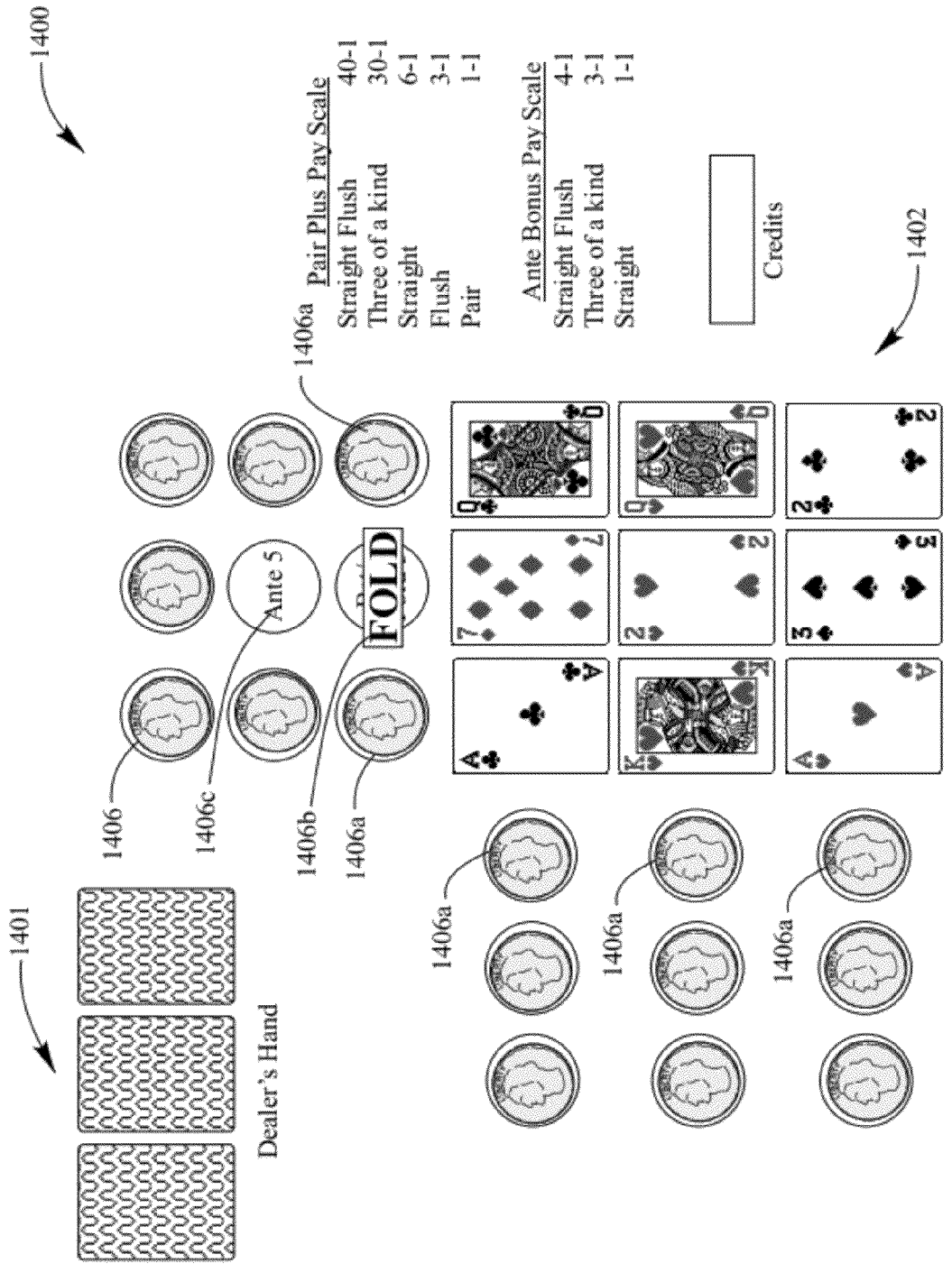
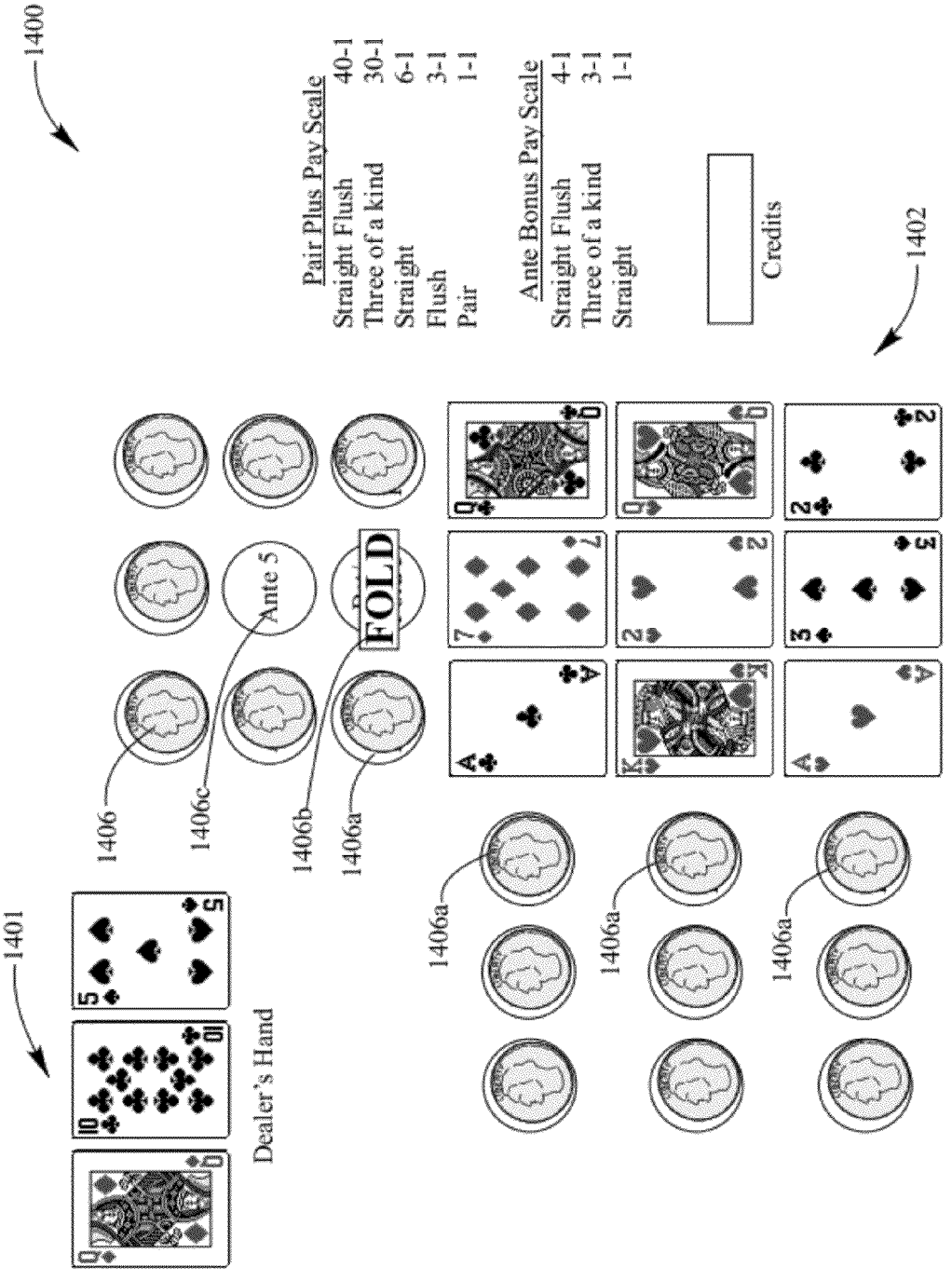

1400
1401
Dealer's Hand
1406
1406c
1406b
1406a
Ante 5
FOLD
1406a
Pair Plus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 40-1
Three of a kind 30-1
Straight 6-1
Flush 3-1
Pair 1-1
Ante Bonus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 4-1
Three of a kind 3-1
Straight 1-1
Credits
1402
1406a
1406a
1406a

