

(19)



Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets



(11) Publication number:

0 464 935 A1

(12)

EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION(21) Application number: **91201662.3**(51) Int. Cl.⁵: **G07F 17/34, A63F 3/06**(22) Date of filing: **28.06.91**(30) Priority: **29.06.90 NL 9001487**(43) Date of publication of application:
08.01.92 Bulletin 92/02(84) Designated Contracting States:
AT BE CH DE DK ES FR GB GR IT LI LU NL SE(71) Applicant: **ROUVOET ELECTRONICS B.V.**
Hambakenwetering, 11
NL-5231 DD 's-Hertogenbosch(NL)(72) Inventor: **Rouvoet, Steven**
Vriesdonklei 26 WD 3
Brasschaat(BE)(74) Representative: **Noz, Franciscus Xaverius, Ir.**
et al
Algemeen Octrooibureau P.O. Box 645
NL-5600 AP Eindhoven(NL)(54) **Gaming device.**

(57) The invention relates to a gaming device provided with at least one field (8,9,10) on which signs are provided, said signs being arranged in columns of signs located one above the other and in rows of signs located side by side, and with a number of setting means (2-6) arranged side by side, which setting means can be set in action by means of a control mechanism (7) to be operated by a player, so as to activate certain signs in the field. The number of columns of signs located one above the other in the field is equal to the number of setting means arranged side by side, and the signs located in a field are only activated by means of a single setting means associated with the column in question.

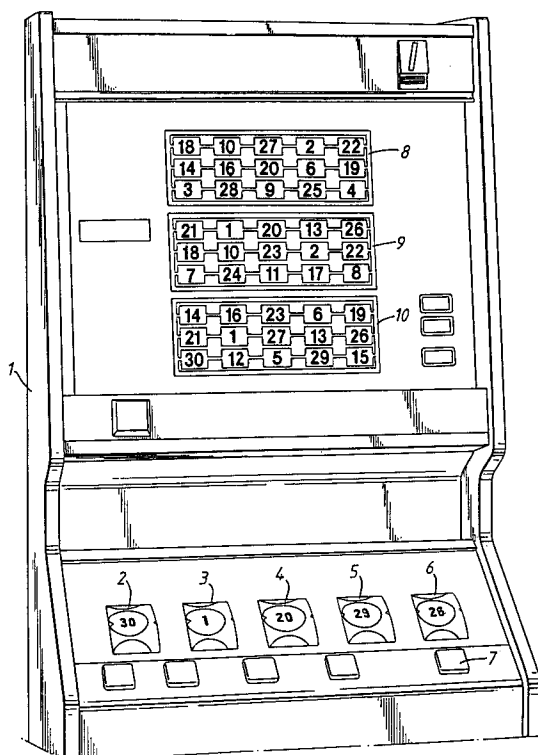


FIG.1

EP 0 464 935 A1

The invention relates to a gaming device provided with at least one field on which signs are provided, said signs being arranged in columns of signs located one above the other and in rows of signs located side by side, and with a number of setting means arranged side by side, which setting means can be set in action by means of a control mechanism to be operated by a player, so as to activate certain signs in the field.

A similar device is known from GB-A-2137392, said device being provided with setting means formed by three rollers arranged side by side, said setting means each being provided with a number of signs, whereby at least one of said signs is located opposite a window after the rollers, subsequent to having been set rotating, have come to a standstill, in such a manner that a number of signs located side by side in a row is then visible through said window, whereby the number of signs visible through said window corresponds with the number of rollers arranged side by side. Furthermore the device is provided with a main field, which comprises the five columns of signs located one above the other as well as two auxiliary fields each comprising three columns of signs located one above the other.

The signs which are visible in the window after the rollers or the setting means have come to a standstill are illuminated in the main field, and possibly also in one or both auxiliary fields, if the signs in question also occur in the auxiliary fields. When certain combinations of illuminated fields occur prizes will be paid out. There is not any correlation between the arrangement of the rollers and the signs. In particular for the unpractised player such a system is inconveniently arranged, so that such a gaming device has little attraction for the untrained player.

From EP-A-0233298 a gaming device is known having two rollers or setting means provided with signs and a field provided with five columns arranged side by side comprising further signs located one above the other, said signs corresponding with a combination of signs which, when the rollers are stationary, are visible through a window on the two rollers located side by side. Each time the rollers have been set rotating and subsequently have come to a standstill, a sign in the field is illuminated, which corresponds with the combination of the signs which are visible through the window after the rollers have come to a standstill. When after some time a certain combination of illuminated signs in the field has been obtained a prize may be paid out. Such a gaming device appears to be less attractive for the players, since the eventual result, whether or not a prize, is rather long in coming.

