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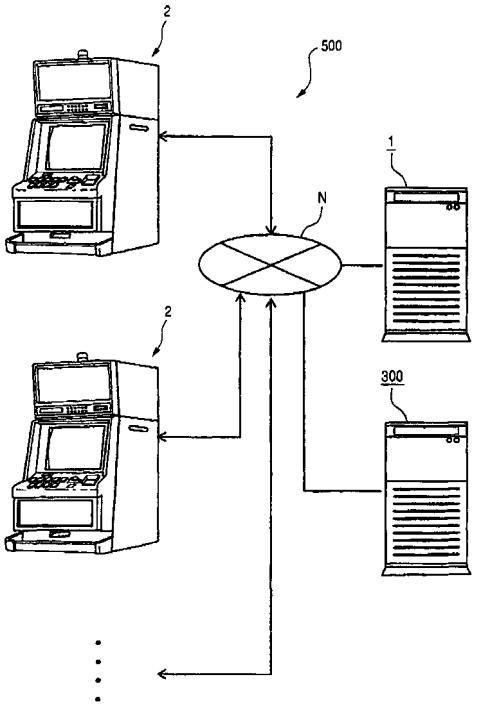
(54) Gaming management system

(57) A gaming management system is established by means of interconnecting a plurality of gaming machines, each of which is provided with a card unit, a member management server, and an insurance management server. An ID number of a membership card read by means of a reader/writer of the card unit is transmitted from the gaming machine to the insurance management server. Moreover, the insurance management server determines whether or not coincidence exists between a security code transmitted from the gaming machine by means of buttons of the card unit and the security code that has been read from information about details of insurance stored in the insurance management server by reference to the ID number, to thus determine whether or not a person who has inserted the membership card into a card slot of the card unit is a insurant of the game insurance.

FIG. 1



EP 1 701 317 A1

Description

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates to a gaming management system that manages the game insurance targeted for a game result of a gaming machine with use of an insurance management server by utilization of a membership card.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Related-art gaming machines include, e.g., a slot machine provided with an insurance function. When insurance coins (coins for activating the insurance function) is inserted into the slot machine in advance before initiation of a game, even when the number of consumed game start coins has reached a certain level and a player has failed to gain a win, a specified number of coins as dividend of the insurance (insurance dividend coins) are paid out to thereby lessen the loss of the player (e.g., see JP-A-4-244178).

[0003] However, the insurance function fulfilled by the insurance coins is limited to the services that have previously been set in the slot machine into which the insurance coins are to be inserted, such as payout of a specified number of insurance dividend coins according to the number of consumed game start coins. Accordingly, only a uniform insurance service can be provided, and obstacles are encountered in providing a variety of services that satisfy requests of the player.

SUMMARY

[0004] One of objects of the present invention is to provide a gaming management system capable of providing a variety of services satisfying the requests of the player in relation to the game insurance targeted for a game result of a gaming machine.

According to one aspect of the invention, there is provided a gaming management system including: a gaming machine that provides a game to a player; a member management server that is connected to the gaming machine through a computer network; and an insurance management server that is connected to the gaming machine and the member management server through the computer network. The gaming machine includes: a card unit that reads an ID number of a membership card; an authorization means for permitting playing of the game on the gaming machine when the card unit detects the membership card; a generation means for generating game information pertaining to a result of the game; and an input means that is provided on the card unit. The member management server includes a member management storage means for storing member information associated with the ID number read by the card unit. The insurance management server includes: an insurance management storage means for storing insurance information and player identification information, which are associated with the player as an insurant of a game insurance; a player identification means for identifying the player as the insurant of the game insurance by determining whether of not information input through the input means coincides with the player identification information stored in the insurance management unit; a specifying means for specifying the insurant based on the member information stored in the member management storage means and the ID number read by the card unit, when the player identification means identifies the player as the insurant; and a game insurance payout determination means for determining whether or not to pay the insurance coverage of the game insurance to the insurant specified by the specifying means based on the game information generated by the generation means and the insurance information stored in the insurance management storage means.

