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(54) **SOLITAIRE GAME**

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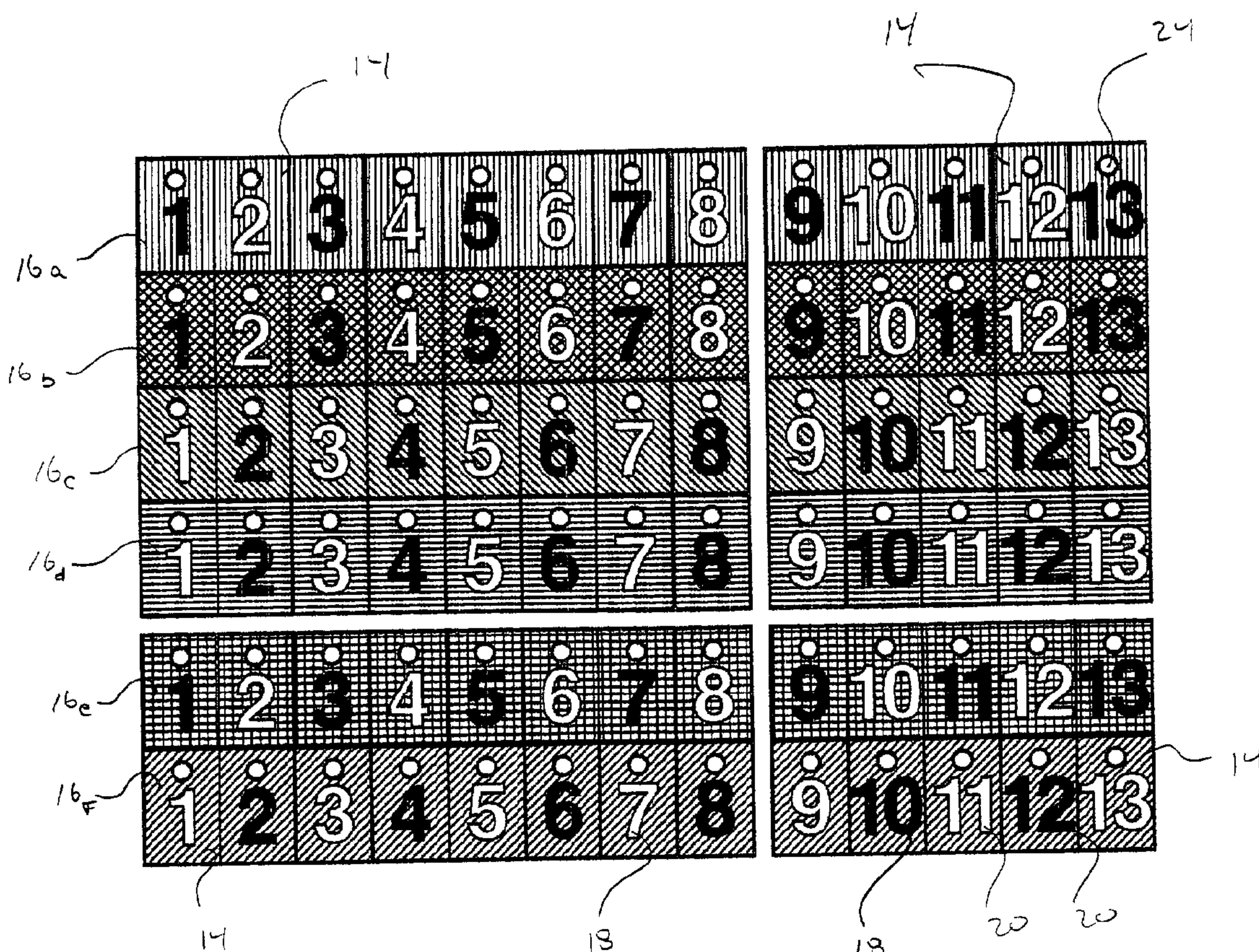
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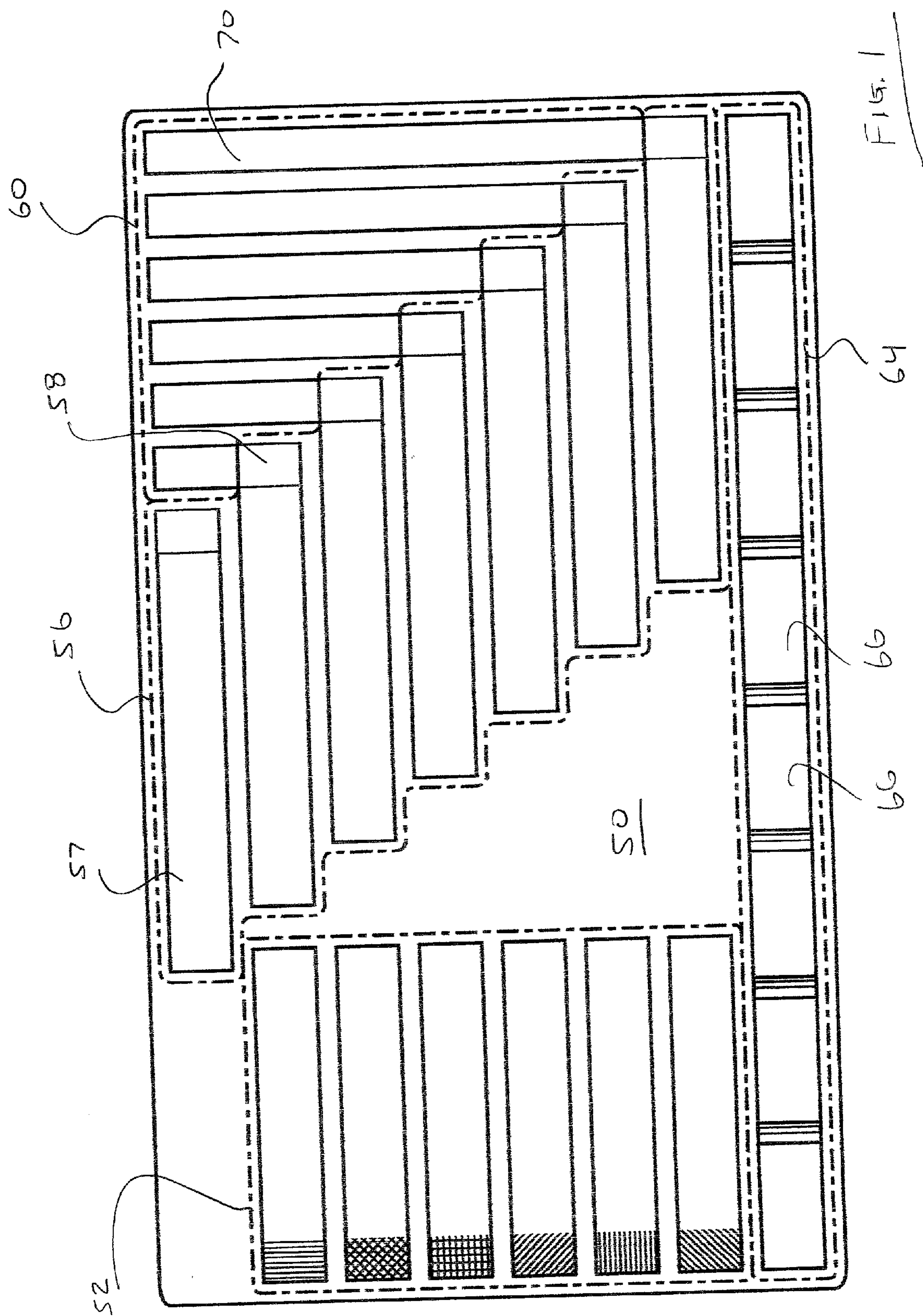
(57) **ABSTRACT**

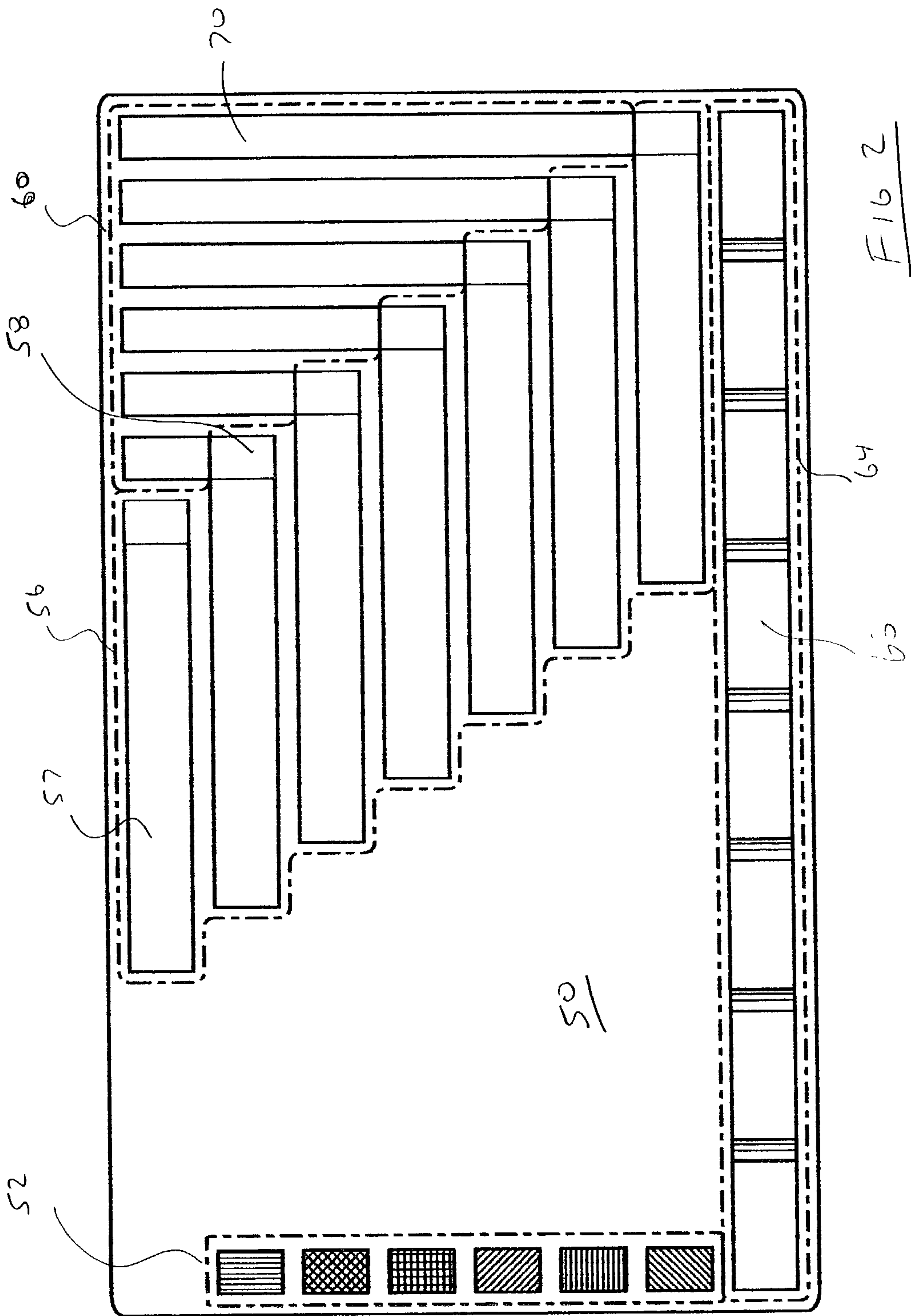
An improved solitaire game having a plurality of game pieces. The game pieces have first, second, and third indicia formed thereon. The first, second, and third indicia are visible while playing the game by moving the game pieces on the game board. Each game piece may be fitted with one or more holes to receive pegs used to indicate the strategic status of each piece. The game may be played with or without a game board.