FIG. 1C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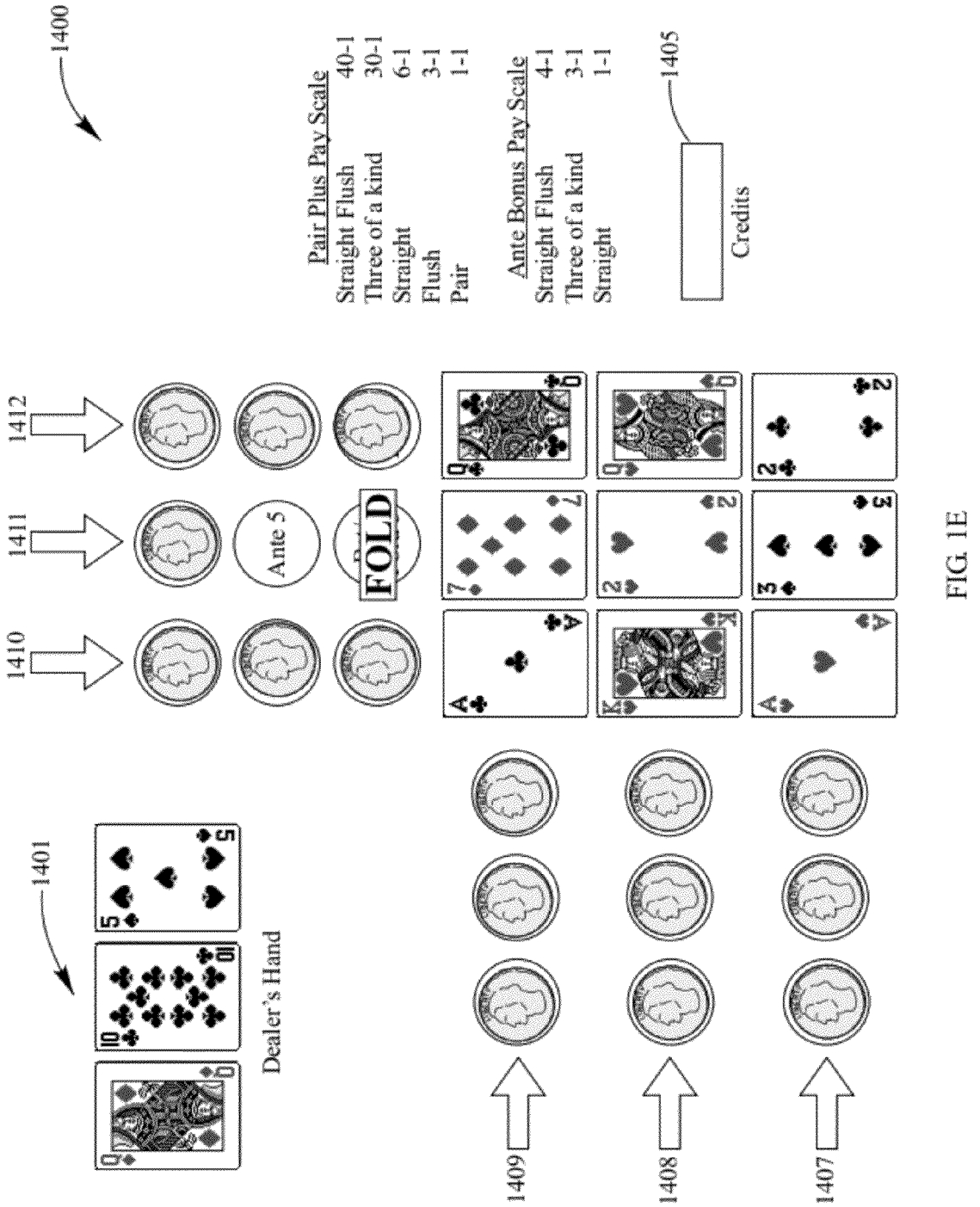
Pair Plus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 40-1
Three of a kind 30-1
Straight 6-1
Flush 3-1
Pair 1-1
Ante Bonus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 4-1
Three of a kind 3-1
Straight 1-1
Credits
1402
1401
Dealer's Hand
1406
1406c
Ante 5
1406b
FOLD
1406a
1406a
1406a
1406a

FIG. 1D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Pair Plus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 40-1
Three of a kind 30-1
Straight 6-1
Flush 3-1
Pair 1-1
Ante Bonus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 4-1
Three of a kind 3-1
Straight 1-1
1405
Credits
1412
1411
1410
Ante 5
FOLD
1401
Dealer's Hand
1409
1408
1407

FIG. 1E

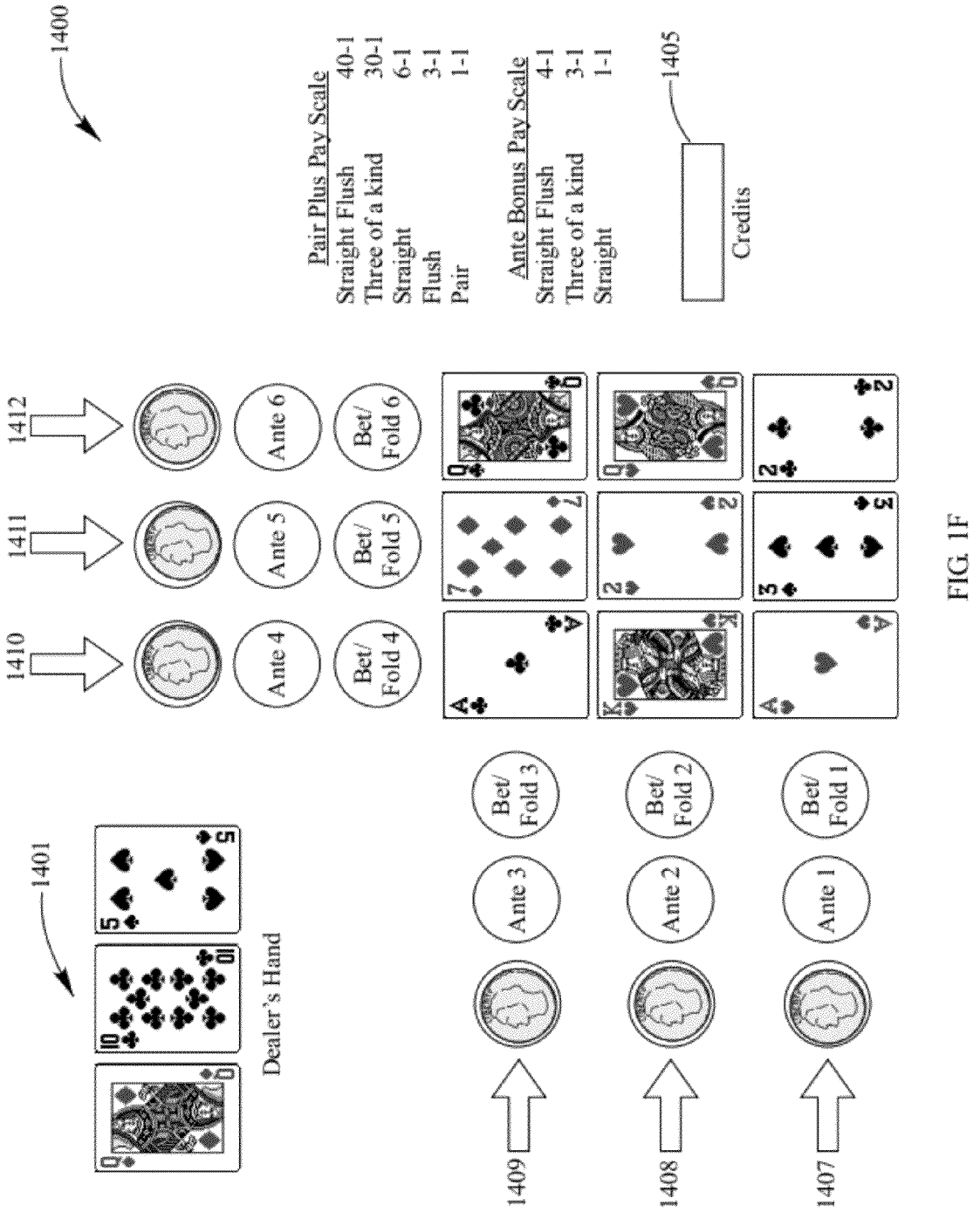
1400
Pair Plus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 40-1
Three of a kind 30-1
Straight 6-1
Flush 3-1
Pair 1-1
Ante Bonus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 4-1
Three of a kind 3-1
Straight 1-1
1405
Credits
1412
1411
1410
Ante 6
Ante 5
Ante 4
Bet/ Fold 6
Bet/ Fold 5
Bet/ Fold 4
1401
Dealer's Hand
1409
1408
1407
Ante 3
Ante 2
Ante 1
Bet/ Fold 3
Bet/ Fold 2
Bet/ Fold 1

FIG. 1F

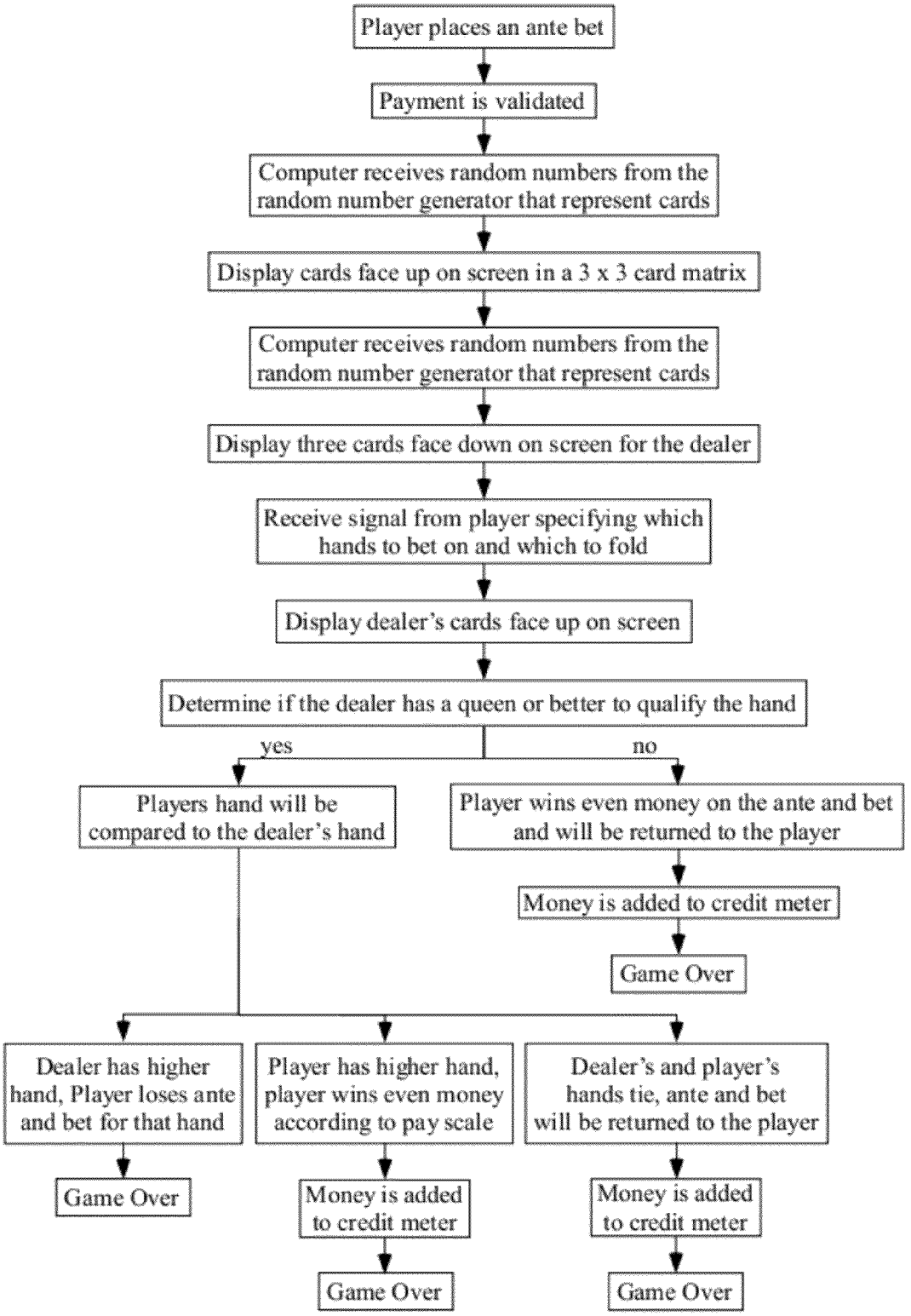
Player places an ante bet
Payment is validated
Computer receives random numbers from the random number generator that represent cards
Display cards face up on screen in a 3 x 3 card matrix
Computer receives random numbers from the random number generator that represent cards
Display three cards face down on screen for the dealer
Receive signal from player specifying which hands to bet on and which to fold
Display dealer's cards face up on screen
Determine if the dealer has a queen or better to qualify the hand
yes
no
Players hand will be compared to the dealer's hand
Player wins even money on the ante and bet and will be returned to the player
Money is added to credit meter
Game Over
Dealer has higher hand, Player loses ante and bet for that hand
Player has higher hand, player wins even money according to pay scale
Dealer's and player's hands tie, ante and bet will be returned to the player
Game Over
Money is added to credit meter
Money is added to credit meter
Game Over
Game Over