According to another aspect of the invention, there is provided a gaming management system including: a gaming machine that provides a game to a player; a member management server that is connected to the gaming machine through a computer network; and an insurance management server that is connected to the gaming machine and the member management server through the computer network. The gaming machine includes: a game processing means for providing the game to the player; a card unit that reads identification information stored in a membership card, the identification information being set unique to each of the membership cards; a generation means for generating game information pertaining to a result of the game; and an input means for allowing the player to input a command and information. The member management server includes a member management storage means for storing member information for identifying the player, the member information being associated with the identification information. The insurance management server includes: an insurance management storage means for storing insurance information for the player as an insurant of a game insurance; a specifying means for specifying the insurant based on the member information and the identification information; and a game insurance payout determination means for determining whether or not to pay the insurance coverage of the game insurance to the insurant specified by the specifying means based on the game information generated by the generation means and the insurance information stored in the insurance management storage means. The gaming management system further includes a player identification means for identifying the player as the insurant of the game insurance by determining whether of not the information input through the input

means coincides with a player identification information previously registered. The specifying means specifies the insurant when the player identification means identifies the player as the insurant.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0005] In the accompanying drawings:

Fig. 1 shows an example gaming management system according to an embodiment where an insurance management server, a member management server, and gaming machines are connected together by way of a computer network;
Fig. 2 is a block diagram showing a control circuit of the insurance management server according to the embodiment;
Fig. 3 is a block diagram showing a control circuit of the member management server according to the embodiment;
Fig. 4 is a perspective view showing the gaming machine according to the embodiment;
Fig. 5 is a block diagram showing a main control circuit for controlling the gaming machine according to the embodiment;
Fig. 6 is a block diagram showing a display controller of the gaming machine according to the embodiment;
Fig. 7 is a view showing a flowchart of example control processing that can be performed by the gaming management system according to the embodiment;
Fig. 8 is a view showing a flowchart of example control processing that can be performed by the gaming management system according to the embodiment;
Fig. 9 is a view showing a flowchart of example control processing that can be performed by the gaming management system according to the embodiment;
Fig. 10 is a view showing a flowchart of example control processing that can be performed by the gaming management system according to the embodiment;
Fig. 11 is a view showing a flowchart of example control processing that can be performed by the gaming management system according to the embodiment; and
Fig. 12 is a view showing a flowchart of example control processing that can be performed by the gaming management system according to the embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0006] An embodiment of the present invention will be described hereinbelow with reference to the drawings. First, the overview of a gaming management system of an embodiment will be described briefly. The gaming management system according to the embodiment includes a plurality of gaming machines, each of which is provided with a card unit, a member management server, and an insurance management server, and all of these elements are connected to each other by way of a computer network.

The term "the game insurance" herein means a system where a large number of players, or the like, pay insurance expenses in case of losses induced by a game and given negotiable values, including game medium which will be described later, are paid as insurance coverage to a player who has induced a loss during a game, by means of taking the insurance expenses as funds. The insurance expenses and the insurance coverage may be paid by and to the player in a form of real money or in a form of the game medium.

[0007] Each of the card units reads an ID number stored in a membership card. The ID number stored in the membership card is provided in a one-to-one correspondence with a player (member) who owns the membership card. Therefore, the player who is playing a game on a gaming machine provided with the card unit can be identified based on the ID number stored in the membership card.

[0008] The member management server stores member information [e.g., name, address, date of birth, vital information (biometric data), the member's account number, and the like] about the member (a player) in correspondence with the ID number. The member information is managed for each member (player).

[0009] The insurance management server is for managing the game insurance of the member (player) . The game insurance is a system for covering a loss incurred by a game in each gaming machine with insurance coverage on condition that a member (player) pays an insurance expense. In many cases, services of the insurance, including a special agreement such as an automatic update service, change according to details of an insurance contract made by each member (player). Accordingly, the insurance management server stores details of insurance of each member (player) including information about whether or not an insurance expense has been paid, and information of security code for identifying an insurant of the game insurance, in correspondence with the ID number. Thereby, the details of insurance are managed on a per-member (per-player) basis.

[0010] Moreover, a series of processes pertaining to the game insurance, from acceptance of a contract to payment of an insurance expense, are automated in the insurance management server. At that time, an ID number is acquired from each card unit in order to obtain details of the game insurance for each member (player), a member's account

number from which an insurance expense is withdrawn or to which insurance coverage is transferred, and a game result of the gaming machine, the game result being covered by the game insurance. The member information is acquired from the member management server by utilization of the ID number, and the game result is acquired from the gaming machine.

[0011] The embodiment illustrates, as an example gaming machine, a gaming machine where a game play is performed by means of a game displayed on an image display device, such as an LCD panel. However, the embodiment is not limited to this type of gaming machine. For instance, a slot machine equipped with a plurality of mechanical reels which actually spin, a Pachinko gaming machine, or the like, may also be employed.

[0012] The embodiment employs "coins" as game medium to be used in a gaming machine. The term "coins" encompasses both hard currency (metal money) circulated in the economy of a country where the present invention is practiced, and game medals or tokens which are uniquely used in a game arcade --where the present invention is practiced-- and are available for the player by means of exchanging the currency of the country where the invention is practiced.