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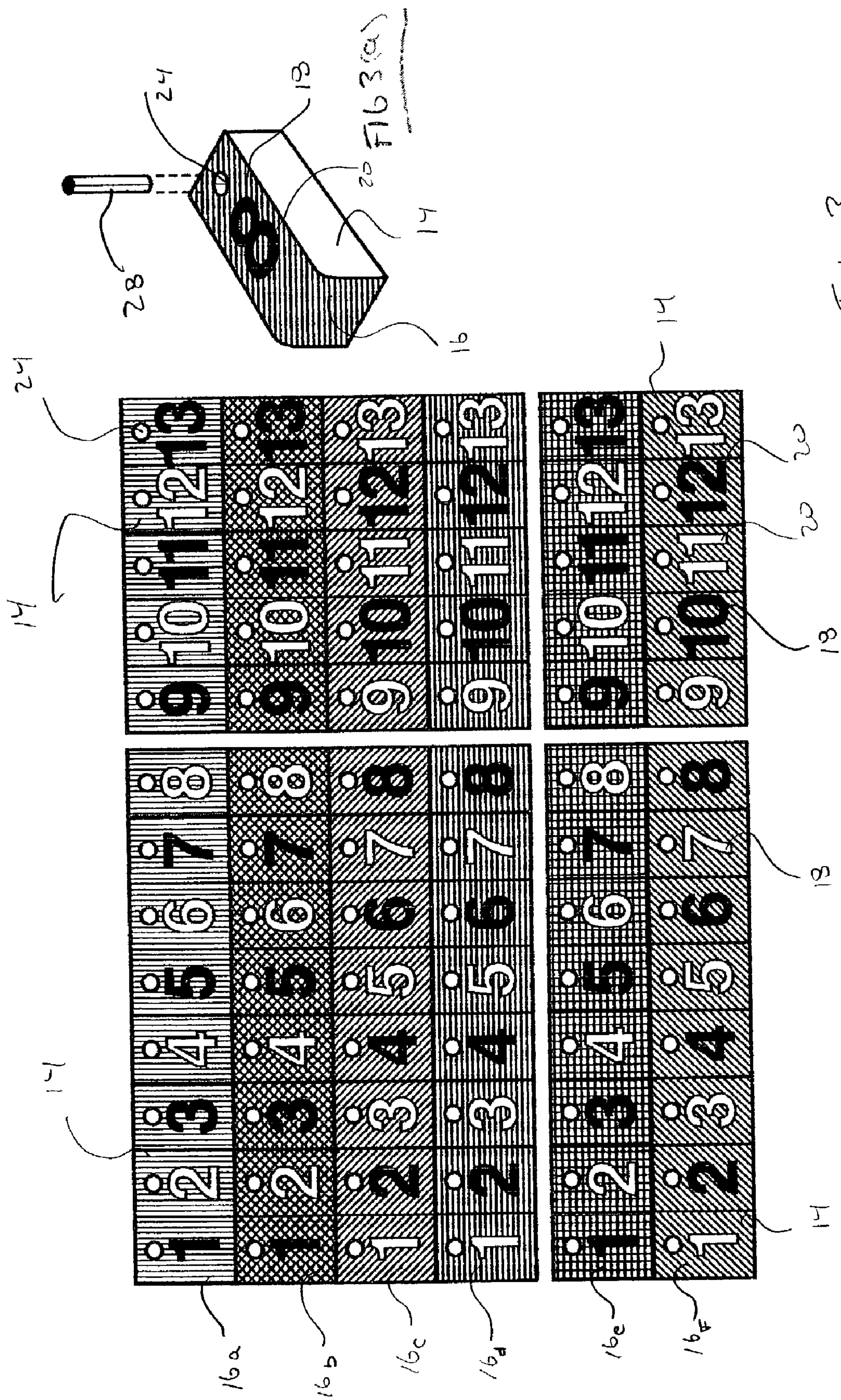
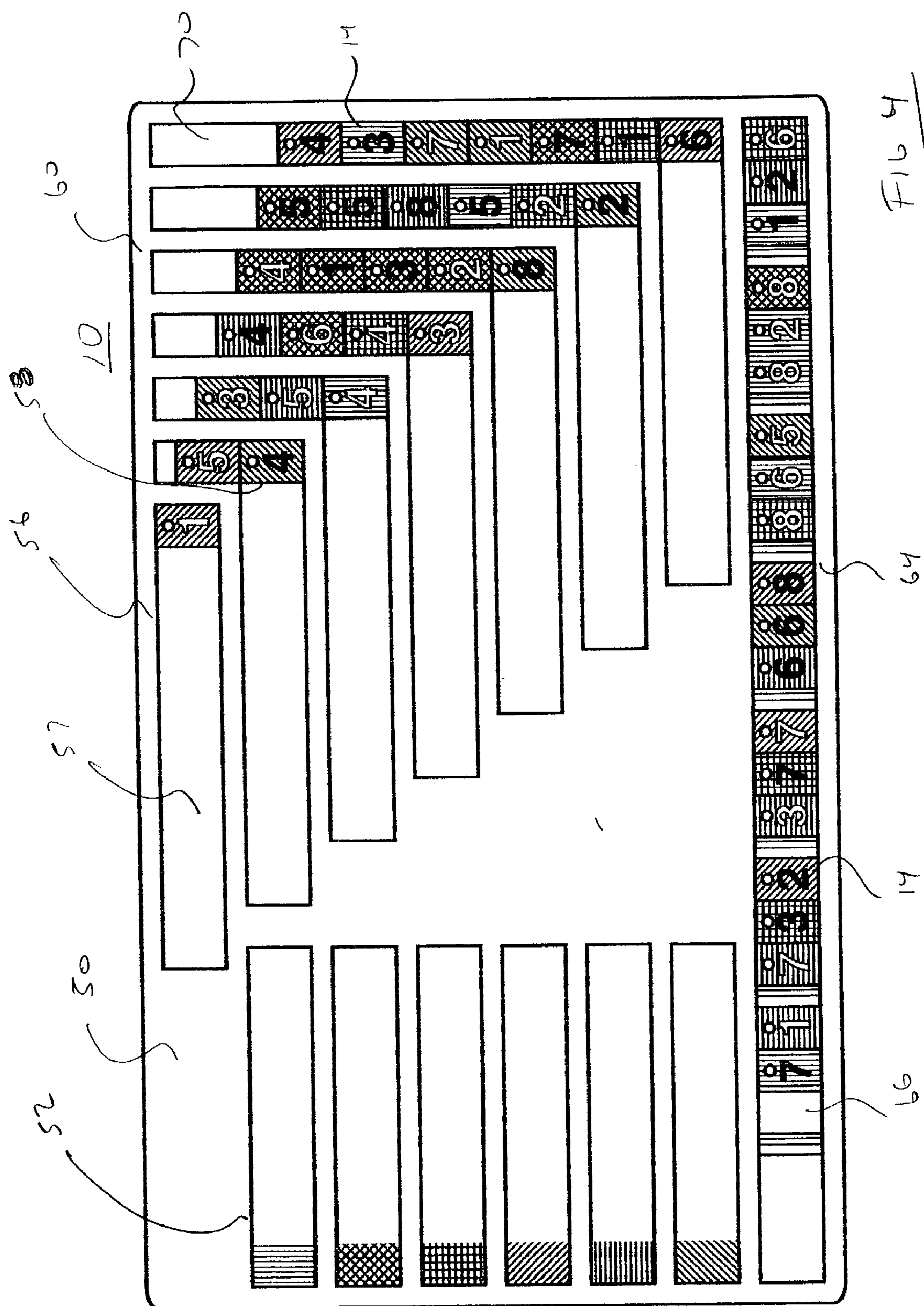