FIG. 2

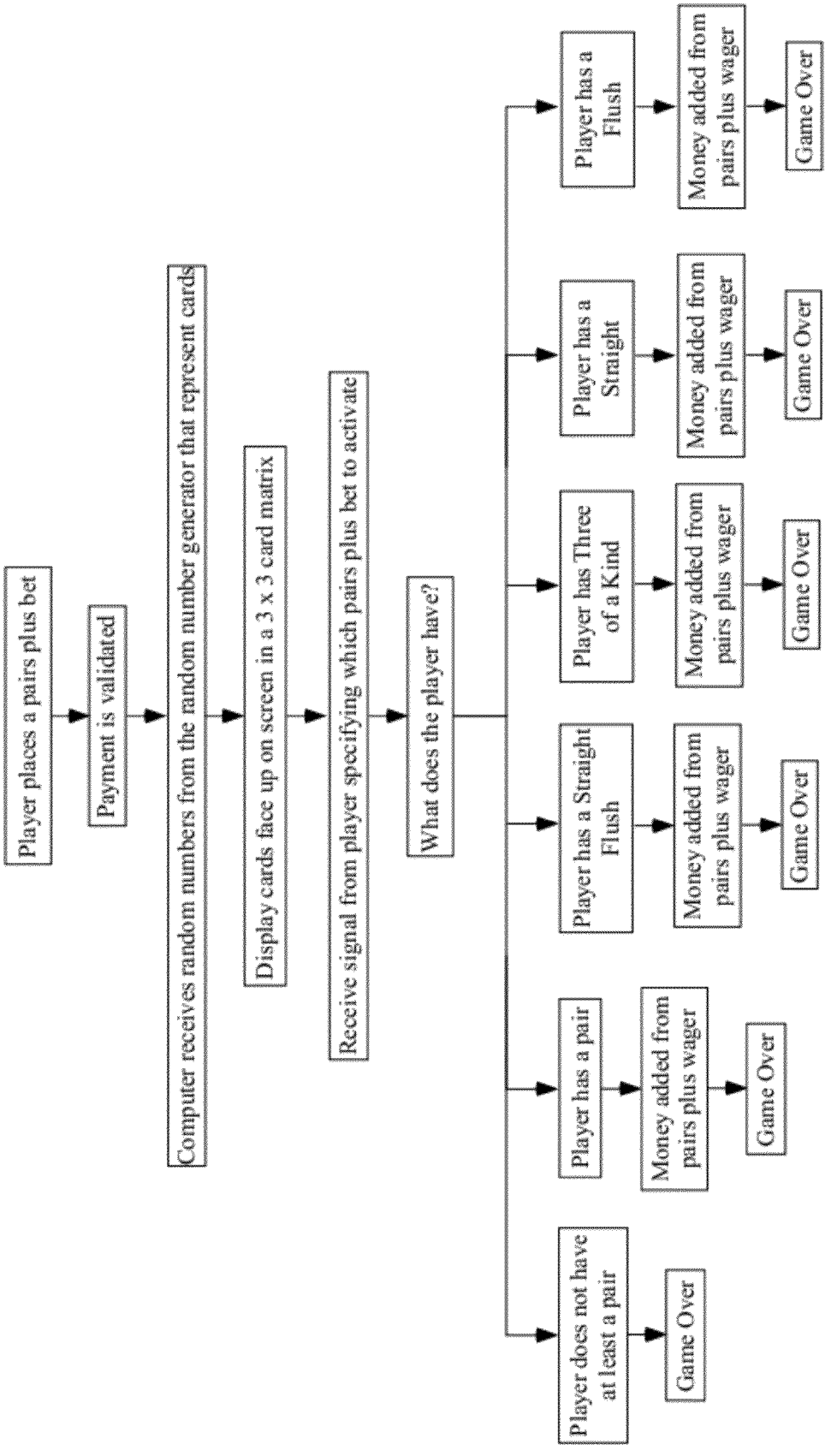
Player places a pairs plus bet
Payment is validated
Computer receives random numbers from the random number generator that represent cards
Display cards face up on screen in a 3 x 3 card matrix
Receive signal from player specifying which pairs plus bet to activate
What does the player have?
Player does not have at least a pair
Game Over
Player has a pair
Money added from pairs plus wager
Game Over
Player has a Straight Flush
Money added from pairs plus wager
Game Over
Player has Three of a Kind
Money added from pairs plus wager
Game Over
Player has a Straight
Money added from pairs plus wager
Game Over
Player has a Flush
Money added from pairs plus wager
Game Over

FIG. 3

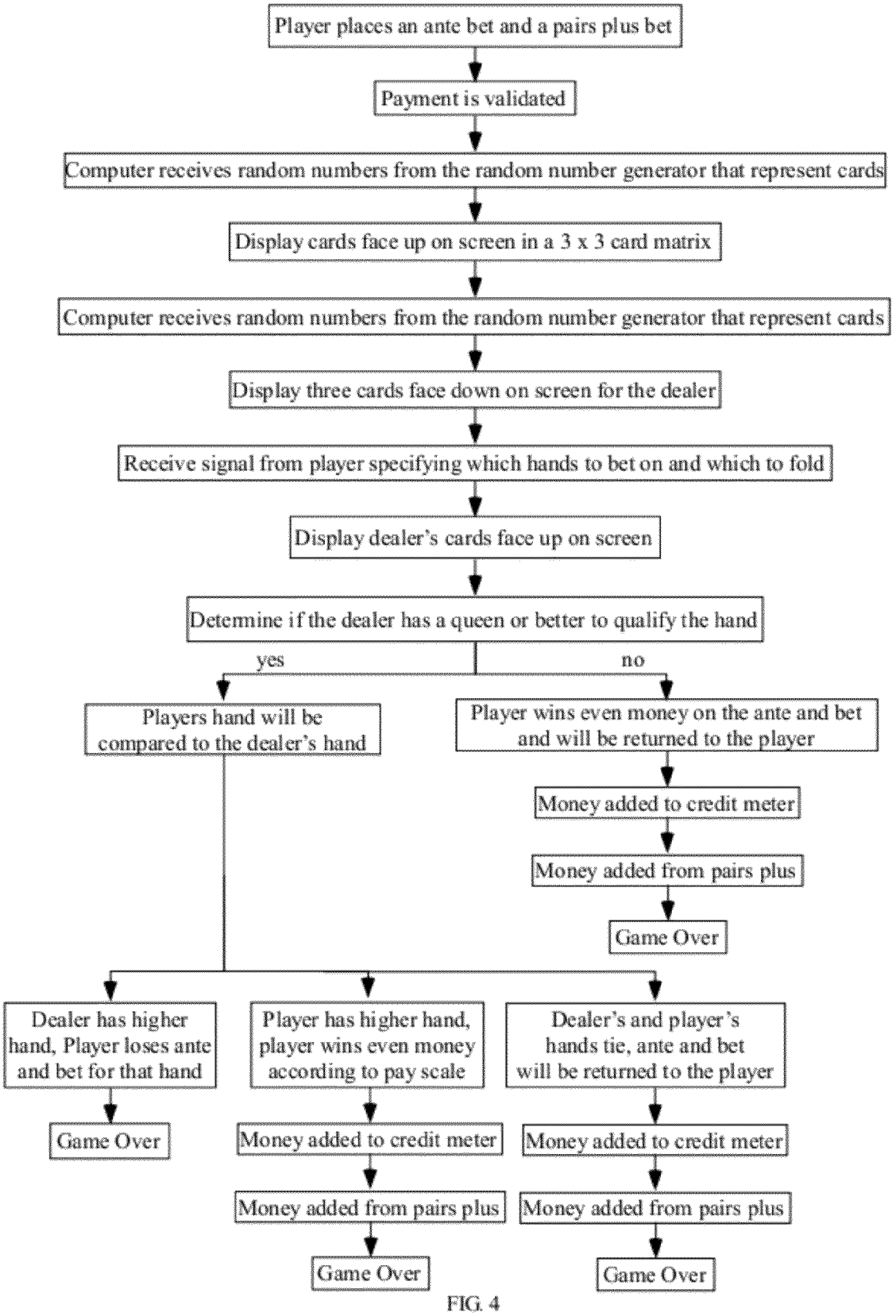
Player places an ante bet and a pairs plus bet
Payment is validated
Computer receives random numbers from the random number generator that represent cards
Display cards face up on screen in a 3 x 3 card matrix
Computer receives random numbers from the random number generator that represent cards
Display three cards face down on screen for the dealer
Receive signal from player specifying which hands to bet on and which to fold
Display dealer's cards face up on screen
Determine if the dealer has a queen or better to qualify the hand
yes
no
Players hand will be compared to the dealer's hand
Player wins even money on the ante and bet and will be returned to the player
Money added to credit meter
Money added from pairs plus
Game Over
Dealer has higher hand, Player loses ante and bet for that hand
Player has higher hand, player wins even money according to pay scale
Dealer's and player's hands tie, ante and bet will be returned to the player
Game Over
Money added to credit meter
Money added to credit meter
Money added from pairs plus
Money added from pairs plus
Game Over
Game Over