GB-A-1,591,623 discloses a usual, so-called

fruit machine comprising three drums provided with signs. As an extra this machine is provided with a field comprising a number of columns, which is considerably larger than the number of rollers. Said columns contain signs which also occur on the rollers when corresponding signs are visible through the window after the rollers have come to a standstill. Also this version is inconveniently arranged, in particular for the unpractised player.

The object of the invention is to obtain a gaming device of the above kind having a simple and efficient construction, so that also an unpractised player will soon acquire an understanding of the operation of the machine, whilst the element of surprise, and thus the intended tension for the player, is still maintained.

According to the invention this can be achieved in that the number of columns of signs located one above the other in the field is equal to the number of setting means arranged side by side, and the signs located in a field are only activated by means of a single setting means associated with the column in question.

When using the construction according to the invention a simple, directly operating gaming device can be obtained, whereby each time the player has set the control mechanism in action a certain sign is activated in each column and, dependent on the arrangement of said signs in the field, a prize will or will not be awarded in the one or other manner.

With the gaming devices described in the above publications the setting means are formed by rotatable rollers having signs on their peripheries, said rollers being rotatable about a horizontal axis, whereby at least one sign of each roller is visible through a window when the rollers have come to a standstill, in such a manner that a number of signs located side by side in a row is then visible through the window, which signs correspond with the signs which are at that moment activated in the field. This is the configuration of such a gaming device that has been usual so far. Instead of such rollers it is also possible, however, to use electronically operating setting means in order to activate the signs in the field, whereby said electronically operating setting means may or may not display corresponding signs in a window or the like provided on the machine for that purpose. It will be apparent, however, that all these various versions will fall within the scope of the invention.

The invention will be explained in more detail hereafter with reference to a few possible embodiments of the construction according to the invention illustrated in the accompanying Figures.

Figure 1 is an elevational view of a part of a gaming device according to the invention.

Figure 2 shows the peripheries of the rollers of the gaming device with the signs provided thereon, in their opened-out position.

Figure 3 shows the possible arrangement of a gaming hall with interconnected gaming devices arranged therein.

Figure 4 shows a possible embodiment of fields containing a number of signs, which fields may be provided on the various gaming devices illustrated in Figure 3.

The gaming device shown in Figure 1 comprises a casing 1, whereby five rotatable means or rollers 2 - 6 are accommodated in said casing in the illustrated embodiment. Said rotatable rollers are thereby independently rotatable in a usual manner, about a common axis of rotation. The rollers may e.g. be set rotating by a player by means of one or more control knobs 7 provided on the casing. Once the rollers have been set rotating said rollers will come to a standstill again, in a manner which may or may not be influenced by the player.

On the circumference of each of the rotatable rollers 2 - 6 signs are provided, in this case in the shape of numerals placed within encircled areas. The arrangement of said signs provided on the circumference of the drums 2 - 6 located side by side is shown in an opened-out form. Of course it will be conceivable to provide signs formed by other images on the rotatable means, but the use of numerals is quite common with the so-called bingo game.

As will furthermore be apparent from Figure 1 and as is also quite common, each time the rollers 2 - 6, after having been set rotating, have come to a standstill, a number of signs located in a row will be visible through (a) relevant opening(s) or window(s) provided in the casing, as is illustrated in Figure 1.

In the embodiment illustrated in Figure 1 the casing is furthermore provided with three fields 8 - 10, on which signs corresponding with the signs provided on the rotatable means 2 - 6 are provided. In the illustrated embodiment each field comprises five columns of signs located side by side, said signs being arranged in three rows located one above the other.

The construction is thereby such that the number of columns of signs in each field 8, 9 or 10 corresponds with the number of rollers 2 - 6. Furthermore the construction is such that each roller will only activate the signs in a certain column of a field. In the illustrated embodiment for example the roller located furthest to the left will only activate signs in the columns in the fields 8 - 10 located furthest to the left, i.e. that the sign visible through the window in question after the roller 2 has come to a standstill will exclusively be activated in one of

the fields if said sign occurs in the column of said fields located furthest to the left. In a similar manner the roller 6 located furthest to the right will only activate signs in the columns of the fields 8, 9 and 10 located furthest to the right, whilst in a corresponding manner the rollers located between the rollers 3 - 5 located between the rollers 2 and 6 will only activate signs in the columns correspondingly located in the fields between the columns located furthest to the left and those located furthest to the right.