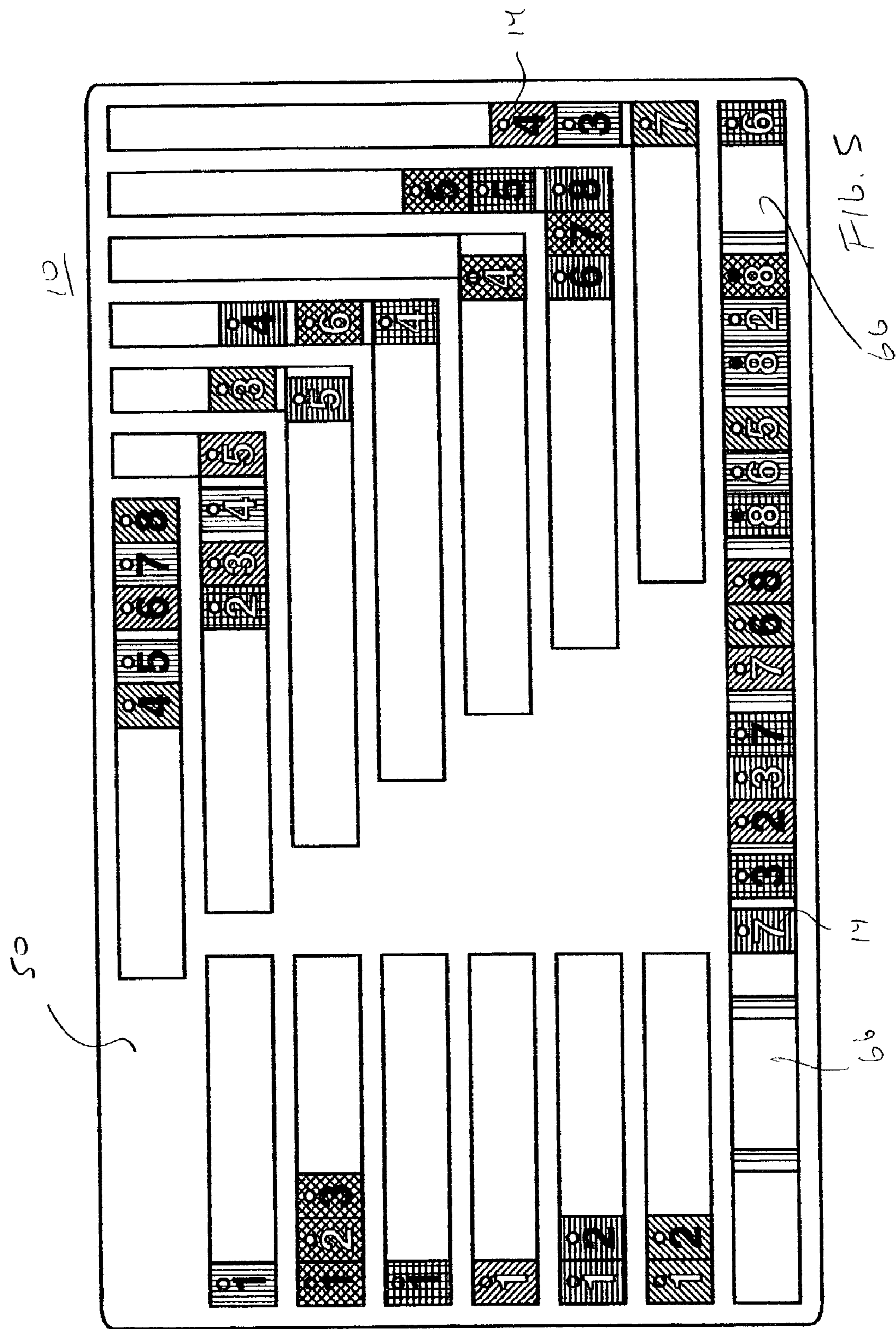
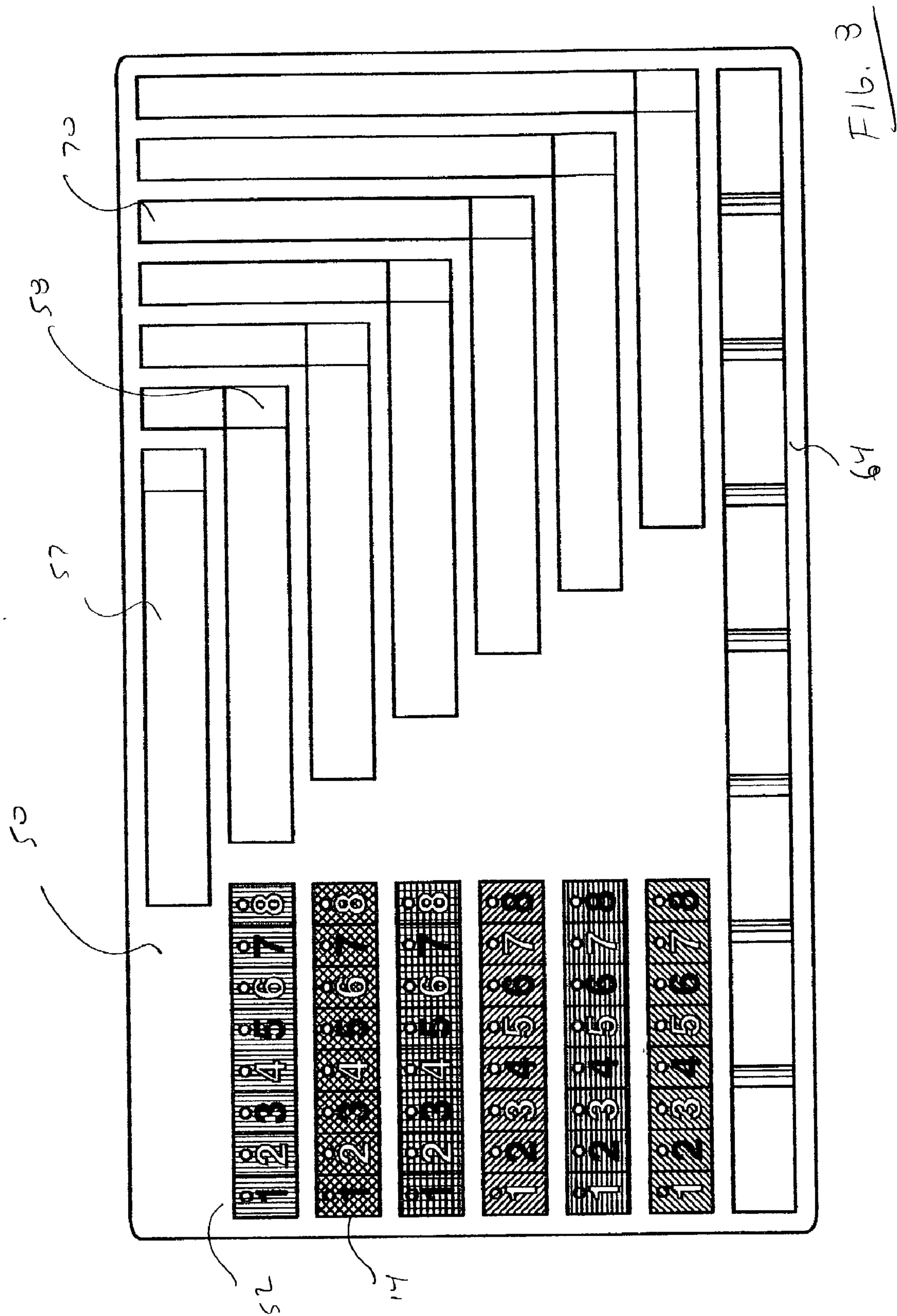
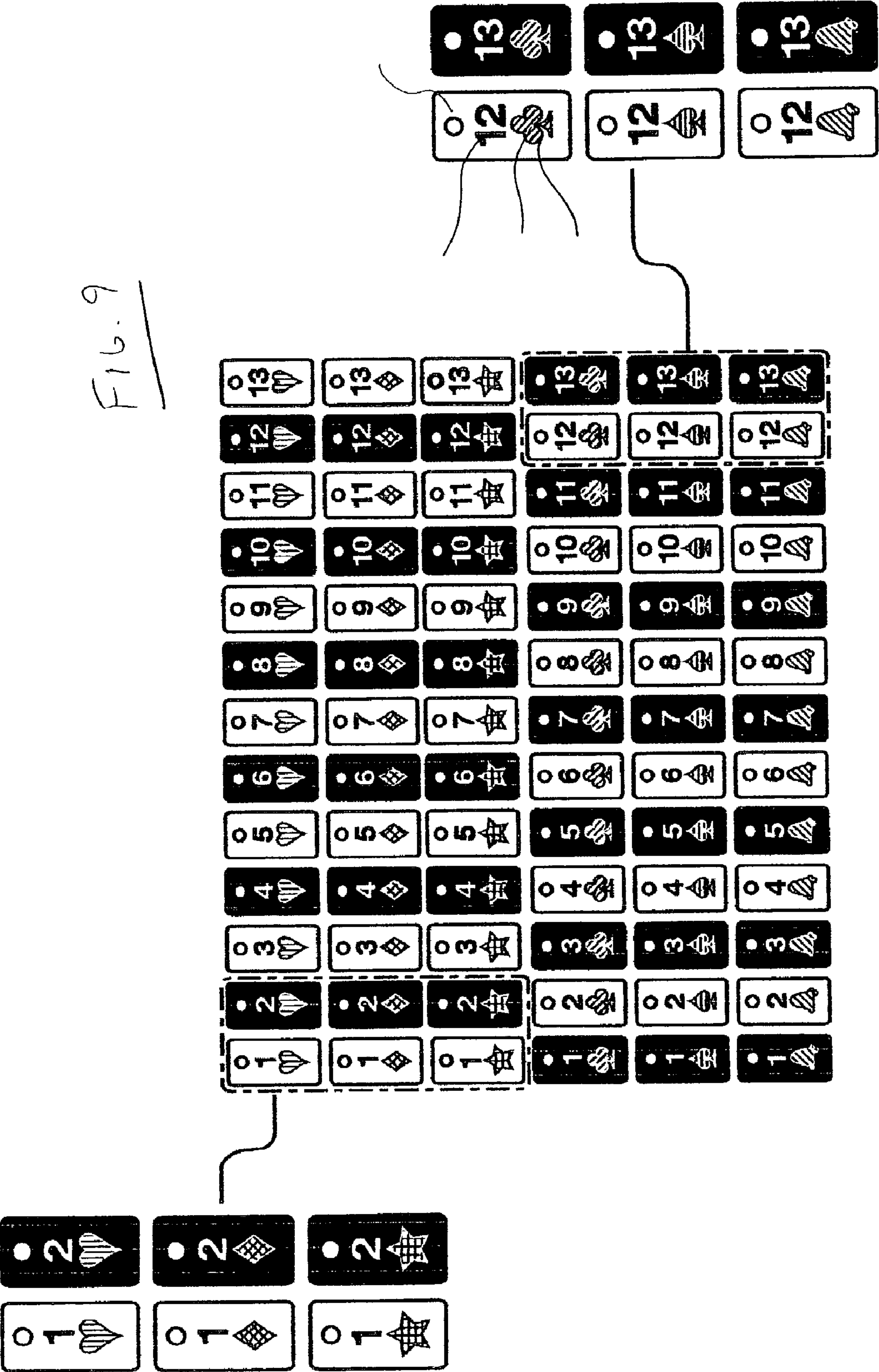