FIG. 4

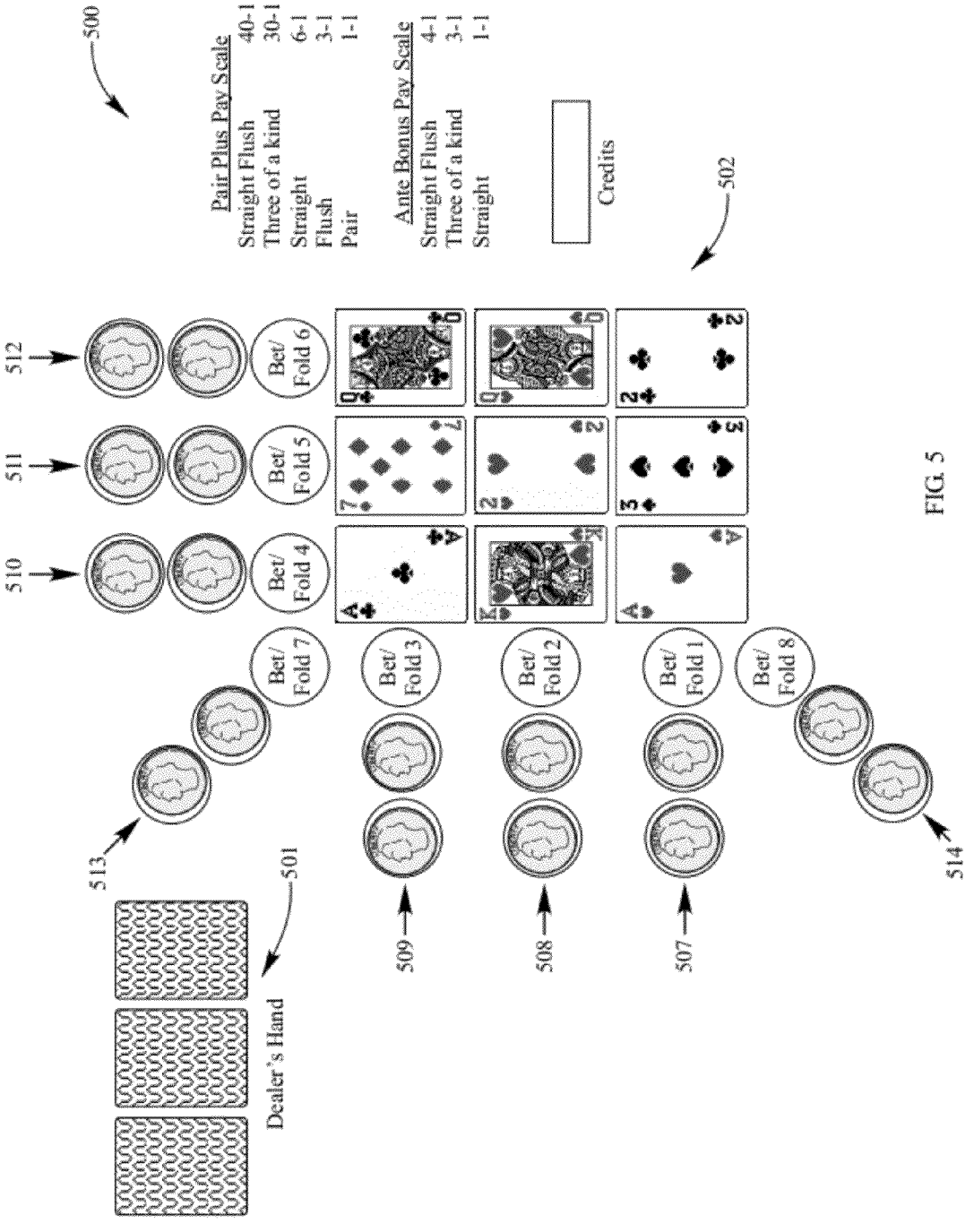
500
Pair Plus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 40-1
Three of a kind 30-1
Straight 6-1
Flush 3-1
Pair 1-1
Ante Bonus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 4-1
Three of a kind 3-1
Straight 1-1
Credits
502
512
511
510
Bet/ Fold 6
Bet/ Fold 5
Bet/ Fold 4
Bet/ Fold 7
Bet/ Fold 3
Bet/ Fold 2
Bet/ Fold 1
Bet/ Fold 8
513
501
Dealer's Hand
509
508
507
514

FIG. 5

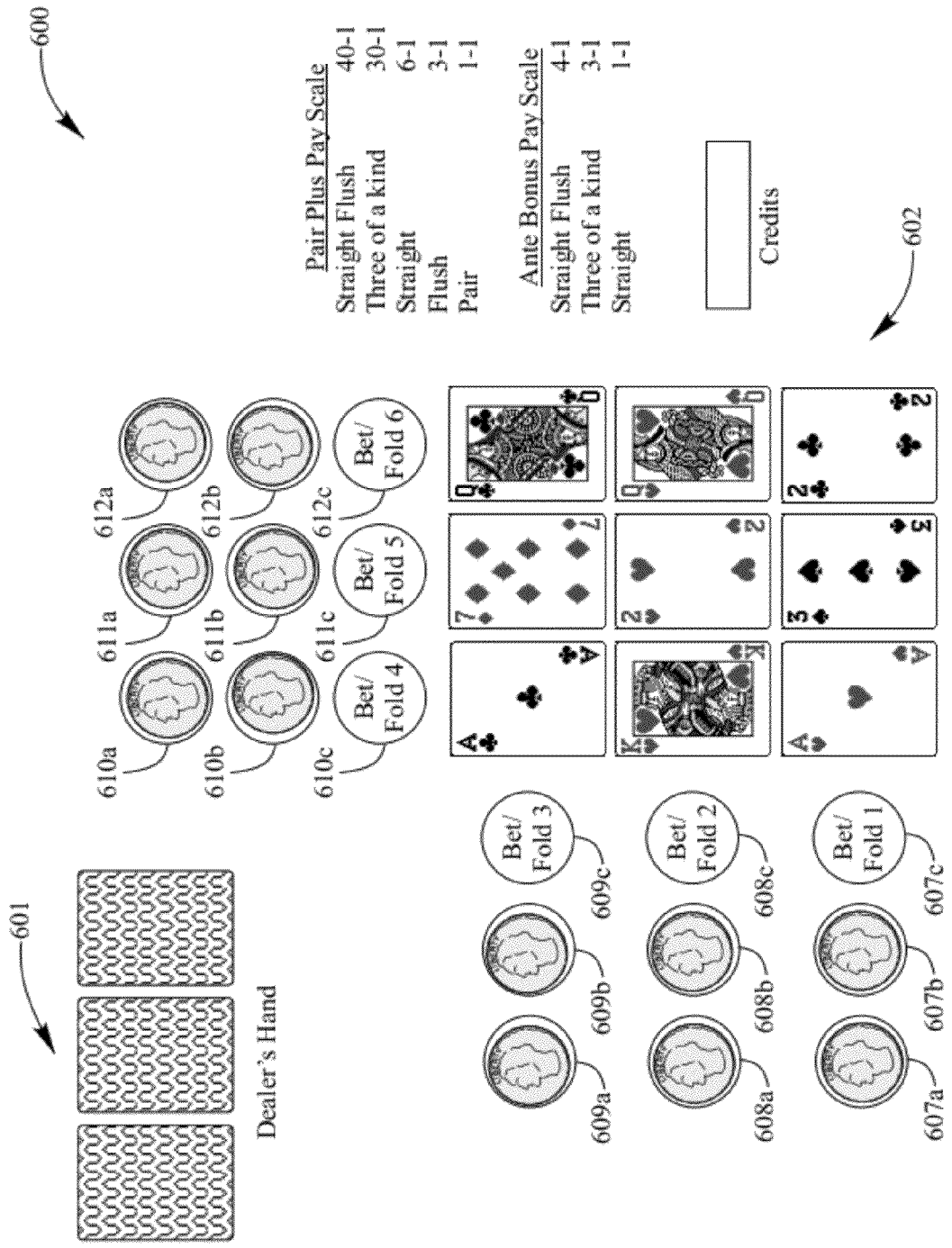
600
601
Dealer's Hand
Pair Plus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 40-1
Three of a kind 30-1
Straight 6-1
Flush 3-1
Pair 1-1
Ante Bonus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 4-1
Three of a kind 3-1
Straight 1-1
Credits
602
610a
611a
612a
610b
611b
612b
610c
611c
612c
Bet/ Fold 4
Bet/ Fold 5
Bet/ Fold 6
Bet/ Fold 3
Bet/ Fold 2
Bet/ Fold 1
609a
609b
609c
608a
608b
608c
607a
607b
607c