When the control mechanism of the device is put into operation by a player by means of a control knob 7, the drums will thus be set rotating and subsequently come to a standstill again, whereby in the illustrated embodiment five signs located side by side on the drum will be visible. When the visible signs in question present on the drum occur in the columns in the fields 8 - 10 coupled to the drums in question, the relevant signs in the fields will be activated, e.g. light up.

Dependent on the setting of the gaming device e.g. a number of points or a prize will be awarded when three signs located side by side are activated in one field, whilst a larger number of points *casu quo* a larger prize can be awarded when four or five signs located side by side are activated in one field. Of course also other combinations for awarding a number of points or a prize are conceivable, in a comparable manner as with the conventional gaming devices. The construction may be selected such that, whether or not to be influenced by the player, in all three fields 8 - 10 the signs corresponding with the signs visible on the stationary drum are activated simultaneously or that this only takes place for each field individually. In the latter case it is e.g. also possible to play with more players, while using only one gaming device, whereby each player is allotted his own control knob 7 and his own field. Of course the number of fields and/or the number or rollers with the number of columns associated with said rollers may be different from the number used in the above-described embodiment.

Furthermore, as already mentioned above, instead of using the rollers which have been in common use so far also it will also be possible to use electronically operating setting means in order to activate the signs in the fields, whereby also in this case respectively one setting means is coupled to a single certain column in a field. The setting means in question may thereby show, whether or not through a separate window or the like, certain signs in a row in a similar manner as by means of the usual rollers.

The construction according to the present invention is also very well suitable for playing bingo with larger companies. In such a case it will e.g. be

possible, as is diagrammatically shown in Figure 3, to arrange a number of such devices 11 in a hall, whereby every device has a chair 12 for a player. The devices will thereby be provided with fields having mutually different combinations of signs. A number of such possible fields a - h are shown in Figure 4.

The setting means of the gaming devices 11 will be interconnected, so that the setting means of all devices 11 activate the same signs in the columns coupled to the setting means in question when said signs occur in the fields of the associated gaming device.

The interconnected machines 11 may e.g. be activated at set intervals by a host or by an automatically operating mechanism. At a central location in the building there may thereby be located a set of rollers 13 comprising rollers 2 - 6, electronically operating setting means or the like, corresponding with the rollers 2 - 6 described with reference to the first embodiment. With each game said rollers will show a certain combination of signs on a so-called winning line 14. Near the set of rollers 13 there may also be arranged a screen 15, on which all numerals occurring on the rollers are arranged in numerical order, whereby in this field the numerals which correspond with the numerals on the winning line are activated, e.g. by being illuminated. The players sitting at the gaming devices 11 can thus compare the winning numbers, by means of the set of rollers 13 and the field of numbers 15, with the numbers activated on their gaming devices. As is furthermore indicated in Figure 3 use may be made of a tv-camera in order to record the winning numbers and/or possibly the field 15, whereby said tv-camera may be coupled to a number of monitors 17 arranged in the playing room, so that all players may watch the set of rollers 13 and/or the field 15 via the monitors without any effort.

Each gaming device 11 may be provided with means for recording whether or not the player has won. Furthermore each device may be provided with means which enable the player to decide whether or not to take part in a certain game.

Claims

1. A gaming device provided with at least one field on which signs are provided, said signs being arranged in columns of signs located one above the other and in rows of signs located side by side, and with a number of setting means arranged side by side, which setting means can be set in action by means of a control mechanism to be operated by a player, so as to activate certain signs in the field, characterized in that the number of col-

umns of signs located one above the other in the field is equal to the number of setting means arranged side by side, and the signs located in a field are only activated by means of a single setting means associated with the column in question.