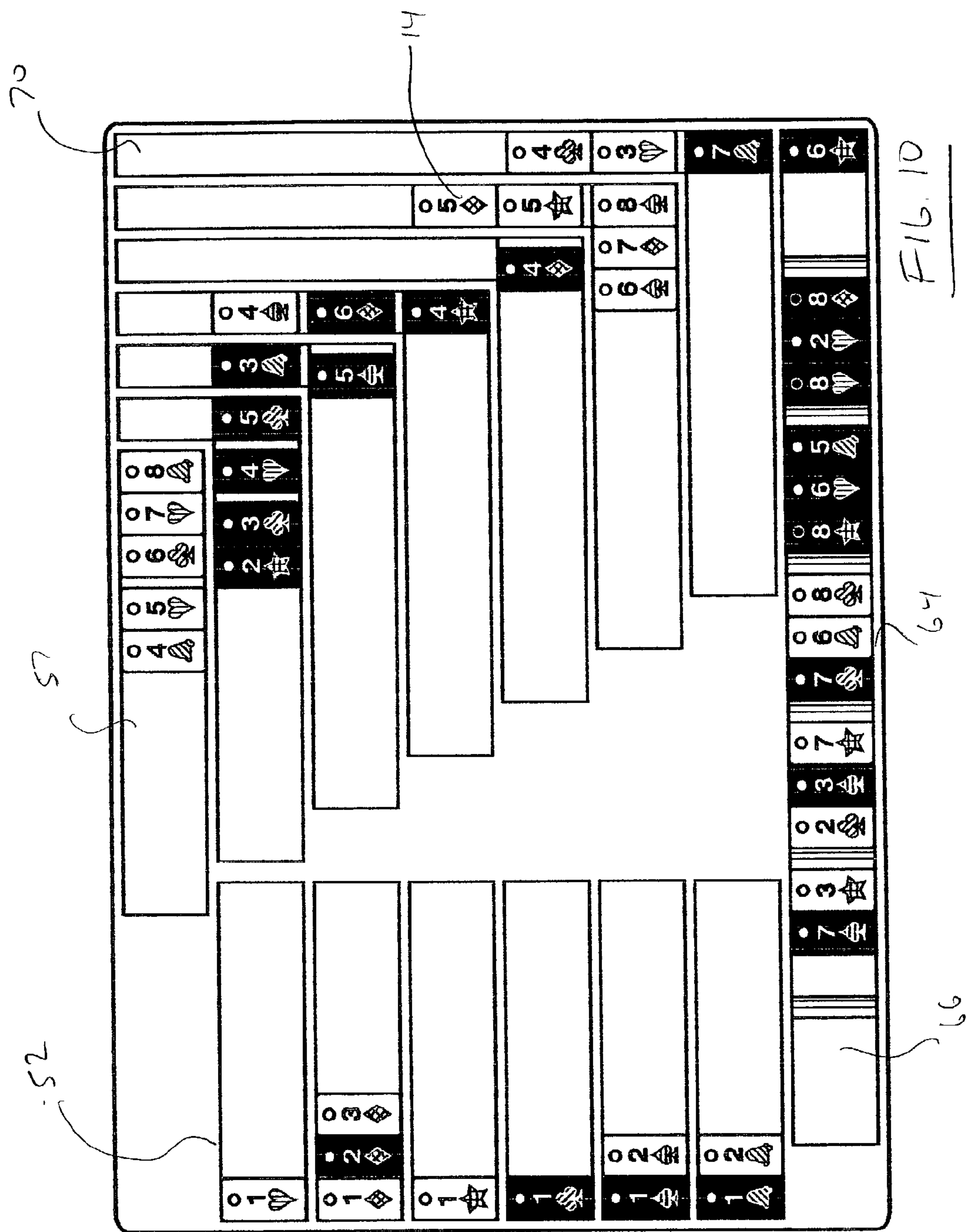
Fig. 3

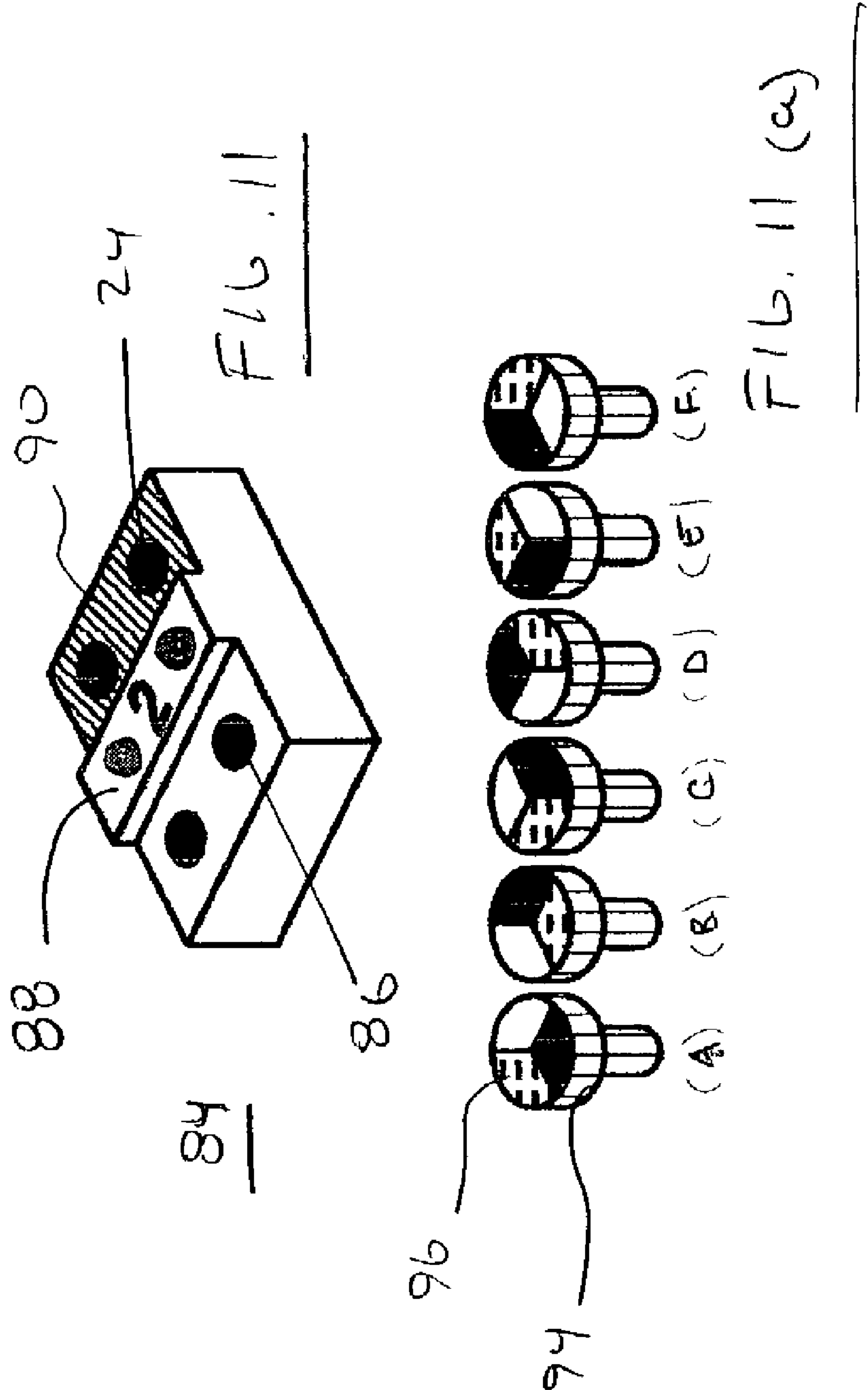












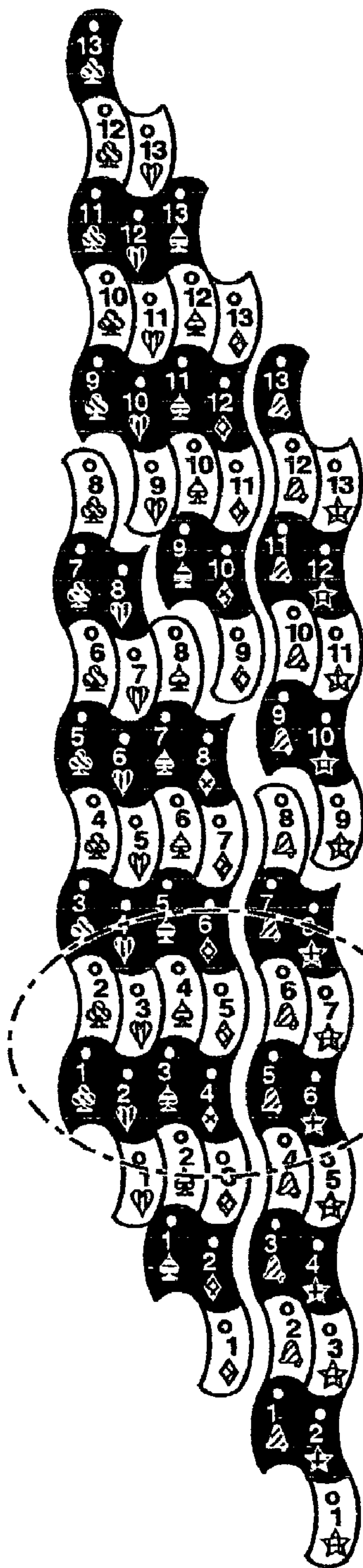
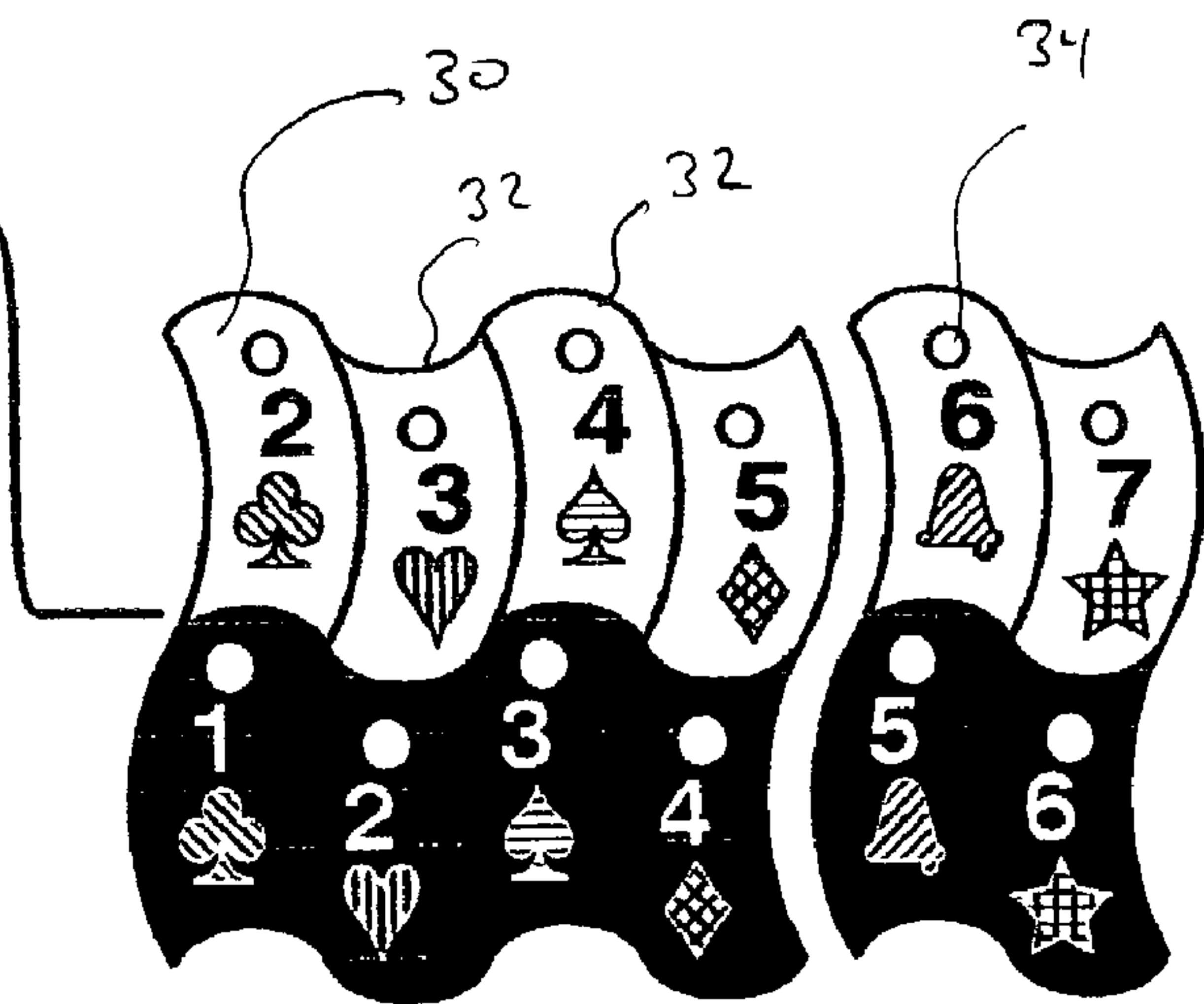
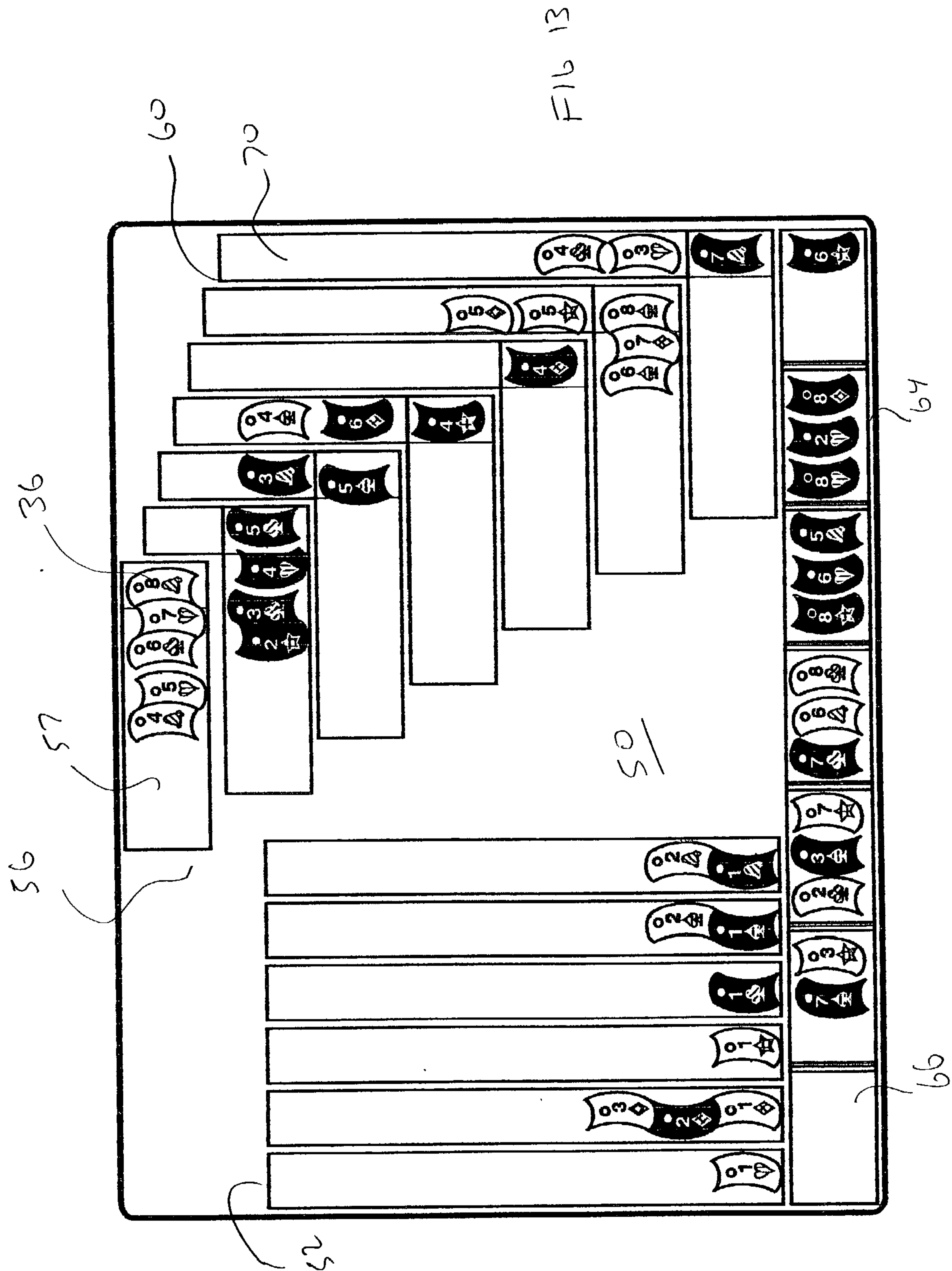