FIG. 6

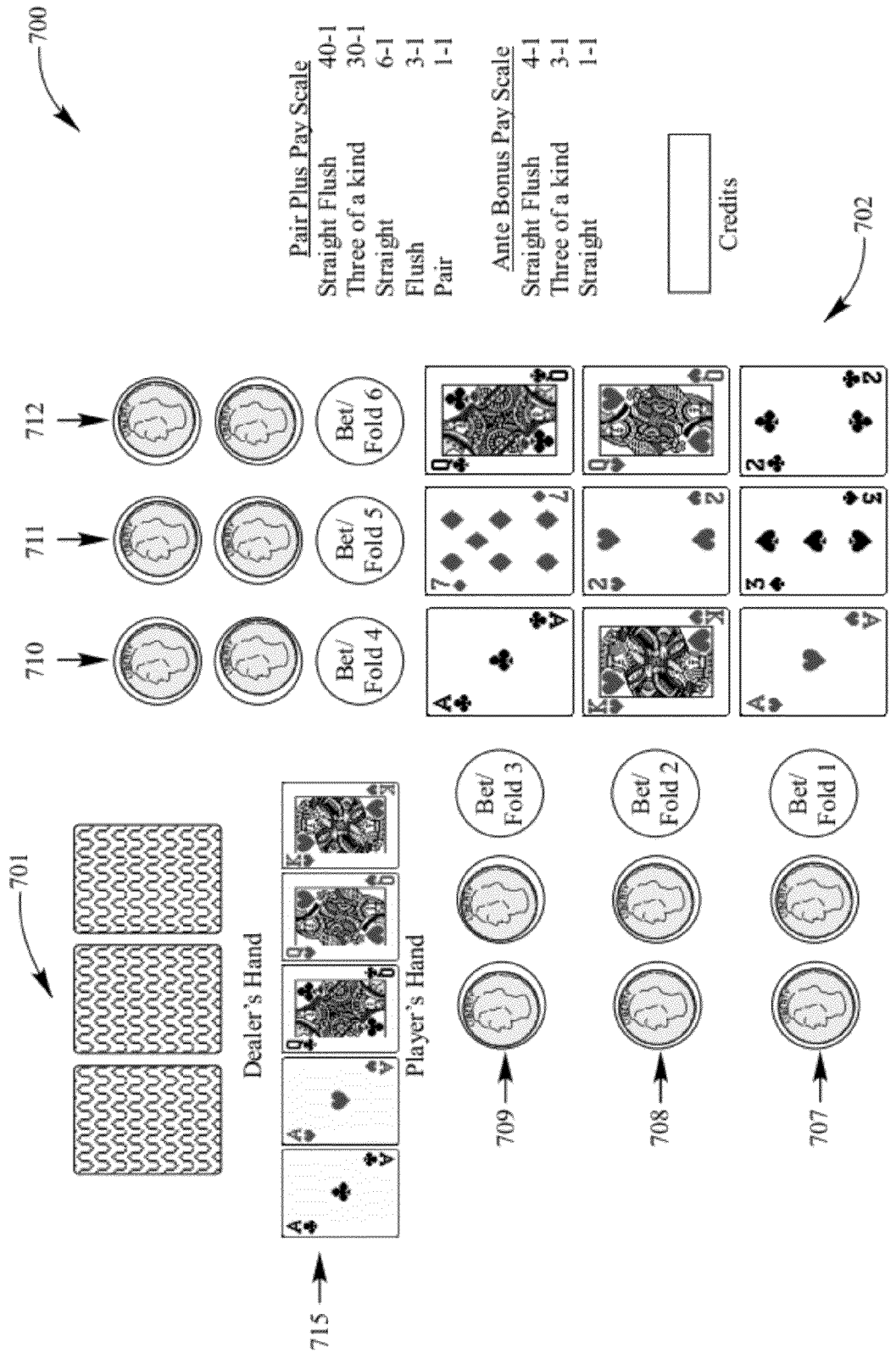
700
Pair Plus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 40-1
Three of a kind 30-1
Straight 6-1
Flush 3-1
Pair 1-1
Ante Bonus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 4-1
Three of a kind 3-1
Straight 1-1
Credits
702
712
711
710
Bet/ Fold 6
Bet/ Fold 5
Bet/ Fold 4
701
Dealer's Hand
Player's Hand
Bet/ Fold 3
Bet/ Fold 2
Bet/ Fold 1
709
708
707
715

FIG. 7

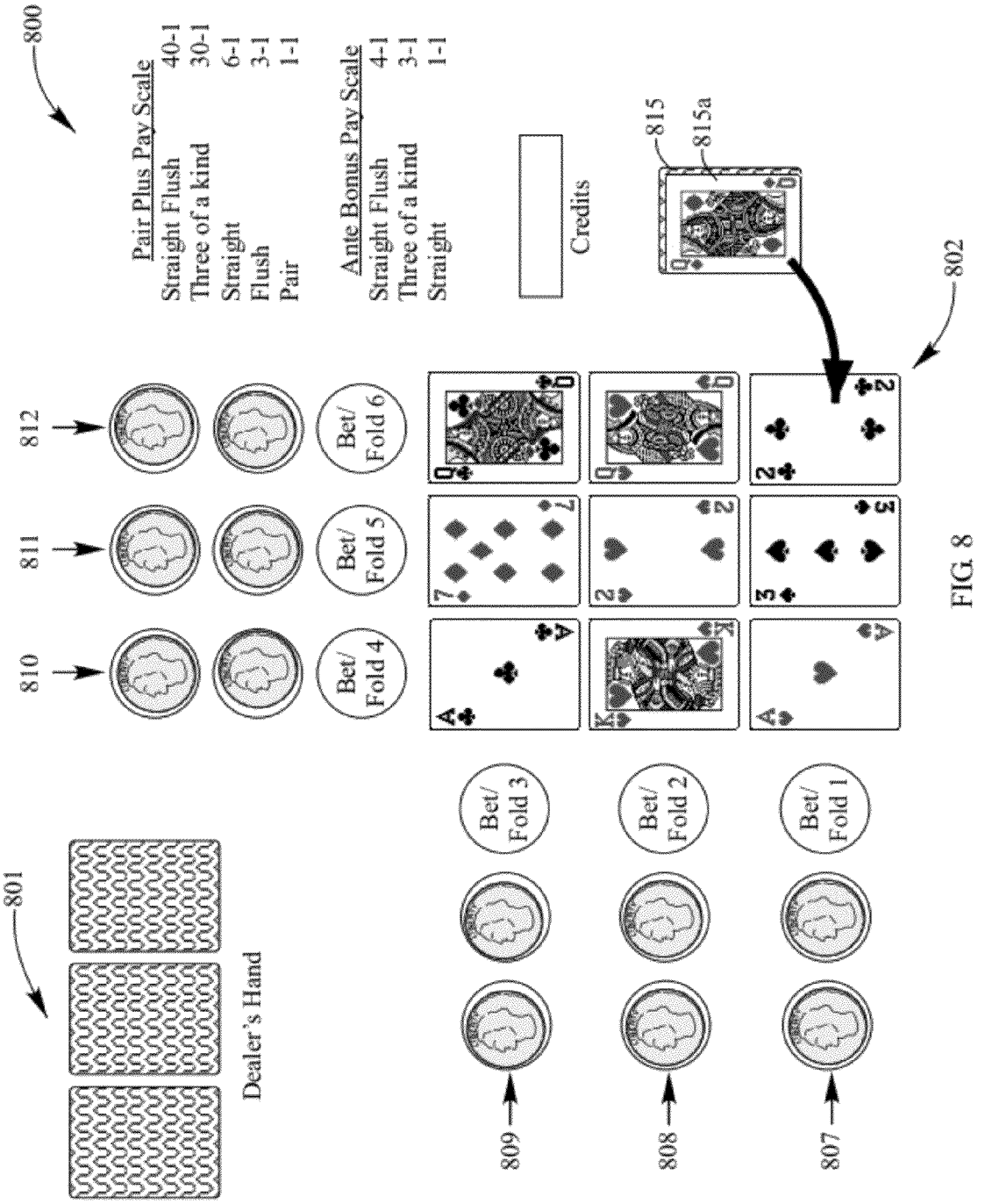
800
Pair Plus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 40-1
Three of a kind 30-1
Straight 6-1
Flush 3-1
Pair 1-1
Ante Bonus Pay Scale
Straight Flush 4-1
Three of a kind 3-1
Straight 1-1
Credits
815
815a
802
812
811
810
Bet/ Fold 6
Bet/ Fold 5
Bet/ Fold 4
Bet/ Fold 3
Bet/ Fold 2
Bet/ Fold 1
801
Dealer's Hand
809
808
807