2. A gaming device according to claim 1, characterized in that said setting means are formed by rollers arranged side by side which can be set rotating about a horizontal axis of rotation, each of said rollers at its circumference being provided with a number of signs, at least one of said signs being located opposite a window when the rollers are stationary, in such a manner that in that case a number of signs located side by side in a row are visible through said window(s), the number of said signs corresponding with the number of rollers arranged side by side.
3. A gaming arrangement provided with a number of gaming devices according to claim 1 or 2, characterized in that said gaming devices are provided with mutually different fields comprising signs, whilst said setting means are interconnected in such a manner that the setting means of the various gaming devices activate the same signs in the columns of the fields coupled to the setting means in question insofar as said signs occur in the columns in question.
4. A gaming arrangement according to claim 3, characterized in that said arrangement is provided with a set of rollers or the like provided with signs visible from the various gaming devices, said rollers each being coupled to a corresponding column of each of said gaming devices.
5. A gaming arrangement according to claim 3 or 4, characterized by a screen which is visible from said gaming devices, on which the signs formed by numerals occurring on the fields of the gaming device are provided in numerical order, said signs being activated during play in correspondence with the numerals activated on the gaming devices.
6. A device according to claim 4 or 5, characterized by a tv-camera connected to (a) monitor(s), by means of which an image of the rollers and/or the screen can be displayed on said monitor(s).