FIG. 12





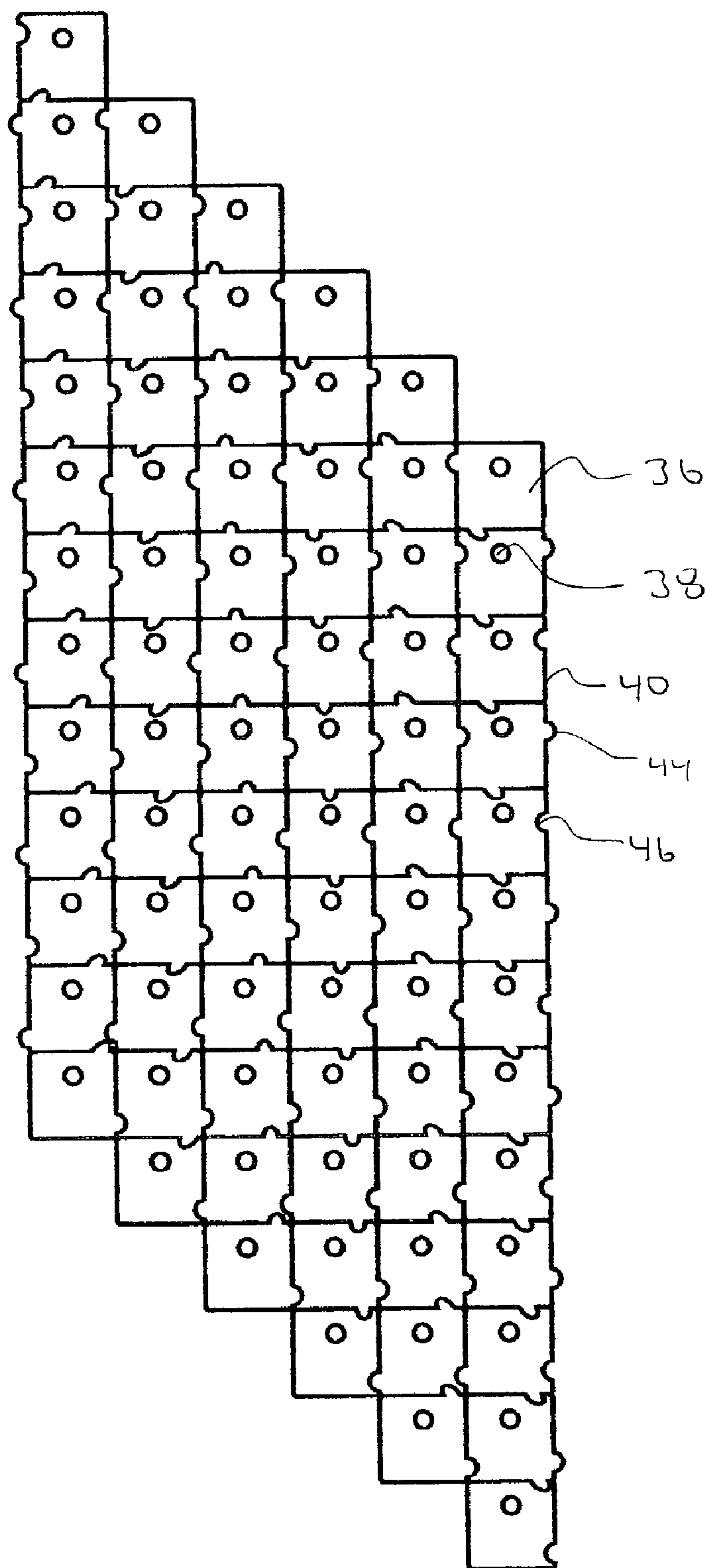
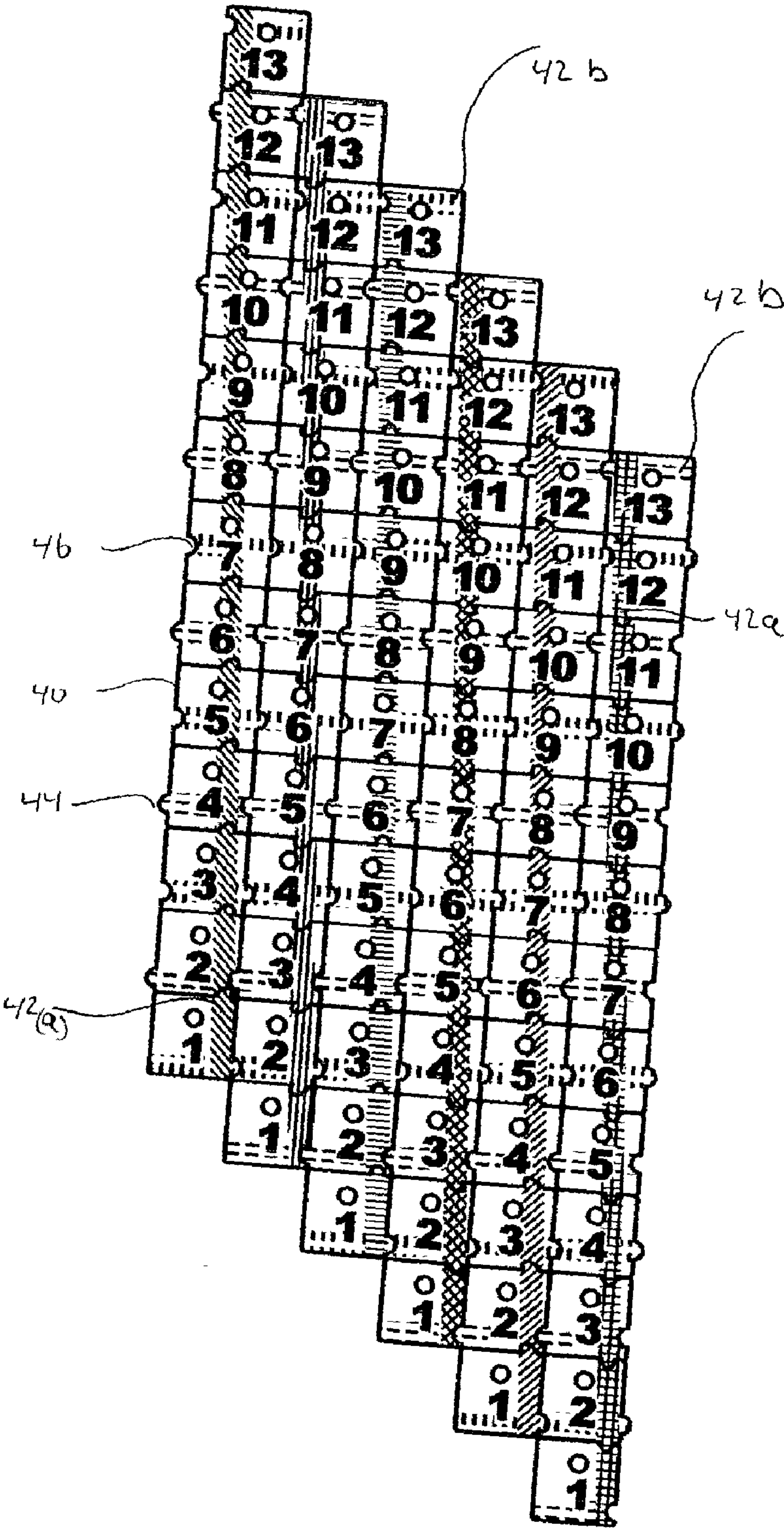
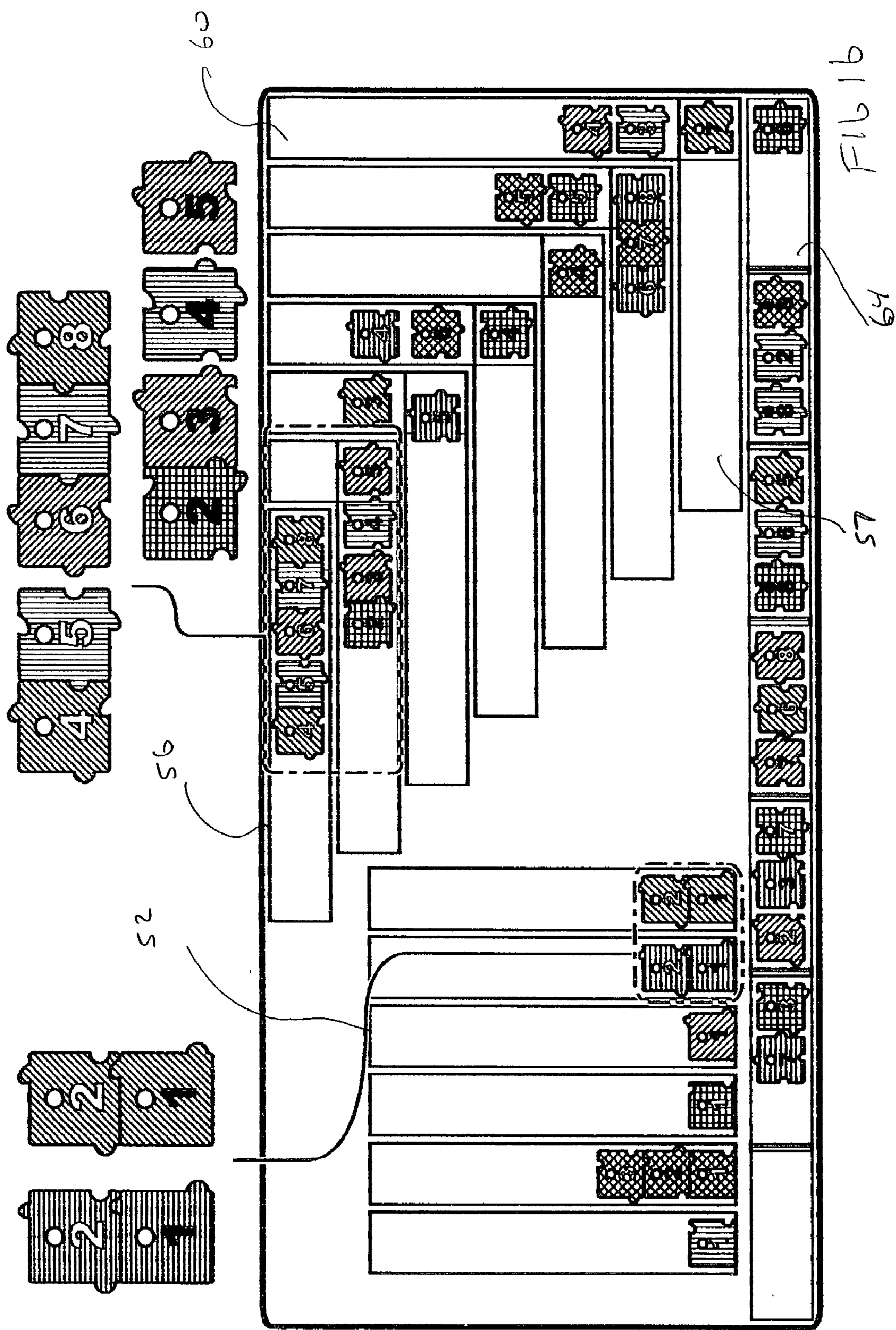
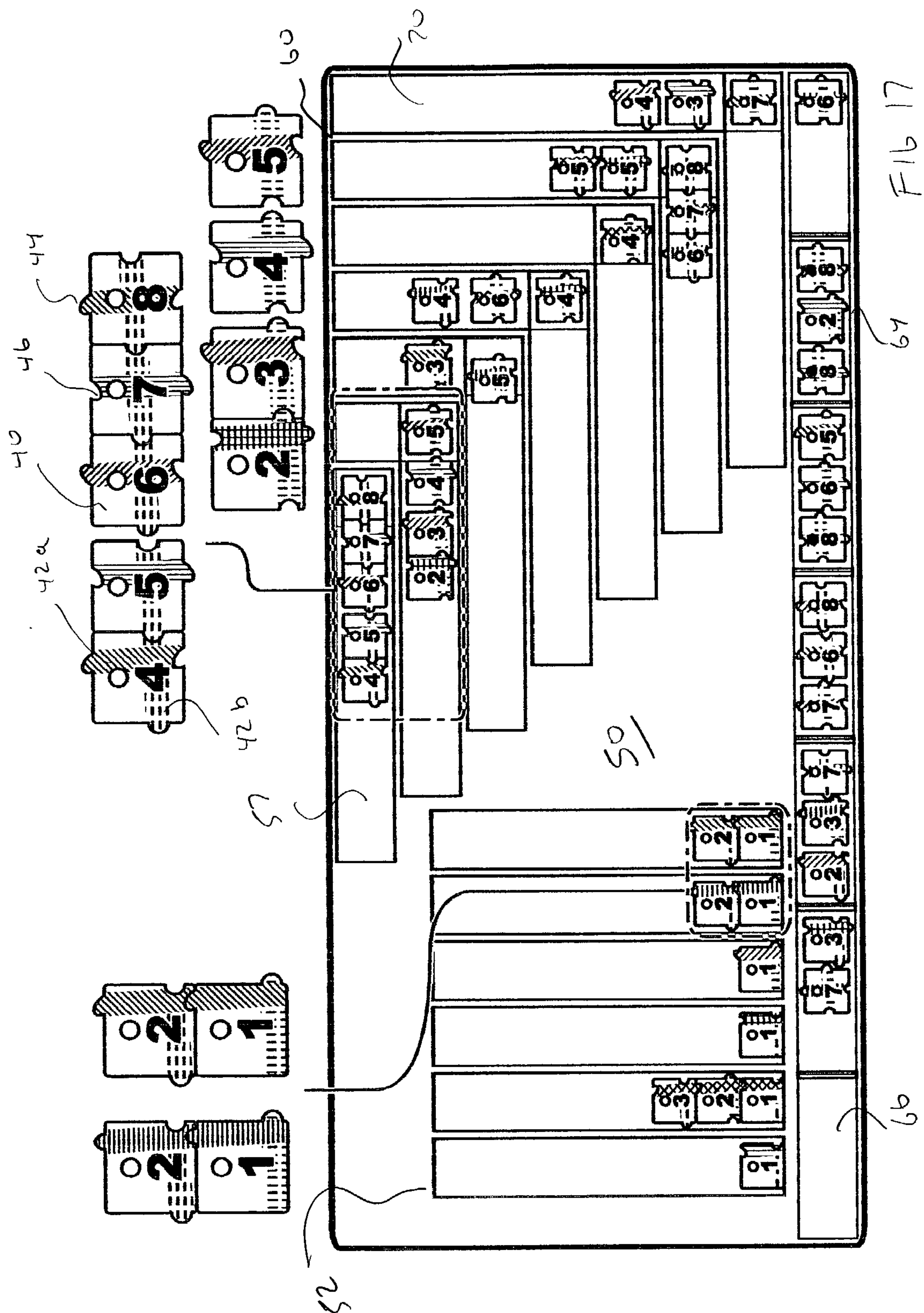