FIG. 8

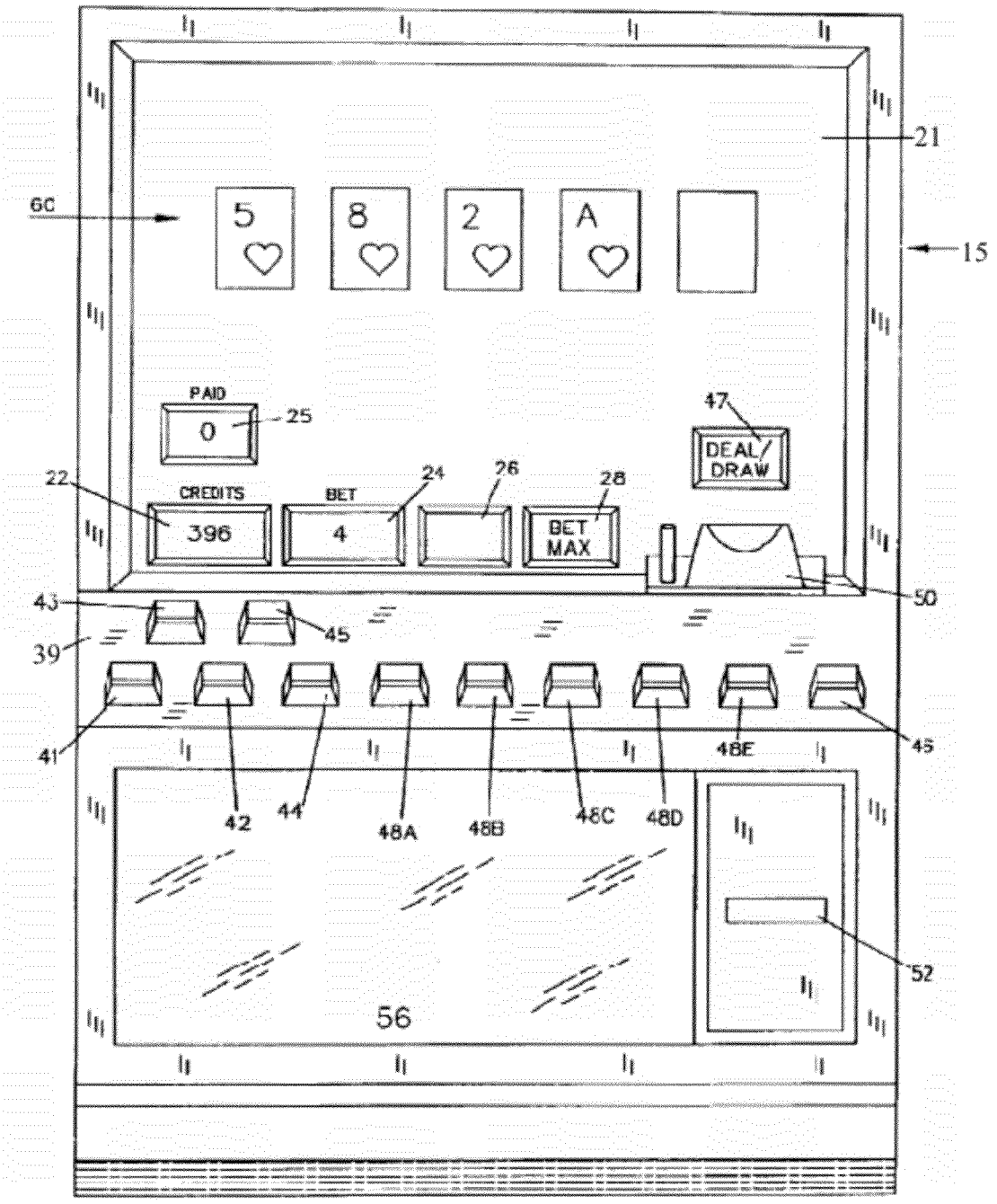
60
5
8
2
A
21
15
PAID
0
25
47
DEAL/
DRAW
22
CREDITS
396
BET
4
24
26
28
BET
MAX
50
43
45
39
41
42
44
48A
48B
48C
48D
48E
45
52
56

FIG. 9

THREE CARD VIDEO POKER

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation-in-part under 35 U.S.C. 120 of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/368,319 filed Feb. 10, 2009, to issue as U.S. Pat. No. 8,177,617, with a claim of priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(e) of U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 61/029,043 filed Feb. 15, 2008.

RELATED PRIOR ART

The following references disclose a video poker game wherein multiple hands are dealt per game for a single player: U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,098,985 (Moody), 6,474,645 (Tarantino), 6,511,068 (Sklansky et al.), 6,561,898 (Moody), 7,247,092 (Jarvis et al.), U.S. Patent Application Publication Nos. 2003/0038425 (Tarantino), 2004/0219970 (Tarantino), 2005/0026668 (Tarantino), and 2006/0194628 (Novellie), all incorporated herein by reference.

U.S. Pat. No. 8,002,623 (Resnick et al.) discloses a gaming system with multiple game types, and is incorporated herein by reference.

U.S. Patent Application Publication 2007/0155500 (Honour) discloses a multiple player video poker game, and is incorporated herein by reference.

The following references disclose an improved poker game: U.S. Pat. Nos. 7,137,628 (Moody), 7,222,856 (Dodge), 7,222,857 (Moody), 7,222,858 (Moody), and 7,874,901 (Kirkpatrick), all incorporated herein by reference.

The following references disclose a gaming device with cards that impact the outcome of the game: U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,857,957 (Marks et al.) and 6,991,538 (Cannon), both incorporated herein by reference.

The following prior art references disclose electronic or computerized gaming devices: U.S. Pat. Nos. 5,042,809 (Richardson), 6,248,016 (Walker et al.), 6,332,839 (Walker et al.), 7,022,016 (Wood et al.), 7,222,857 (Moody), and 7,247,091 (Moody). U.S. Design Pat. No. D395,463 (Scott et al.) and U.S. Pat. No. 6,201,532 (Tode et al.) disclose an electronic gaming device with a deck mounted touch screen, all incorporated herein by reference.

The following prior art references disclose a three card poker game where the player's hand is compared to a dealer hand: U.S. Pat. Nos. 6,698,759 (Webb et al.), 6,773,012 (French), 7,165,770 (Snow), and 7,264,243 (Yoseloff et al.), all incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF INVENTION

This invention relates to a three card poker game wherein a plurality of unique poker hands are generated for a player and a dealer, allowing a player to receive multiple payouts before and after the player's hands are compared to the dealer's hand.

SPECIFIC EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with this invention, there is provided a poker game which comprises generating a row-column grid or grid of three cards by three cards, a total of nine cards, such that there are three horizontal rows of poker hands and three vertical columns of poker hands, a total of six poker hands. The dealer receives three cards face down.

This invention relates to a multiple handed video poker game wherein a single player is dealt nine cards face up from a deck of cards, for example, a standard 52 card deck. The cards are arranged in a grid of three rows and three columns, with three cards per row and three cards per column, a total of nine cards. The dealer receives three cards face down.

A hand is defined as any row of three cards or any column of three cards. The player may collect on any number of hands one to six.

A typical game comprises the following steps:

1. The player makes an ante bet and an optional pair plus bet equal to the ante bet.
2. The dealer or computer deals the cards face up in a three card by three card grid or matrix for the player and deals three dealer cards face down.
3. The player decides to bet or fold any of the six hands that were dealt to him/her. If the player decides to play a specific hand, then he/she must place an equal bet on the bet hand next to the ante bet. If the player decides to fold the hand, he/she surrenders the ante bet.
4. The dealer or computer reveals the dealer cards. The dealer needs a queen or better to qualify. If the dealer's hand does not have a queen, then the player will win even money on the ante bet and the play will be returned to the player. If the dealer's hand has a queen, then the player's hands will be compared to the dealer's hand, with the higher hand or hands winning according to a pre-determined pay scale.

An example of a pre-determined pay scale for a winning hand is shown in Table III.

TABLE III

Pre-determined Pay Scale

Winning hand	Payout
Straight Flush	40-1
Three of a kind	30-1
Straight	6-1
Flush	3-1
Pair	1-1
High Card	1-1

5. If the player has the higher poker hand, then the ante and bet will both pay even money.
6. If the dealer has the higher poker hand, then the ante and bet will both lose.
7. If the player and dealer hands tie, then the ante and bet will be returned to the player.
8. If the player made the ante bet and has a straight or higher, then the player will receive an ante bonus, regardless of the value of the dealer's hand.

An example of a pre-determined pay scale for a pairs plus bonus hand is shown in Table IV.

TABLE IV

Pairs Plus Bonus Hand Pre-determined Pay Scale

Ante Bonus	Payout
Straight Flush	4-1
Three of a kind	3-1
Straight	1-1

9. The pair plus bet will pay entirely based on the poker value of the player's hand and is not subject to the dealer qualifying or the player making a play bet.

Any or all of this game may be played with an actual dealer or with a computerized gaming console with a video screen such as a CRT or a flat screen display such as plasma, LCD, OLED, or LED. The game may be played on site at a legal

game casino, in a non-gambling mode on-line over the internet, or off-line on a home computer using a disc such as a compact disc. The game could also be played as a game in gambling or non-gambling mode at a tavern, bar, or the like.

The gaming console may include a computer with a random number generator, and an integrated touch system to facilitate player input. The touch system may be an infrared (IR) touch system, capacitive touch system, resistive touch system, surface acoustical wave touch system, or an inductive touch system, mounted to the cabinet or to the bezel of the screen. A keyboard, cursor, or other input device may be used.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is an example of the active game area.

FIG. **1**A shows an example of an ante and a pair plus wager.

FIG. **1**B shows the active game area after the deal.

FIG. **1**C shows a sample game being played after additional wagers and folding of a hand.

FIG. **1**D shows the sample game after a dealers hand is dealt.

FIG. **1**E shows the sample hand after the dealer's hand has been revealed.

FIG. **1**F shows the comparison of the dealer's hand to the player's hands.

FIG. **2** shows a block diagram of the game with only an ante bet.

FIG. **3** shows a block diagram of the game with only a pairs plus bet.

FIG. **4** shows a block diagram of the game with an ante bet and a pairs plus bet.

FIG. **5** provides two diagonal lines in the three by three grid to allow a player to play a total of 8 hands.

FIG. **6** allows the player to take on the role of the dealer and play against the computer's six hands.

FIG. **7** allows the player to create his best five card poker hand from the three by three card grid.

FIG. **8** allows the player to draw the next card in the deck to place on the three by three grid to improve the hands prior to placing bets on each hand.

FIG. **9** shows a typical electronic video gaming machine.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** shows active game area **1400**, the dealer's hand **1401**, the three card by three card grid **1402**, a pre-determined pay scale **1403**, an ante bonus pay scale **1403***a*, the pair plus wager circle for the first row **1404***a*, the ante wager circle for the first row **1404***b*, the bet or fold circle for the first row **1404***c*, the pair plus wager circle for the first column **1404***d*, the ante wager circle for the first column **1404***e*, the bet or fold circle for the first column **1404***f*, and the credit meter **1405**.