[0013] In addition to coins, game balls, such as Pachinko balls, may be used as the game mediums for the gaming machine, such as a Pachinko gaming machine. In a gaming machine using a magnetic card or an IC card which stores numerical data into which the amount of game medium, such as coins, are converted, the numerical data may be used in place of coins.

[0014] Configuration of an Overall Gaming Management System

Fig. 1 shows an example gaming management system where an insurance management server and a member management server are connected to a plurality of gaming machines, which are communication terminals, by way of a computer network.

[0015] As shown in Fig. 1, in a gaming management system 500, the insurance management server 1 and the member management server 300 are connected to the plurality of gaming machines 2 by way of the network N configured by a communication line. The insurance management server 1, the member management server 300, and the gaming machines 2 are configured so as to be able to exchange various pieces of information by way of this network N.

[0016] In the regard, the insurance management server 1 and the member management server 300 exchange information with the plurality of gaming machines 2. The respective gaming machines 2 are provided with unique identification numbers. By means of the identification number, the senders of data transmitted from the respective gaming machines 2 are identified, and a destination to which data are to be sent is identified from the gaming machines 2.

[0017] Configuration of the Insurance Management Server

Fig. 2 is a block diagram showing the configuration of the above-described insurance management server 1.

[0018] The insurance management server 1 has a central processing circuit (hereinafter referred to as a CPU) 10, and the CPU 10 is connected to an input/output bus 12. A configuration is made such that a data signal or an address signal is input to or output from the CPU 10.

[0019] The input/output bus 12 is also connected to ROM (read-only memory) 14 and RAM (random access memory) 16. The ROM 14 stores a control program for controlling the insurance management server 1, which will be described later. The RAM 16 stores flags or variables used in the above-described program. Moreover, the RAM 16 temporarily stores an ID number sent from a card unit 400, which will be described later, of the gaming machine 2; member information sent from the member management server 300 to be described later; game information delivered from the gaming machine 2 to be described later; and information about details of insurance in a hard disk drive 18 to be described later.

[0020] The input/output bus 12 is also connected to the hard disk drive 18 and a communications interface circuit 22. The hard disk drive 18 includes a database, or the like, where information about details of insurance is stored in correspondence with the ID number of the member (the player). As shown in Fig. 1, the communications interface circuit 22 is connected to the plurality of gaming machines 2 and the member management server 300, in a communicable manner, by way of the network N, which is a communication line such as a public switched telephone network or a local area network (LAN).

[0021] In the embodiment, the hard disk drive 18 is used as a storage device for storing information about details of insurance or the like. However, the storage device is not limited to the hard disk drive. Any device may be used, so long as the device is a nonvolatile rewritable mass storage device such as flash memory.

[0022] A display monitor 24 and an input device 26 are also connected to the input/output bus 12. The display monitor 24 can display various types of data, such as information about details of insurance, stored as a database, in the hard disk drive 18. The input device 26 can send, to the insurance management server 1, a command for displaying information, such as details of insurance, on the display monitor 24 and a command for causing the hard disk drive 18 to store new information about details of insurance.

[0023] Configuration of the Member Management Server

Fig. 3 is a block diagram showing the configuration of the above-described member management server 300.

[0024] The member management server 300 has a CPU 310, and the CPU 310 is connected to an input/output bus 312, so that a data signal or an address signal is input to or output from the CPU 310.

[0025] The input/output bus 312 is connected to ROM 314 and RAM 316, as well. The ROM 314 stores a control

program for controlling the member management server 300 to be described later. In the meantime, the RAM 316 stores flags or variables, which are used in the above-mentioned program. Moreover, the ID numbers sent from the insurance management server 1, which will be described later, and member information about a hard disk drive 318, which will be described later, are temporarily stored in the RAM 316.

[0026] The input/output bus 312 is also connected to the hard disk drive 318 and a communications interface circuit 322. The hard disk drive 318 stores a database, or the like, into which member information [e.g., name, address, date of birth, vital information (biometrics data), an account number of the member, and the like] is stored in correspondence with the ID number of the member (the player) . A communications interface circuit 322 is connected in a communicable manner, as shown in Fig. 1, to the plurality of gaming machines 2 and the insurance management server 1, by way of the network N which is a communication line such as a public switched telephone network or a local area network (LAN) . The member management server 1 serves as a master station of the plurality of gaming machines 2, and the identification number used for communication is set to "0000."