FIG. 14

FIG. 15







SOLITAIRE GAME

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a game, and more particularly to a solitaire game.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Card games of various types are well known in the art. One or more persons typically play these games. Some of the card games are strongly influenced by chance, some are controlled by the player's individual skill, while some of the games involve a combination of skill and chance. Persons of all ages enjoy card games.

[0003] Previous solitaire card games have some inherent disadvantages. One of the disadvantages is that existing solitaire card games rely on a standard deck of cards with markings that are not well suited to traditional solitaire games such as Klondike. Also, some persons who prefer games of skill dislike existing solitaire card games because they hide the cards from the player's view, thereby forcing the player to rely substantially on chance or guesswork rather than skill to successfully complete the game. Further, some persons dislike games that sometimes are impossible or extremely difficult to complete. Also, some persons prefer games that provide visually stimulating designs and color combinations.

[0004] The present invention overcomes these and other problems inherent in existing solitaire card games. The present invention provides a game with markings better suited to solitaire games. Also, the present invention provides an improved solitaire game of skill as well as an alternate embodiment for a multi-player competitive game. Further, the present invention provides a method of completing the game when it cannot be completed using the ordinary rules associated with standard variations of Klondike, thus avoiding the frustration associated with solitaire games that are known in the art. Further, the present invention provides playing pieces in a variety of different colors that are visually stimulating.

[0005] The principal object of the present invention is to provide an improved game that allows the player to view the playing pieces continuously during game play.

[0006] Another object of the present invention is to provide a method to play a solitaire card game that requires the player to use skill alone while playing the game.

[0007] Another object of the present invention is to provide a game with markings better suited for play of Klondike, other solitaire games, and similar competitive games.

[0008] Another object of the present invention is to provide game pieces in a small enough size to easily transport, yet large enough for convenient handling, and in a design that is simple enough to be read easily in an array of many pieces.

[0009] Another object of the present invention is to provide a distinctive and useful array for the pieces.

[0010] Another object of the present invention is to provide a novel game board that facilitates placing and keeping the pieces in the distinctive array during game play.

[0011] Another object of the present invention is to provide attachments to the game pieces that the player can use to indicate the changing strategic status of the game pieces.

[0012] Another object of the present invention is to provide a novel game that provides game pieces that are visually stimulating and designed in various colors, and provide an extra degree of interest and utility to the game.

[0013] Another object of the present invention is to provide supplemental game rules that provide a method of completing the game when it cannot be completed using the ordinary rules of traditional solitaire games.

[0014] Another object of the present invention is to provide an alternative method for measuring and recording the quality of solitaire game play.

[0015] A further object of the present invention is to provide an alternate embodiment for a novel competitive game for two or more players, based on the solitaire game.

[0016] A further object of the present invention is to provide a novel game that is simple in design and inexpensive to construct, and is durable and rugged in structure.

[0017] A further object of the present invention is to provide equivalent designs for the solitaire and competitive games to be played on a computer, electronic network or other electronic device.

[0018] Still further objects and advantages will become apparent from a consideration of the ensuing description and drawings of the invention.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0019] These and other objects are achieved by a game of the present invention. In one form of the invention, a game is provided that includes a plurality of game pieces and a game board. The game pieces have first indicia for separating the game pieces into an even number of groups, for example four or six groups. The game pieces also have second indicia that permit ordering the game pieces within each group, for example, numbers printed on the game pieces. The game pieces also may have third indicia that separate the game pieces into two groups which are interleaved with the groups of the first indicia, for example, shading variations on the game pieces. Each game piece may be fitted with a hole to receive a peg that is used to indicate the strategic status of the piece.

[0020] The game board is divided into a home area, a stock area, a field area, and a reserve area. The home area, the stock area, the field area, and the reserve area each include multiple locations for the placement of the game pieces, as well as extra space needed during play. The field area and the reserve area are contiguous for transfer of game pieces from the reserve area to the field area. The corner spaces where they are joined are part of the field area.

[0021] The game pieces are distributed into the reserve area, the corner spaces of the field area, and the stock area so that all of the plurality of starting locations for placement of game pieces in these areas are occupied with game pieces. The game pieces are moved from the stock area to the field area, from the stock area to the home area, from one location within the field area to another field area, from the reserve area to corner spaces of the field area when those become

empty, and from the field area to the home area. The game pieces are placed temporarily in the field area in groups pursuant to the third indicia, ordered pursuant to the second indicia. The game pieces are placed finally in the home area in groups pursuant to the first indicia, ordered pursuant to the second indicia.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0022] **FIG. 1** is a top view of a game board for use with the solitaire game of the present invention.

[0023] **FIG. 2** is a top view of an alternate embodiment of the game board for use with the solitaire game of the present invention.

[0024] **FIG. 3** is a top view of one embodiment of a full set of game pieces for use with the solitaire game of the present invention, with first, second, and third indicia in a visible orientation

[0025] **FIG. 3a** is a perspective view of a representative game piece and one peg.

[0026] **FIG. 4** is a top view of the game board of **FIG. 1** with game pieces in a standing position on the game board.

[0027] **FIG. 5** is a top view of the game board of **FIG. 1** shown during game play.

[0028] **FIG. 6** is a top view of the stock area of the game board shown during game play when the game pieces are all contiguous.

[0029] **FIG. 7** is a top view of the stock area of the game board shown during game play when the game pieces are not all contiguous.

[0030] **FIG. 8** is a top view of the game board of **FIG. 1** after the game has been completed.

[0031] **FIG. 9** is a top view of an alternate embodiment of game pieces for use with the solitaire game of the present invention.

[0032] **FIG. 10** is a top view of the game board of **FIG. 1** showing the game during play and using the game pieces of **FIG. 9**.

[0033] **FIG. 11** is a perspective view of yet another alternate embodiment of a game piece for use with the solitaire game of the present invention.

[0034] **FIG. 11a** shows a strategy peg and its six different peg rotations that it may have during game play.

[0035] **FIG. 12** is a top view of an alternate embodiment of a full set of game pieces for use with the game of the present invention.

[0036] **FIG. 13** is a top view of the solitaire game shown during play using the game pieces of **FIG. 12**.

[0037] **FIG. 14** is a top view of still another alternate embodiment of game pieces for use with the solitaire game of the present invention.

[0038] **FIG. 15** is a top view of the game pieces of **FIG. 14** with stripes.

[0039] **FIG. 15a** is a top view of the game pieces of **FIG. 14** with each set of 123 pieces identified by a different color.

[0040] **FIG. 16** is a top view illustrating the solitaire game during game play using the pieces of **FIG. 15a**.

[0041] **FIG. 17** is a top view illustrating the solitaire game during game play using the game pieces of **FIG. 15**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0042] Game Pieces

[0043] The present invention is directed to a solitaire game **10**, as most clearly illustrated in **FIGS. 1, 3, 3a, 4, 5, 6, 7** and **8**. The solitaire game **10** includes a plurality of game pieces **14** and a game board **50**. The pieces **14** may each include a first indicia **16**, second indicia **18** and a third indicia **20**. In one embodiment, first indicia **16** may be, for example, the background color of a game piece **14**. Second indicia **18** may be, for example, numbers or letters. Third indicia **20** may be, for example, the color assigned to the second indicia **18**. All of the game pieces **14** are placed on the game board **50** so that first indicia **16**, second indicia **18**, and third indicia **20** on each of the game pieces **14** are visible when playing the solitaire game **10**, as illustrated in **FIGS. 4, 5** and **8**. The game pieces **14** may have a hole **24** to receive a peg **28**, as shown in **FIGS. 3, 11** and **11a**. The pegs **28** can be used by a player to indicate the strategic importance of certain game pieces **14** during game play.

[0044] Because the first, second, and third indicia **16, 18, 20** respectively on each of the game pieces **14** are visible at all times while playing a game, the solitaire game **10** of the present invention can be played by skill alone, chance playing no part except in the initial random placement of pieces.

[0045] The first indicia **16, 16a-f** see **FIG. 3** pieces **14** into an even number of groups. There may be four, six or more groups. Each game piece **14** in a group has the same first indicia **16** formed thereon. In one embodiment, the first indicia **16** may be the color assigned to the background of game piece **14**. For example, yellow, green, blue, pink and orange. In another embodiment, the first indicia **16** may be the color assigned to a numeral or other symbol formed on a surface of each of the game pieces **14**. For example, the game pieces **14** may be divided into six groups wherein all the pieces **14** in a particular group have unique numerals of the same color, each group using a different color, such as, for example, red, orange, yellow, green, blue and brown. If only four groups are used, the colors may be, for example, red, yellow, green, and blue. In yet other embodiments, and other colors and/or combinations of colors may be used.

[0046] Alternatively, as illustrated in **FIGS. 9** and **10**, the first indicia **16** may instead be symbols such as the heart, diamond, club, and spade suits of a conventional deck of cards when four groups are used, or those symbols supplemented by others such as a bell and a star, for example, when six groups are used. Alternatively four or six different colors may also be applied to the four or six symbols.