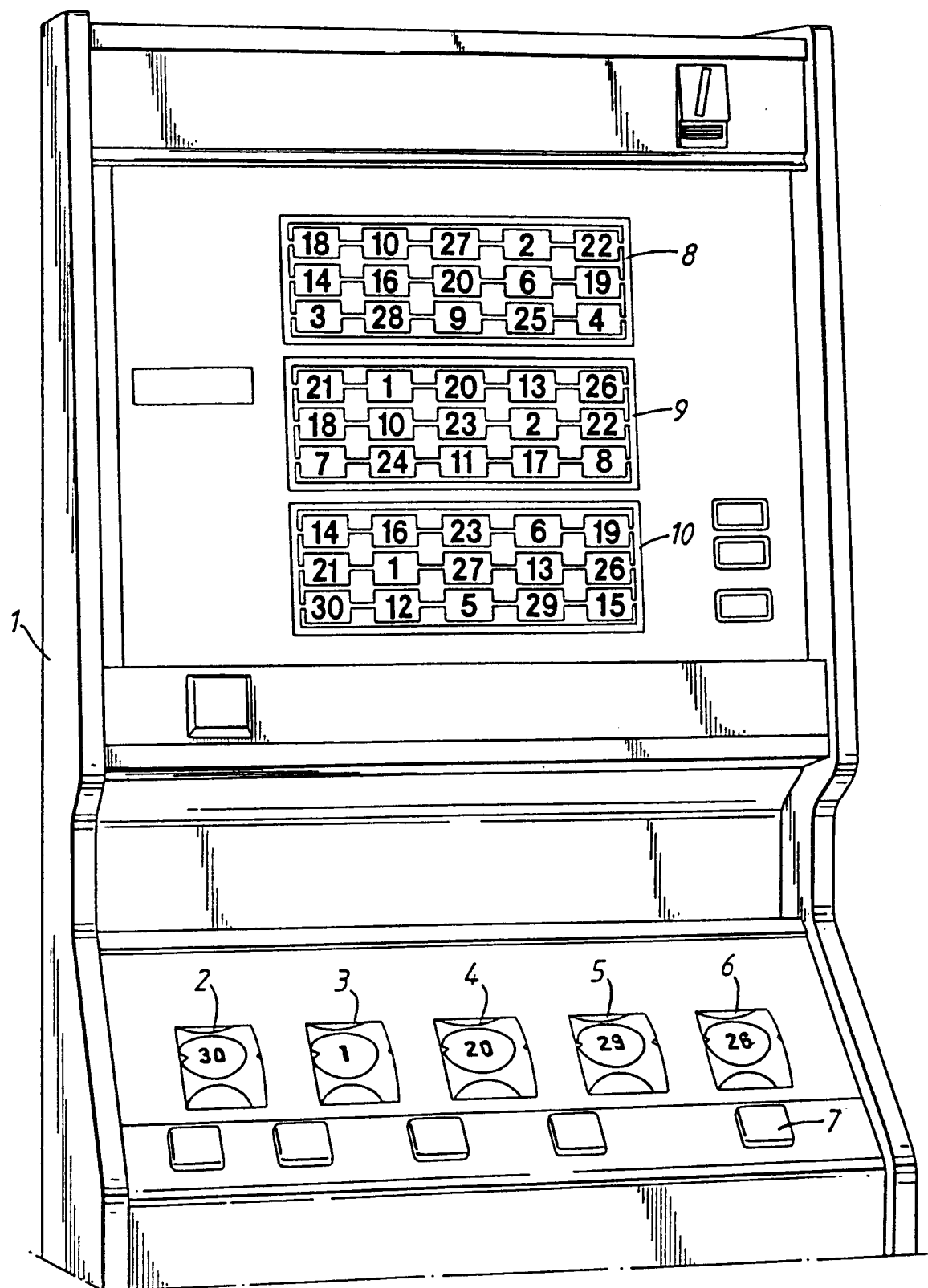


FIG. 1

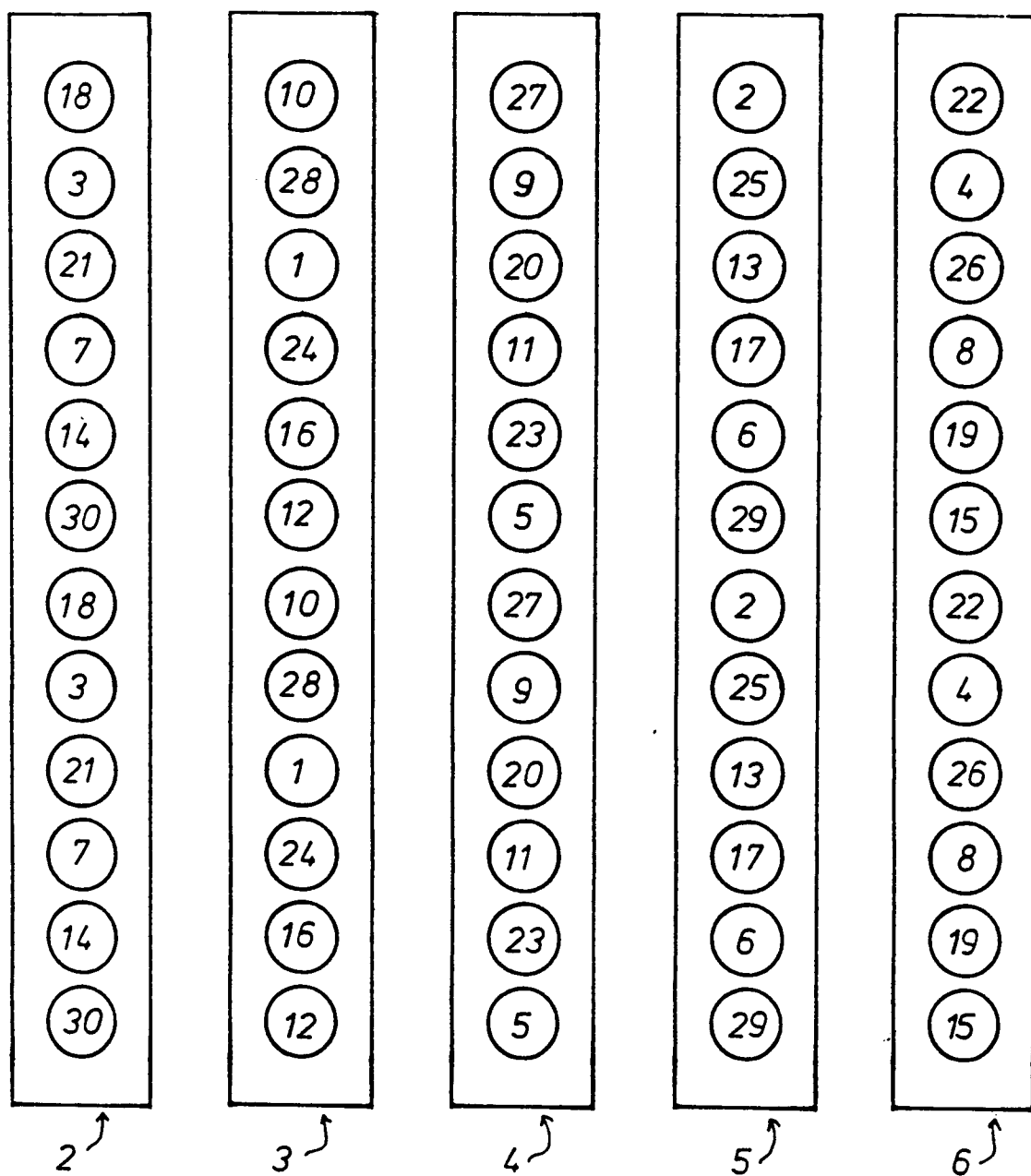


FIG. 2

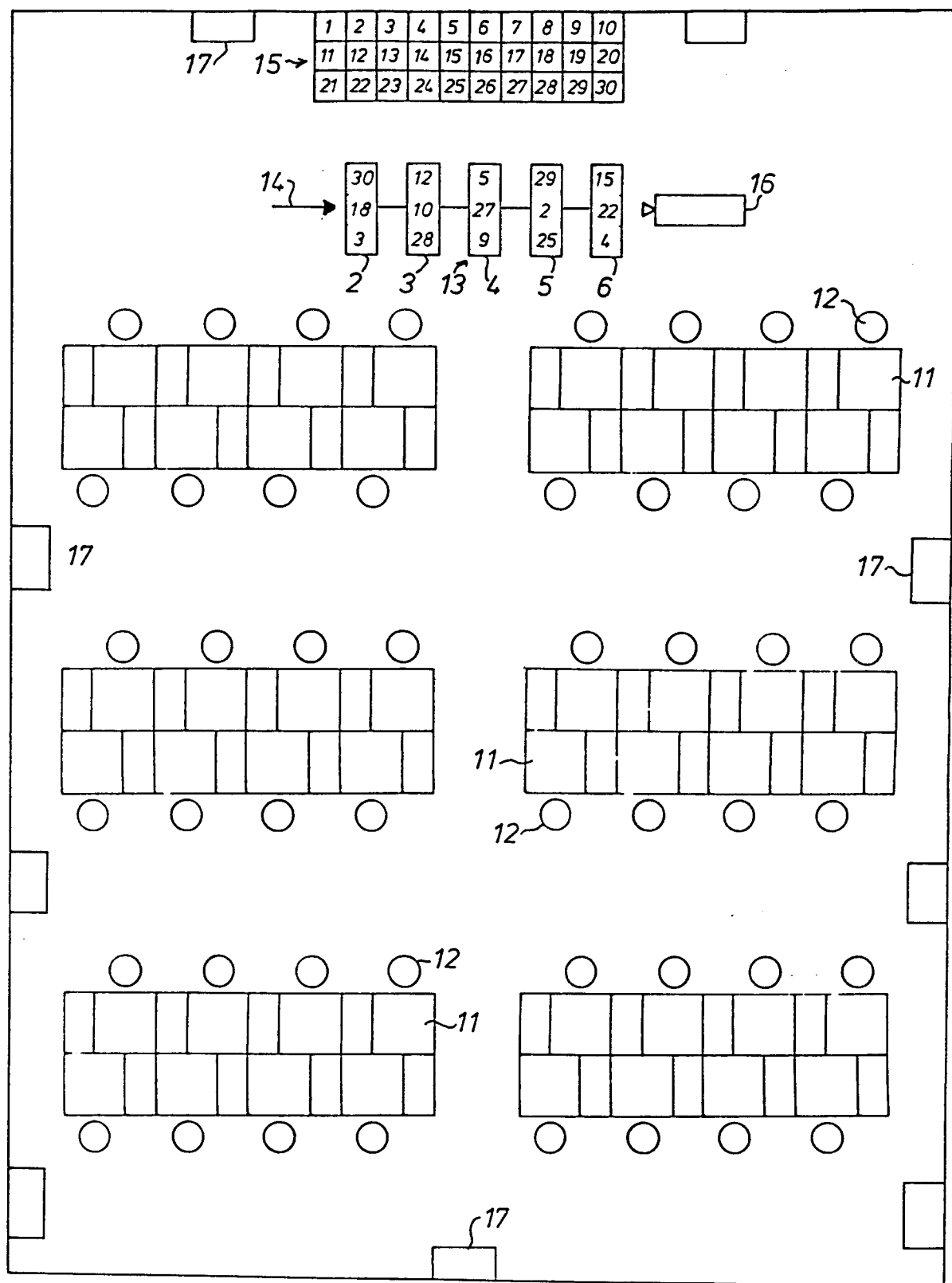


FIG. 3

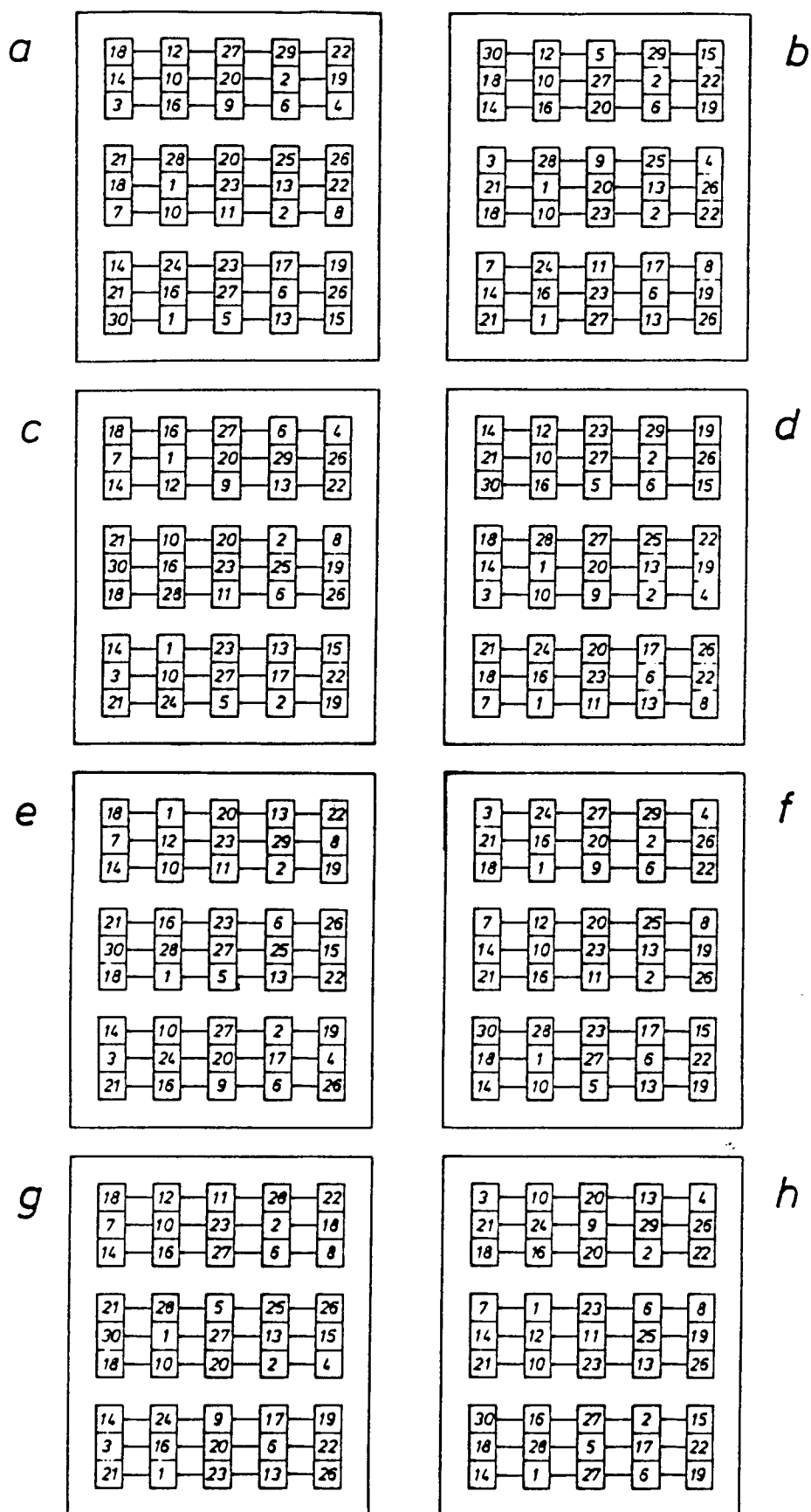


FIG. 4



EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

EP 91 20 1662

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int. Cl.5)
Y	GB-A-1 568 522 (M.G. WHITE) * page 2, lines 64 - 98; figure 1 ** page 2, line 130 - page 3, line 41 *	1,2	G 07 F 17/34 A 63 F 3/06
D,Y	GB-A-2 137 392 (JPM) * abstract; claims ; figure 1 *	1,2	
A	EP-A-0 214 290 (SIGMA ENTERPRISES) * abstract; claims ; figures *	1,3-5	
A	GB-A-2 150 844 (G. ELLIS) * page 2, line 100 - page 3, line 24; figure 1 *	1	
A	GB-A-2 180 460 (MAJSA)		
A	GB-A-2 183 381 (ELTON FABRICATIONS)		
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int. Cl.5)
			G 07 F A 63 F
The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search The Hague		Date of completion of search 17 September 91	Examiner DAVID J.Y.H.
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			