[0027] In the embodiment, the hard disk drive 318 is used as a storage device used for storing information such as the member information. However, the storage device is not limited to the hard disk drive. Any storage device may be used, so long as the device is a nonvolatile rewritable mass storage device such as flash memory.

[0028] The input/output bus 312 is also connected to a display monitor 324 and an input device 326. The display monitor 324 displays various data; for instance the member information [e.g., name, address, date of birth, vital information (biometrics data), an account number of the member, and the like] stored as a database in the hard disk drive 318. Further, the input device 326 can send, to the member management server 300, a command for causing the display monitor 324 to display member information and a command for causing the hard disk drive 318 to store new member information.

[0029] Configuration of the Gaming Machine Fig. 4 shows a perspective view of an example gaming machine 2 according to the embodiment.

[0030] The gaming machine 2 is provided with a cabinet 30. A front center portion of the cabinet 30 is inclined so as to become slanted slightly rearward with respect to the vertical direction. A main display device 32 is provided on top of the slanted face. The main display device 32 displays game information about respective games, and the games proceed on the display device.

[0031] A sub-display device 34 is provided at a position above the main display device 32 on the front of the cabinet 30. The sub-display device 34 displays information, which cannot be displayed on the main display device 32, as well as rules about a game carried out on the main display device 32, or the like.

[0032] Further, the card unit 400 is interposed between the main display device 32 and the sub-display device 34. The card unit 400 has a plurality of buttons 401, a card insertion slot 402 into which a membership card is inserted, a display monitor 403, or the like. The plurality of buttons 401 are used for inputting an instruction in relation to an input of a security code or the discharge of a membership card. The display monitor 403 is used for prompting the player to input a security code or a command for discharge of a membership card. Since the membership card is subjected to reading and writing operations performed by a reader/writer 404 (see Fig. 5) which will be described later, an IC card is used. However, the membership card may be implemented by arbitrary media (e.g., a magnetic card) that is capable of storing information indicating ID number and signing/non-signing of the game insurance (whether or not the contract of the game insurance is made), and configured to be read-out the information therefrom.

[0033] A notification lamp 56 is provided on top of the cabinet 30.

[0034] An essentially-horizontal seat section 50 is provided beneath the main display device 32. A plurality of switches 40 and a cross switch 42 are provided on an upper left portion on the seat 50. These switches are used for issuing a command for selection or determination during games.

[0035] A coin insertion slot 44 and a paper money insertion port 46 are provided on an upper right surface of the seat section 50. As a result of insertion of coins or paper money into the slot or port, playing of a game becomes possible.

[0036] A payout switch 48 is also provided in the vicinity of the coin insertion slot 44. The inserted coins are paid from a coin payout port 52 formed in a front lower portion of the cabinet 30 as a result of the payout switch 48 being pressed. The thus-paid coins are accumulated in a coin-receiving section 54.

[0037] Another sub-display device 38 is provided at a position above the coin payout port 52 in a lower portion of the cabinet 30, and displays pieces of information of various types.

[0038] Configuration of a Controller of the Gaming Machine

Fig. 5 is a block diagram showing the configuration of a control section of the above-described gaming machine 2.

[0039] The switch 40 and the cross switch 42, which have been mentioned previously, are connected to a group of interface circuits 62 of a main control circuit 60. The group of interface circuits 62 is connected to an input/output bus 64. As a result of the respective switches being pressed, respective predetermined signals are generated and supplied to the input/output bus 64. The input/output bus 64 is arranged to enable a data signal or an address signal to be input to or output from a CPU 66.

[0040] The above-mentioned group of interface circuits 62 is connected to a coin detection sensor 58, as well. When

a coin has been inserted into the coin insertion slot 44 or paper money has been inserted into the paper money insertion port 46, information about the type or number of inserted coins or sheets of paper money is converted into a signal, and the signal is supplied to the group of interface circuits 62.

[0041] The above-mentioned group of interface circuits 62 is connected to the payout switch 48, as well. When the player has pressed the payout switch 48, a predetermined signal is supplied to the input/output bus 64, and the inserted coin is paid out from the coin payout port 52, which will be described later, in accordance with the signal.

[0042] The identification (ID) number used for communication is set in each of the plurality of gaming machines 2. Thereby, the insurance management server 1 or the member management server 300 identifies the gaming machine.

[0043] The input/output bus 64 is also connected to ROM 68 and RAM 70. The ROM 68 stores a control program for controlling the flow of the entire system of the gaming machine. Moreover, the ROM 68 stores initial data used for executing the control program or portions of programs for controlling a display of the main display device 32 and the like. The RAM 70 stores the above program and flags or variables used in a game program to be described later.