[0047] The second indicia **18**, in one embodiment, corresponding to numerals identify and order the game pieces **14** within each first-indicia **16** group. The second indicia **18** may be the numerals themselves. For example, if thirteen pieces **14** are used in each group, one piece **14** in each group would have a unique numeral between 1 and 13 printed thereon. A person of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate

that it is possible alternatively to use letters of the alphabet or other symbols instead of numerals. For example, printed on the game pieces **14** may be Roman numerals, letters of the alphabet or various geometrical shapes, or the traditional sequential symbols as on traditional playing cards, wherein the numerals **1**, **11**, **12**, and **13** are replaced by A or Ace, J or Jack, Q or Queen, and K or King.

[0048] The game pieces **14** may also have a third indicia **20** formed thereon, which separate all the game pieces **14** into two large groups that are interleaved with the first-indicia **16** groups. These third indicia **20** may be a pair of colors, such as gray and white, applied to the surface of each of the game pieces **14** as background to the colored numerals. In the alternative, the third indicia colors may be applied to the second indicia **18** numbers if the game pieces **14** background is marked with colors. The third indicia **20** are assigned by selecting alternating members of each first-indicia **16** group according to the sequence of the second indicia **18**, reversing the polarity of third-indicia **20** assignment according to two subgroups of the first-indicia **16** groups, such as the warm colors (red/orange/yellow) and the cool colors (green/blue/purple), those subgroups corresponding to the red and black suits of traditional playing cards. For example, game pieces **14** in the warm-colored first-indicia **16** subgroup with odd numerals (1, 3, 5, etc.), along with game pieces **14** in the cool-colored first-indicia **16** subgroup with even numerals (2, 4, 6, and so on), are assigned to one third-indicia **20** group. Conversely, game pieces **14** in the warm-colored first-indicia **16** subgroup with even numerals, along with game pieces **14** in the cool-colored first-indicia **16** subgroup with odd numerals, are assigned to the other third-indicia **20** group. In alternate embodiments which resemble the design of traditional playing cards, whether the design is applied to cards, tiles, or other pieces **14**, the third indicia **20** may either be represented by a pair of colors, such as black and white or yellow and white, applied to the surface of each of the game pieces **14** as background, as illustrated in **FIG. 9**, or may be absent except as implied by the alternation of red and black suits (or other colors) on the cards or pieces **14** with odd and even numerals or equivalent symbols.

[0049] The game pieces **14** may be tiles, pieces or any other object that can be used to play the game **10**, or a computer representation of any such objects. The game pieces **14** may be rectangular in shape, or may be any other shape that will provide for proper operation of the game **10**. For example, the game pieces **14** may be square, circular, triangular or octagonal in shape, or shaped like jigsaw puzzle pieces.

[0050] The game pieces **14** may be constructed of plastic, wood, metal or any other material that will provide an aesthetic appearance and provide for proper operation of the game **10**. The game pieces **14** are designed on a scale that will provide for proper operation of the game **10**, being large enough for a player to handle conveniently and to see easily the markings on the game pieces **14**, and small enough to fit onto a game board **50** of a convenient size. In one embodiment, the game pieces **14** may have a width of about $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch, a length of about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch, and a depth of $\frac{1}{2}$ of an inch. The pieces **14** may be rounded or beveled at their near upper edge so as to aid the player in randomly placing the pieces right-side-up and properly rotated without looking at them.

[0051] In an alternate embodiment, the solitaire game **10** of the present invention may include more elaborate game pieces **84**, **FIG. 11**, and strategy pegs **94**, **FIG. 11a**. The player can use these pegs **94** to show that any game piece **84** is needed either in the home area **52** or in the field area **56** of the game board **50**, that it is needed either eventually or immediately, and the degree of that need.

[0052] Each game piece **84** includes one, two or more holes **86** that are adapted to receive the strategy pegs **94**. The upper area **88** and lower areas **90** of each game piece **84** may be colored pursuant to the first and third indicia **16**, **20** respectively. Placement of a strategy peg **94** into a hole **86** in the upper or the lower area **90** of a game piece **84** indicates whether that piece **84** is needed in the home area **52** or the field area **56** of the game board **50**, where game play is controlled by those respective indicia.

[0053] The strategy pegs **94** include markings **96** on the top surface of each peg **94**. Rotation of the strategy peg **94** indicates the mode of strategic need. Preferably, the markings **96** divide the peg **94** top surface into three equal sections as shown in **FIG. 11(a)**. Such a configuration permits six different signals to be clearly shown by rotations of 60 degrees. Examples of such signals are: **FIG. 11** piece **94A** is needed uniquely, no other piece will work, piece **94B** is needed or another with the same second **18** and third indicia **20**; either this piece **94C** is needed or another with the same second **18** and third indicia **20**; either this piece **94D** is needed or another with the same second **18** and third indicia **20**; piece **94E** may be needed, and if so, uniquely; and piece **94F** is not needed. Further, the player can show that a piece **84** is needed immediately by using two such pegs **94** instead of one. The two pegs **94** may be oriented differently to show two separate modes of immediate and eventual strategic need.

[0054] In another alternate embodiment, the rectangular pieces **14** of **FIG. 3** are modified with slight curves **32** on all four edges (**FIG. 12**) that reinforce the first **16** and third indicia **20**. These help the player to avoid the common mistake of relying on the first indicia **16** instead of the third indicia **20** in the field area **56**, and likewise the mistake of relying on the third indicia **20** instead of the first indicia **16** in the home area **52**. A full set of such pieces **30** is illustrated in **FIG. 12**, and their use while playing the game is illustrated in **FIG. 13**. Holes **34** for strategy pegs **28** or **94** located on pieces **30**.

[0055] In yet another alternate embodiment, the game pieces **14** may be shaped like jigsaw puzzle pieces **36** as shown in **FIG. 14**, **FIG. 15**, **FIG. 15(a)** and **FIG. 16**. These pieces **36** may include holes **38** to accommodate strategy pegs **28** or **94**. The unique shape of each puzzle game piece **36** provides an alternate method of marking all three indicia **16**, **18** and **20** by shape alone, as illustrated in **FIG. 14**. In one embodiment, as illustrated in **FIG. 15**, all three indicia **16**, **18** and **20** may additionally be indicated by colors and numerals or other symbols, or further organized into stripes **42(a)** and **42(b)** that illustrate the respective functions of these indicia. The shapes of these game pieces **36** make it possible for the player to fit them together using recesses **46** and protrusions **44**, while playing the game, in every way that is permitted by the rules of the game as described herein and in none of the ways that are not permitted, as illustrated in **FIG. 16**. In this embodiment, as illustrated in **FIG. 14**,

each game piece 36 is marked by either a protrusion 44 or a recession 46 on each of the four edges 40, such protrusions 44 and recessions 46 occurring on edges 40 opposite to each other, except that the pieces 36 ranked lowest pursuant to the second indicia 18, e.g. those with the numeral 1 when numerals are used, have either a protrusion 44 or a recession 46 on only two adjacent edges 40 as shown, for example, in FIG. 15. In one embodiment, the first indicia 16 may be the presence and the shape of protrusions 44 and/or recessions 46 on the top and bottom edges 40 of the game pieces 36. For example, all of the game pieces 36 in the fifth first-indicia 16 group have a recession 46 on the top edge and a protrusion 44 on the bottom edge 40, these recessions 46 and protrusions 44 may be shaped similar to half of an ellipse rotated 45 degrees counter-clockwise. These first-indicia recessions 46 and protrusions 44 control the joining of game pieces 36 in the home area 52 (FIG. 16) in vertical arrays or columns.

[0056] The second indicia 18 are the positions of all protrusions 44 and recessions 46 along every edge 40 of the game pieces 36 (FIGS. 14, 15, 16). For example, all of the game pieces 36 ranked third in the second indicia have protrusions 44 or recessions 46 on the top and bottom edges 40 that are in the third of the several usable positions, as measured from the right edge 40, as well as protrusions 44 or recessions 46 on the left and right edges 40 that are in the third of the several usable positions, as measured from the bottom edge 40. The several usable positions on opposite edges 40 of each game piece 36 differ slightly so as to permit correct interlocking of the game pieces 36. The positions of these protrusions 44 and recessions 46 control the sequence of this interlocking, vertically in the home area 52 and horizontally in the field area 56.

[0057] The third indicia 20 are the presence and shape of protrusions 44 or recessions 46 on the left edge 40 and right edges 40 of the game piece 36. For example, all of the game pieces 36 in the first and third-indicia 16, 20 group have a recession 46 on the left edge 40 and a protrusion 44 on the right edge 40. The game pieces 36 are joined in the field area 56 in horizontal arrays or rows 57, interlocked by these protrusions 44 and recessions 46.

[0058] In one embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. 17, all of the indicia on such game pieces 36 are also indicated by colors and numerals according to the same system as used in the embodiment shown in FIG. 3. Optionally, as illustrated in FIG. 17, the colors that represent the first indicia 16 and third indicia 20 are further organized into stripes 42a and 42b, nearly vertical and nearly horizontal respectively. These stripes 42a may run through the protrusions 44 and recessions 46 on the top and bottom edges 40, 42 and continuously from piece to piece 36 when the game pieces 36 are correctly joined pursuant to the first 16 and second indicia 18 in the home area 52. The third-indicia 20 stripes 42b are in distinct color tones. These stripes 42b run through the protrusions 44 and recessions 46 on the left and right edges 40, and continuously from piece 36 to piece 36 when the game pieces 36 are correctly joined pursuant to the second 18 and third indicia 20 in the field area 56.

[0059] In yet another alternate embodiment the game pieces may be cards, marked with indicia in any of the ways described herein. The cards may be constructed of plastic, paper, plastic laminated paper or any other material that will

provide an aesthetic appearance and provide for proper operation of the game 10. In another embodiment

[0060] Game Board

[0061] The game board 50, as illustrated in FIG. 1, may have a home area 52, a stock area 64, a field area 56, and a reserve area 60, each comprising sufficient space for the placement of a certain number of game pieces 14. In one embodiment, these areas 52, 56, 60 and 64 are slightly indented below the surface of the board 50 to hold the game pieces 14 in place during game play. The field area 56 and the reserve area 60 are separate but contiguous, and both areas include extra space to let the player separate game pieces 14 during game play so as to show potential mobility. The home area 52 comprises sufficient space for the placement of all the pieces 14 used in the game, see FIG. 8, separated and aligned pursuant to first indicia 16 and ordered pursuant to second indicia 18. In alternate embodiments, as shown in FIG. 2, pieces 14 are used that can conveniently be stacked, the home area 52 comprises sufficient space for the placement of one stack of game pieces 14 for each of the groups defined by the first indicia 16.

[0062] The field area 56 is for the initial placement of a small number of the game pieces 14, and during game play for the separation and alignment of any number of the game pieces 14 pursuant to the third indicia 20, ordered pursuant to second indicia 18. The field area 56 preferably consists of a series of linear arrays 57. To enhance the learning and playing of the game of the present invention, these linear arrays 57 may be oriented parallel to each other, and in a horizontal orientation.

[0063] Each field area row 57 in the field area 56 is large enough for the placement of a number of game pieces 14 equal to the number of game pieces 14 in a first-indicia 16 group, as well as approximately one third more extra space for optional spacing between game pieces 14 to indicate mobility. For example, in one embodiment, when the second indicia 18 consists of the numerals 1 through 8, the field area 56 consists of several rows 57, each large enough for placement of approximately eleven game pieces 14. The number of such rows 57 is chosen to be sufficient to accommodate a total number of game pieces 14 slightly greater than the total number of game pieces 14 that are being used in the game 10. FIG. 5. For example, in one embodiment, when either 48 or 52 game pieces 14 are used, seven field area rows 57 are provided, sufficient for 56 pieces. The location at the right end of each field area row 57 where it intersects with another row 57 is designated as a corner space 58. At the beginning of game play, one game piece 14 is placed on each corner space 58, leaving the rest of each row 57 unoccupied.

[0064] The reserve area 60 is for initial placement of several of the game pieces 14; during game play. It provides holding space for pieces 14 that will enter the field area 56 when a corner space 58 becomes vacant. The reserve area 60 may consist of a second series of field area rows 70, preferably oriented parallel to each other and intersecting with rows 57. The number of rows 70 in this second series is selected to be one less than the number of rows 58 in the first series (FIG. 1).