FIG. **1**A shows the active game area **1400** after the ante **1406***d* and pair plus wagers **1406** have been made on all of the rows and columns of possible hands. The dealer's hand **1401** has not yet been revealed and the three card by three card grid **1402** has also not yet been revealed. The player begins the game by placing equal wagers on the ante circle **1406***d* and the optional pair plus circle **1406** for all of the possible hands.

FIG. **1**B shows the active game area **1400** after a computer has used a random number generator to select cards for the player and displayed them face up in a three card by three card grid **1402** giving the player a total of six possible hands to play. The computer also uses the random number generator to select three cards for the dealer and displays them face down **1401**.

The player must decide which hands will be folded and which will receive an additional bet. If the player folds a hand, by not placing an additional equal bet on it, then the ante is surrendered. If the player places an additional bet, it must be equal to the ante.

FIG. **1**C shows the active game area **1400** after the player has selected which hands to fold **1406***b* and which hands to place an additional bet upon **1406***a*. The player has lost his ante bet **1406***c* for the hand in the second column.

FIG. **1**D shows the active game area **1400** after the dealer's hand **1401** has been revealed to the player. The dealer has at least a queen and the hand qualifies to be compared to the hands that the player has remaining **1402**.

FIG. **1**E shows the active game are **1400** each row and column are compared to the dealer's hand **1401**. The dealer's hand **1401** only has a high card (queen of diamonds). Row one **1407** is compared to the dealer's hand **1401** and the player has a straight, winning the ante and the bet.

Row two **1408** is compared to the dealer's hand **1401** and the player has a flush, winning the ante and the bet. Row three **1409** is compared to the dealer's hand **1401** and the player has high cards, winning the ante and the bet. Column one **1410** is compared to the dealer's hand **1401** and the player has high cards (ace of clubs and queen of clubs), winning the ante and the bet. Column two **1411** was folded, and the player loses the ante and the bet. Column three **1411** is compared to the dealer's hand **1401** and the player has a pair of queens, winning the ante and the bet.

After each row and column is analyzed the computer adds the appropriate amount of money to the credit meter **1405**.

FIG. **1**F shows the active game area **1400** with the pre-determined pair plus payouts as follows: row one **1407**, wins 6 to 1 with a straight; row two **1408**, wins 3 to 1 with a flush; row three **1409**, loses since the hand only has a high card an ace of clubs; column one **1410**, wins 1 to 1 with a pair of aces; column two **1411**, loses with only a high card a seven of diamonds; column three **1412**, wins 1 to 1 with a pair of queens. The computer only analyzes these hands according to standard three card poker rules, and does not compare the hands to the dealer's hand **1401**. The payouts are calculated and the computer adds the appropriate amount to the credit meter **1405**.

FIG. **2** shows a block diagram of a typical game of three card poker as described in the present invention. In this embodiment, the player chooses not to play the pairs plus option.

The player places a bet, which is validated by the computer or dealer. The computer sends a signal to a random number generator. The random number generator sends nine numbers which represent cards to the computer. The computer displays the cards face up in a three card by three card grid. The computer sends another signal to a random number generator. The random number generator sends three numbers which represent cards to the computer. The computer displays the cards face down in a three card row representing the dealer's three card poker hand. The player chooses which hands to bet on, by placing a bet on the hand, and which to fold. The computer displays the dealer's hand face up, and determines if the dealer's hand has a queen or better to qualify the hand.

If the dealer's hand has a queen or better then the player hands will be compared to the dealer's hand. If the dealer has a higher hand, then the player loses the ante bet and the bet for the hand, and the game is over.

If the dealer's hand has a queen or better then the player hands will be compared to the dealer's hand. If the player has

a higher hand then the player wins even money according to a pre-determined pay scale, money is added to a credit meter and the game is over.

If the dealer's hand has a queen or better then the player hands will be compared to the dealer's hand. If the dealer's hand and the player's hand tie then the ante and the bet are returned to the player, money is added to a credit meter and the game is over.

If the dealer's hand does not have a queen or better then the player wins even money on the ante and the bet. The ante and the bet are returned to the player, money is added to a credit meter and the game is over.

FIG. **3** shows a block diagram of a typical game of three card poker as described in the present invention, where only the pairs plus option is played.

The player places a pairs plus wager, which is validated by the computer or dealer. The computer sends a signal to a random number generator. The random number generator sends nine numbers which represent cards to the computer. The computer displays the cards face up in a three card by three card grid. The player chooses which pairs plus bet to activate.

The computer determines the proper payout for each of the hands that had a bet placed upon them, and pays accordingly.

FIG. **4** shows a block diagram of a typical game of three card poker as described in the present invention. In this embodiment, the player chooses to play the pairs plus option.

The player places a bet, and a pairs plus wager, which is validated by the computer or dealer. The computer sends a signal to a random number generator. The random number generator sends nine numbers which represent cards to the computer. The computer displays the cards face up in a three card by three card grid. The computer sends another signal to a random number generator. The random number generator sends three numbers which represent cards to the computer. The computer displays the cards face down in a three card row representing the dealer's three card poker hand. The player chooses which hands to bet on, by placing a bet on the hand and which to fold. The computer displays the dealer's hand face up, and determines if the dealer's hand has a queen or better to qualify the hand.

If the dealer's hand has a queen or better then the player hands will be compared to the dealer's hand. If the dealer has a higher hand then the player loses the ante bet and the bet for the hand and the game is over.

If the dealer's hand has a queen or better then the player hands will be compared to the dealer's hand. If the player has a higher hand then the player wins even money according to a pre-determined pay scale, money is added to a credit meter, if the hand has a Straight Flush, Three of a kind, or a Straight, the pairs plus bonus is paid accordingly, and the game is over.

If the dealer's hand has a queen or better then the player hands will be compared to the dealer's hand. If the dealer's hand and the player's hand tie then the ante and the bet are returned to the player, money is added to a credit meter and the game is over.

If the dealer's hand does not have a queen or better then the player wins even money on the ante and the bet. The ante and the bet are returned to the player, money is added to a credit meter and the game is over.

FIG. **5** provides two diagonal lines in the three by three grid to allow a player to play a total of 8 hands. FIG. **5** shows active game area **500** after the computer has used a random number generator to select cards for the player and displayed them face up in a three by three card grid **502**. Two additional player hands are created in this embodiment to provide the player with a total of eight possible hands to play. These new hands are diagonal hand **513** and **514**. The computer also uses the random number generator to select three cards for the dealer and displays them face down **501**. The player must decide which hands out of the eight possible hands will be folded and which will receive an additional bet. If the player folds a hand by not placing an additional equal bet on it, the ante is surrendered. If the player places an additional bet, it must be equal to the ante.

FIG. **6** allows the player to take on the role of the dealer and play against the computer's six hands. FIG. **6** shows the active game area **600**, the player taking on the role of the dealer by using the three cards **601** as his hand, and the computer playing each of the six hands in the three by three card grid **602**. The computer has chosen to activate all six hands prior to the cards being dealt into the three by three card grid and places an equal bet on both the ante circles **607***b*, **608***b*, **609***b*, **610***b*, **611***b*, **612***b* and pair plus bet circles **607***a*, **608***a*, **609***a*, **610***a*, **611***a*, **612***a*. According to a predetermined decision based on a preprogrammed set of rules within the central processing unit (CPU) and memory unit, the computer chooses which of the six hands it will place bets on and which hands it will fold. Once the computer selects which hands to bet or fold, the player, now acting as the dealer in this embodiment, will reveal the three cards **601** that the random number generator has dealt into the dealer's three card hand **601**. Each of the computer's hands will be compared to a predetermined pay scale and to the player's hand to award the proper payouts. The player acting as the dealer will pay out the wins for each winning computer hand and will collect from losing or folded hands.

FIG. **7** allows the player to create his best five card poker hand from the three by three card grid. FIG. **7** shows the active game area **700**, the embodiment from the original game allowing the best five card poker hand **715** to be created from the three by three card grid **702**. This hand as illustrated is a pair of aces, a pair of queens, and a king. In this particular hand **715**, the player was able to create a hand consisting of: the ace of hearts (row **707**, column **710**), ace of clubs (row **709**, column **710**), queen of hearts (row **708**, column **712**), queen of clubs (row **709**, column **712**), and king of hearts (row **708**, column **710**) which will be compared to a predetermined pay scale and a set amount paid out prior to continuing on to the three card poker game in the three by three card grid **702**. The three card game continues after the five card hand is completed.

FIG. **8** allows the player to draw the next card in the deck to place on the three by three grid to improve the hands prior to placing bets on each hand. FIG. **8** shows the active game area **800** and the remaining deck of cards **815** with the next card, the queen of diamonds, turned face up **815***a*. In this embodiment, the player has the opportunity to place the queen of diamonds in any of the nine card positions in the three by three card grid **802**. In this particular case, the player decides to place the queen of diamonds in the position of the two of clubs (row **807**, column **812**), thus removing the two of clubs from the three by three card grid, and positioning the queen of diamonds in the position that was occupied by the two of clubs. Placing the card into the three by three card grid can help improve any, all, or none of the six hands in the grid **802**. In this illustration there results three of a kind.