[0065] Each of the rows 70 in the second series may comprise space for a different number of game pieces 14.

These rows 70 are oriented so that rows 70 have space for one more game piece than one adjacent row 70 and so on, as well as enough extra space for approximately one third more. A person of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that other orientations are possible when playing the game without departing from the scope of the present invention.

[0066] The stock area 64 is for initial placement of all of the game pieces 14 that remain after the reserve area 60 and the corner spaces of the field area 56 have been filled. During game play it provides holding and organizing space for pieces 14 that become intermittently available for play. The stock area 64 comprises a number of sections 66 for placement of game pieces 14, which may be arranged in a linear or an approximately linear array. Each section 66 is large enough for the placement of one or more game pieces 14, with adjacent locations being spaced slightly apart, offset, or otherwise differentiated. In one embodiment, these sections may be separated by curved and slightly raised areas that both resist and permit the passing of game pieces 14 during game play.

[0067] Rules of Game Play

[0068] In one embodiment of the game 10, the object of the game 10 is to move all game pieces 14 from the game board 50 playing area, i.e. the field area 56, reserve area 60 and stock area 64, onto the home area 52, see FIGS. 1 and 8. First, the game pieces 14 are placed at random onto the starting locations of the reserve area 60, field area 56, and stock area 64, as illustrated in FIG. 4. The starting locations in field area 56 comprise only the corner spaces 58. The starting locations in the reserve area 60 comprise the parts of each linear array that are contiguous with the corner spaces 58 of the field area 56, placing one piece 14, two pieces 14, three pieces 14 and so on into each linear array as shown in FIG. 4. The starting locations in the stock area 64 comprise the portion necessary to accommodate the remaining pieces 14, filling the area 64 from right to left as shown in FIG. 4. A person of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that it is possible instead to fill the area 64 from left to right instead if right and left are reversed in the rules of play.

[0069] The game 10 play proceeds similarly to the traditional Klondike solitaire game, by the player moving game pieces 14 onto the board 50 from one location to another, provided that conditions in the first location make the game piece 14 available for play and that conditions in the second location permit the game piece 14 to be moved to there. The player can move game pieces 14 from the stock area 64 to the field area 56, from the stock area 64 to the home area 52, from one location within the field area 56 to another such location, from the reserve area 60 to a corresponding empty corner space 58 of the field area 56, and from the field area 56 to the home area 52. One type of movement of game pieces 14 is compulsory: when an empty corner space 58 in the field area 56 becomes empty, any remaining game pieces 14 in the reserve area 60 must be moved together so that the first of them fills the corner space 58.

[0070] The game pieces 14 in the field area 56 that are available for play include any game piece 14 in a corner space 58 when there are no other pieces 14 in that row 58, or the game piece 14 farthest to the left when there are multiple pieces 14 in a row 58. The game pieces 14 in the stock area 64 that are available for play vary according to the array of such pieces 14. When the array of game pieces 14

in the stock area 64 is whole, that is when there is no gap between the game pieces 14 as illustrated in FIG. 6, the available game pieces 14 are any of the several pieces 14 that are fully or partly exposed on their left edge. When there is a gap in the array of game pieces 14 in stock area 64 as illustrated in FIG. 7, the only available game piece 14 is the one that is exposed on its left edge.

[0071] The locations in the field area 56 that can receive a piece 14 vary according to the presence or absence there of other pieces 14. One such location is the one directly to the left of any piece 14 in the field area 56 that is available and that matches the third indicia 20 of the moving piece 14 and that is ranked higher by one in the second indicia 18. For example, in the preferred embodiment an available black 3 game piece 14 in the field area 56 can receive a black 2 game piece into the location on its left. Another location in the field area 56 that can receive a piece is an empty corner space 58 when there are no more pieces 14 in the corresponding reserve area 60 column, as well as an empty corner space 58 where no such column exists. In this case, the second indicia 18 of the moved game piece 14 must be of the highest rank used in the game, for example a numeral 8 game piece 14 when 8 is the highest numeral used; the third indicia 20 plays no role because there is no other game piece 14 to match.

[0072] The home area 52 can receive any piece 14 that has the lowest second-indicia rank 18 among the pieces in its first-indicia group 16 that remain outside the home area 52. For example, in the one embodiment, any available numeral 1 game piece 14 can move to the home area 52 at any time. After that, the numeral 2 game piece 14 of the same numeral first-indicia 16 group can move to the home area 52, etc. The player can fill a gap in the stock area 64 by moving to the right the group of three game pieces 14 that are on the left of the gap, or the last one or two game pieces 14 if there are fewer than three, or any multiple of three game pieces 14 that are on the left of the gap, or all of the game pieces 14 that are on the left of the gap.

[0073] The player can move a game piece that is in a field area row 57 to another field area row 57, ordering second indicia 18 and matching third indicia 20 in the same way. The player can likewise move any complete group of such game pieces 14 that are together in a field area row 57 to another field area row 57, or any continuous section of such a group of game pieces 14 which includes the leftmost piece 14. In case of game deadlock, special rules apply, deadlock defined as a situation in which the player cannot move any of the game pieces 14 in any of the ways described above, except for movement within the field area 56 that fails to change the possibility of any game pieces 14 to move to the home area 52. In this situation, one of four escape moves must be played, depending on their possibility: (1) If possible, the player places a normally unavailable reserve area 60 game piece into the field area 56, ordering and matching second 18 and third indicia 20 as usual, then moves any remaining reserve area 60 game pieces 14 downward to close the resulting gap in the reserve; (2) otherwise, if possible, the player moves a normally unavailable game piece 14 from the stock area 64 into the field area 56, matching indicia as usual, then moves the one or two stock area 64 game pieces 14 that are on the left of the resulting gap to the right to close the gap; (3) otherwise, if possible, the player places a normally unavailable reserve area 60

game piece 14 at the right end of the stock area 64, then moves all the game pieces 14 in the stock area 64 to the left into a normal position; (4) otherwise, the player moves the leftmost stock area 64 game piece 14 to the right end of the stock area 64, then moves all the stock area 64 game pieces 14 to the left into a normal position. Once all of the game pieces 14 are moved to the home area 52, as illustrated in FIG. 8, the game has been successfully completed. In other embodiments, the game board 50 may be configured so that the game pieces 14 are positioned in a different location on or off the board 50 when the game is completed.

[0074] In an alternate scoring method, the player is rewarded for moving multiple pieces 14 consecutively within the same first-indicia 16 group to the home area 52 without any intervening movement in any of the other areas of the game board 50. The player receives one point for the first piece 14, two points for the second piece 14, and so on. For example, moving consecutively all eight pieces 14 of a first-indicia 16 group would earn 36 points. The player can take more than one such piece 14 from the stock area 64 if this can be done without moving any other stock area 64 game pieces 14, for example when the lowest-numbered of such pieces 14 is at the extreme left of the stock area 64 with no gap in the stock 64 and another such piece 14 is at the left of a group of three, or when two or more of such pieces 14 are situated together and in ascending second-indicia 18 order from left to right. The final score is calculated by dividing the total of all points earned by the number of scoring sequences.

[0075] In another embodiment of the game, two players compete against each other, using the same rules of play as explained above but taking turns at play, each turn consisting of two parts. In the first part, the player can make an unlimited number of moves within the stock 64, field 56, and reserve areas 60 but without moving any pieces 14 to the home area 52. In the second part, the player can move any possible number of consecutive pieces 14 within only one first-indicia 16 group to the home area 52 but without moving any pieces 14 into or within the stock 64, field 56, and reserve areas 60 of the board 50. Each player is required to remove at least one game piece 14 at the end of each turn, except when this is impossible due to deadlock, in which case the player must make one of the prescribed escape moves, chosen according to their possibility as explained above, and that is the end of the turn.

[0076] This game for two players is scored according to the total number of game pieces 14 moved to the home area 52 during all the turns of each player, each game piece 14 counting for one point. At the end of the game, the player with the greater number of points is the winner. If the same two players play again, the loser of the previous game takes the first turn.

[0077] In yet another alternate embodiment of the game 10 of the present invention, a single player may play the game 10 according to the rules described above for two players and receive one point for each consecutive scoring sequence, the lowest score being the winner.

[0078] In yet other alternate embodiments, the game rules may be altered to vary the level of difficulty of the game 10 of the present invention. For example, players may compete based on the time required to complete and win the game, or additional game pieces 14 and colors may be used.

[0079] A person of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that it is possible to implement the concepts of the present invention in computer software rather than using an actual game board 50 and game pieces 14, the size of the game pieces 14 and game board 50 being selected based upon the number of game pieces 14 utilized in playing the game 10 as well as the anticipated resolution of the device on which the game 10 will be played. One advantage of implementing the solitaire game in computer software is that the game pieces 14 can easily be randomly ordered and then placed on the game board 50 to begin playing the game 10. Another advantage of computer implementation is that the game 10 can easily be replayed from an earlier stage of game play, or from the same initial order of the game pieces 14, so to try the effect of different strategic decisions or to compare the skills of various players. Additionally, the game 10 can be adapted for interactive play over a global computer network. Such a configuration would permit competitions to be easily organized and conducted to determine who possesses the highest level of skill.

[0080] Specific embodiments of novel methods and apparatus for construction of novel solitaire games according to the present invention have been described for the purpose of illustrating the manner in which the invention is made and used. It should be understood that the implementation of other variations and modifications of the invention and its various aspects will be apparent to one skilled in the art, and that the invention is not limited by the specific embodiments described. Therefore, it is contemplated to cover the present invention any and all modifications, variations, or equivalents that fall within the true spirit and scope of the basic underlying principles disclosed and claimed herein.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of playing a solitaire game comprising:

providing a set of game pieces, wherein the game pieces have first means for grouping the game pieces into at least four groups, and wherein the game pieces have second means for ordering the game pieces in each group, and wherein the game pieces have third means for grouping the game pieces into two other independent and interleaving groups;

providing a game board having a home area, a field area, a reserve area, and a stock area that each have a plurality of locations for placement of game pieces, wherein the field area and the reserve area intersect for transfer of game pieces from the reserve area to the field area;

distributing the game pieces into the reserve area, the field area, and the stock area so that each of the plurality of locations for placement of game pieces in the reserve area are occupied with game pieces;

moving the game pieces from the stock area and the reserve area to and within the field area wherein the game pieces are placed in the field area in groups pursuant to the third means for grouping and wherein the game pieces are placed in the field area so that the game pieces are ordered pursuant to the second means for ordering; and

moving the game pieces from the field area and the stock area to the home area wherein the game pieces are placed in the home area in groups pursuant to the first

means for grouping and wherein the game pieces are placed in the home area so that the game pieces are ordered pursuant to the second means for ordering.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the groups have equal number of game pieces.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the second means for ordering the game pieces in each group orders the game pieces in each group in an identical manner.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein the groups of the third means have an equal number of game pieces.

5. A solitaire game comprising:

a plurality of game pieces that each have a first means for grouping the game pieces into at least four groups, a second means for ordering the game pieces in each group, and a third means grouping the game pieces into two groups;

at least one strategy piece for use with the plurality of game pieces to indicate whether an individual game piece is needed; and

a game board having a home area, a field area, a reserve area, and a stock area that each have a plurality of locations for placement of game pieces.

6. The solitaire game of claim 5, wherein each of the game pieces in the plurality of game pieces is adapted to receive at least one of the strategy pieces.

7. The solitaire game of claim 6, wherein each of the game pieces in the plurality of game pieces has a plurality of recesses that are each adapted to at least partially receive one strategy piece.

8. The solitaire game of claim 7, wherein the plurality of recesses are oriented on each of the game pieces to indicate the relative need of the individual game pieces.

9. The solitaire game of claim 5, wherein the strategy pieces have means for indicating the relative need of the game piece on which the strategy piece is placed.

10. The solitaire game of claim 9, wherein the strategy pieces are pegs, and wherein the means for indicating relative need of the game piece are at least two colored regions on a surface of the peg.

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