FIG. **9** shows a typical electronic video gaming machine **15** that is configured to provide a player apparatus for a poker game such as the method and system of the present invention. The electronic video gaming machine **15** includes a conventional coin acceptor **50** into which the player can insert coins or gaming tokens and a bill acceptor **52** mounted to the gaming machine **15** and into which the player can insert paper

currency or a ticket-in ticket-out (TITO). The use of coins, tokens, paper currency or TITO, is one mechanism by which a player may wager on the poker hands the player wishes to play. Also in the electronic video gaming machine **15**, a credit meter display **22** is provided to show the amount of credits that the player has accrued on the gaming machine **15**, either by inserting coins, tokens, paper currency, TITO, or from winning plays achieved by the player. Whenever the player makes a wager, the amount of the wager is subtracted from the credit meter display **22**. Whenever the player achieves a winning play during the play of the game, the amount of the winning play is added to the credit meter display **22**.

A conventional payout hopper is also located on the interior of the gaming machine and is used to dispense coins or tokens to the player into a payout tray **56** when the player wishes to collect any winning amounts the player has accrued. Other suitable and conventional payout mechanisms can be used, such as a ticket printer (TITO) or other cashless payout devices.

The gaming machine **15** also includes a video screen display **21** of any suitable size or type upon which representations of playing cards are displayed. In one embodiment, one or more hands can be displayed on the video screen display **21** at the same time. As illustrated in FIG. **9**, a first hand is shown at location **60**. Each hand would preferably have five card locations typically from left to right in a horizontal row, although other manners of displaying multiple hands including stacks of cards can be used. In this invention, the three by three grid, the dealer's hand, and the five card hand (from the grid) can be shown on the display. The video screen display **21** also contains a location at which the amount wagered on each hand is shown, for example, "Bet" **24**. In this illustration, the player has bet 4 credits.

A button panel **39** is also provided on the gaming machine **15** with buttons mounted on the button panel **39** to be used by the player to control the operation of the gaming machine **15**. Any suitable number or configuration of the buttons on the button panel can be used and, alternatively, conventional touch screen technology can be used for any or all of the buttons mounted on the button panel.

A typical button arrangement is shown on the button panel **39** in FIG. **9**. A BET ONE button **42** is provided to allow the player to wager one credit at a time. A BET MAX button **44** is provided to allow the player to wager the maximum amount of credits permitted by the configuration of the gaming machine **15**. Any number of credits can be set as the minimum or maximum amount that it is possible to wager on each hand. Typically, five credits may be the maximum number of credits for any particular hand. Alternatively, a BET ONE location **26** and a BET MAX location **28** can be provided on the video screen **21** to allow the player to wager by using conventional touch screen technology.

A conventional DEAL/DRAW button **46** is also provided on the button panel **39** which is used by the player to activate the initial deal of the cards at the deal stage of the method of play or the dealing of replacement cards at the draw stage of the method of play as is appropriate. Similarly, a DEAL/DRAW location **47** can be provided on the video screen **21** to allow the player to select either the deal step or the draw step by using conventional touch screen technology. In this illustration, the button panel **39** is shown with five "CARD" buttons **48**A, **48**B, **48**C, **48**D and **48**E associated with each horizontal card location on the video screen display: card button **48**A is associated with the left most card location, card button **48**B is associated with the second from the left card location, card button **48**C is associated with the middle card location, card button **48**D is associated with the second from the right card location and card button **48**E is associated with the right most card location. Each card button is preferably aligned below the card locations so that the player can easily associate the appropriate card button with the appropriate card location.

The method of play of the various versions of the present invention will now be described. After the player has inserted an appropriate amount of coins, tokens, paper currency, or TITO to add a sufficient amount of credits on the credit display meter **22**, the player makes his initial wager. The player may press the BET ONE button **42** one or more times to bet in single increments or the player may merely press the BET MAX button **44** and the maximum number of credits are applied, for example, five credits would be wagered. The player can also use the touch screen locations to make his wager as described above.

To play the poker game, the player establishes a pool of credits, sets the wager, deals the cards, chooses which cards to hold and discard, draws replacement cards, and collects credits for winning card combinations, with enhancements.

Buttons

In one embodiment, a set of buttons are mounted on the button panel **39** and are used by the player to control the functions of the poker game: Bet One **42**, Bet Max **44**, Deal/Draw **46**, Help **43**, Pay Table **45**, and Cash Out **41**. Any or all of these control buttons may be displayed on the video display **21** and/or buttons electronically connected to the gaming device. If necessary, any number of buttons may be added to further facilitate control of the game, such as Hold buttons to "hold" the cards displayed on the video.

Meters

In one embodiment, meters are shown on the video display screen to display the salient information for the game: Credits meter **22**, Bet meter **24**, and Paid meter **25**. The Credits meter **22** displays the total number credits remaining in the credit pool; the Bet meter **24** displays the amount wagered on the current, previous, and/or upcoming poker hand and is associated with the Bet One **42** and Bet Max **44** buttons; and the Paid meter **25** displays the amount of credits won on the current or previous poker hand.

Credit Pool

In one embodiment, the player deposits coins, tokens, paper currency, TITO, credit cards, debit cards, or other forms of physical and/or electronic currency into the coin acceptor slot **50** or a paper currency bill acceptor **52** to establish a pool of credits. The amount of this common pool of credits is displayed to the player on the Credit meter **22**. The pool of credits increases and decreases according to the player's wins or losses and may be supplemented, if necessary, by the player by additional deposits of coins, tokens, paper currency, TITO, credit cards, debit cards, or other forms of physical and/or electronic currency.

Set the Wager

In one embodiment, the player sets the value of the wager by using the Bet One **42** and Bet Max **44** buttons. The bet may range between one credit and N-credits, with N equal to a predetermined maximum or set by the current value of the credit pool. The typical video poker gaming machine uses a five credit maximum wager.

Deck of Cards

In one embodiment, each card dealt is selected from one or more suitable decks of cards such as one or more fifty-two card traditional decks (i.e. the traditional four suits of Spades, Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs, with thirteen ranks in each suit of two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, Jack, Queen, King and Ace) plus bonus cards that may be added before or after the deal or the draw. Custom decks may also be used.

Deal of Cards

In one embodiment, the player causes the machine **15** to deal the cards by pressing the Deal button **46**. Once the Deal button **46** is pressed, the wager is final and non-refundable. For each deal, as shown with a five card hand, the machine **15** randomly displays five cards face-up in the five card positions **1**, **2**, **3**, **4**, **5**. In a single standard deck embodiment, a displayed card is removed from the deck and may not be dealt again during that game. Typically, only the remaining non-dealt cards in the deck are used to replace a dealt card.

Hold and Discard

In some embodiments, the player may select cards to hold and cards to discard using the buttons on the machine **15** or touching the cards on the video display **21** (i.e. pressing a button or touching a card will "hold" the card) Alternatively, the machine **15** may automatically select cards to hold and/or discard and then allow the player to override the selections by using the buttons or touching the display screen **21**. This may be useful in a training mode.

Winning Card Combinations

In one embodiment, the player is paid for predetermined winning combinations of cards that appear in each final hand. Each winning combination pays the amount indicated on a pre-determined pay scale times the total amount wagered on that hand.

SUMMARY

The foregoing description of various embodiments of the invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed. Obvious modifications or variations are possible in light of the above teachings. The embodiments discussed were chosen and described to provide the best illustration of the principles of the invention and its practical application to thereby enable one of ordinary skill in the art to utilize the invention in various embodiments and with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated. All such modifications and variations are within the scope of the invention as determined by the appended claims to be interpreted in accordance with the breadth to which they are fairly, legally, and equitably entitled.

The invention claimed is:

1. In a video game method for playing three card video poker using a computer, a random number generator, and a video display screen wherein the computer receives random numbers representing cards from the random number generator and displays the cards on the video display screen, the improvement which comprises:

randomly generating a single dealer poker hand of three cards with a random number generator;

displaying the dealer hand face down on the video display screen with the computer;

randomly generating a grid of three cards by three cards with the random number generator to form three vertical player poker hands, three horizontal player poker hands, and two diagonal poker hands;

displaying eight player poker hands face up on the video display screen with the computer;

placing a bet or folding each of the eight player hands with a signal to the computer;

displaying the dealer hand face up;

and awarding with the computer a payout for each winning poker hand compared to the dealer poker hand.

2. The video poker game method of claim **1** wherein the three card by three card grid is generated from a standard deck of 52 cards.

3. The video poker game method of claim **1** wherein the three card by three card grid is generated from a multiple deck of cards.

4. The video poker game method of claim **1** wherein the player has the option to select the role of dealer and play against the eight hands in the grid of three by three cards.

5. The video poker game method of claim **1** wherein the player has the option of selecting five cards from the grid of three by three cards to create a poker hand with a payout according to a predetermined scale.

6. The video poker game method of claim **1** wherein the player has the option of drawing a new card and placing it in the three by three card grid as a replacement card for a selected card.

7. In a video game system for playing three card video poker using a computer, a random number generator, and a video display screen wherein the computer receives random numbers representing cards from the random number generator and displays the cards on the video display screen, the improvement which comprises:

randomly generating a single dealer poker hand of three cards with a random number generator;

displaying the dealer hand face down on the video display screen with the computer;

randomly generating a grid of three cards by three cards with the random number generator to form three vertical player poker hands, three horizontal player poker hands, and two diagonal poker hands;

displaying eight player poker hands face up on the video display screen with the computer;

placing a bet or folding each of the eight player hands with a signal to the computer;

displaying the dealer hand face up;

and awarding with the computer a payout for each winning poker hand compared to the dealer poker hand.

8. The video poker game system of claim **7** wherein the three card by three card grid is generated from a standard deck of 52 cards.

9. The video poker game system of claim **7** wherein the three card by three card grid is generated from a multiple deck of cards.

10. The video poker game system of claim **7** wherein the player has the option to select the role of dealer and play against the eight hands in the grid of three by three cards.

11. The video poker game system of claim **7** wherein the player has the option of selecting five cards from the grid of three by three cards to create a poker hand with a payout according to a predetermined scale.

12. The video poker game system of claim **7** wherein the player has the option of drawing a new card and placing it in the three by three card grid as a replacement card for a selected card.

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