[0044] The above input/output bus 64 is also connected to a hard disk drive 74.

[0045] In the embodiment, the hard disk drive 74 is used as a storage device for storing a game program or the like. However, the storage device is not limited to the hard disk drive. Any storage device may be used, so long as the device is a nonvolatile rewritable mass storage device such as flash memory.

[0046] A group of interface circuits 72 is also connected to the input/output bus 64. The group of interface circuits 72 is connected to a speaker 80, the notification lamp 56, and a payout device 82. The group of interface circuits 72 supplies a drive signal and drive power in order to control the above-described individual devices in accordance with the result of arithmetic processing performed by the CPU 66.

[0047] When the gaming machine 2 has detected an anomaly, the notification lamp 56 illuminates or blinks so as to call an attendant of the game arcade, to thus inform the attendant of the game arcade of detection of the anomaly.

[0048] The input/output bus 64 is further connected to a random number generation means 78 which generates a random number. When a command for generating a random number has been issued by the CPU 66 to the random number generation means 78, the random number generation means 78 generates a predetermined range of random numbers, and a signal showing the value of the random number is sent to the input/output bus 64. The CPU 66 determines the status of a progress in a game by means of the thus-generated random number. The random number issued from the random number generation means 78 is stored in the RAM 70 as data showing the result of a lottery.

[0049] The input/output bus 64 is connected to a communications interface circuit 76, as well. The communications interface circuit 76 is for establishing communication with the insurance management server 1, the member management server 300, and the like, by way of the network N, which is a communication line such as a as public switched telephone network or a local area network (LAN).

[0050] An interface circuit 405 is also connected to the input/output bus 64. The interface circuit 405 is connected to the reader/writer 404, the buttons 401, and the display monitor 403, all of which are provided within the card unit 400. In accordance with the result of arithmetic processing operation performed by the CPU 66, the interface circuit 405 supplies a drive signal and drive power in order to control the above-described individual devices.

[0051] When a membership card (IC card) has been inserted into the card insertion slot 402, the read/writer 404 converts information, such as an ID number, stored in the membership card into a signal, and the signal is supplied to the interface circuit 405. Incidentally, the reader/writer 404 may be replaced with a magnetic card read-out device, in a case where a magnetic card is used as the member card.

As a result of the respective buttons 401 being pressed, predetermined signals are generated and supplied to the interface circuit 405.

The display command issued by the CPU 66 is supplied to the display monitor 403 by way of the interface circuit 405, and the display monitor displays an image corresponding to the command.

[0052] The group of interface circuits 72 is also connected to a display controller 200. The display controller 200 issues a drive signal, which is used for driving the main display device 32 and the sub-display devices 34, 38 connected to the display controller 200, pursuant to an video display command issued by the main control circuit 60.

[0053] Configuration of the Display Controller of the Gaming Machine

Fig. 6 shows a block diagram showing the circuit of the above-described display controller 200.

[0054] An interface circuit 202 is connected to an input/output bus 204, and a video display command issued by the main control circuit 60 is supplied to the input/output bus 204 by way of the interface circuit 202. The input/output bus 204 is arranged to enable a data signal or an address signal to be input to or output from a CPU 206.

[0055] The input/output bus 204 is connected to ROM 208 and RAM 210, as well. The ROM 208 stores a display control program used for generating a drive signal to be supplied to the main display device 32, in accordance with the video display command issued by the main control circuit 60. Meanwhile, the RAM 210 stores flags or variables used in the program.

[0056] A video data processor (hereinafter called a "VDP") 212 is also connected to the input/output bus 204. This VDP 212 is a processor which includes circuits, such as a so-called sprite circuit, a screen circuit, and a palette circuit,

and which can perform various types of processing for displaying an image on the main display device 32.

[0057] The VDP 212 is connected to video RAM 214 for storing image data complying with the video display command issued by the main control circuit 60 and image data ROM 216 for storing background image data, pattern image data, character image data, and the like. Moreover, the VDP 21,2 is also connected to a drive circuit 218 for sending a drive signal used for driving the main display device 32, a drive circuit 220 for sending a drive signal used for driving the sub-display device 34, and a drive circuit 222 for sending a drive signal used for driving the sub-display device 38.

[0058] By means of reading and executing the display control program stored in the ROM 208, the CPU 206 causes the video RAM 214 to store image data which are to be displayed on the main display device 32 pursuant to the video display command sent from the main control circuit 60. The video display command issued from the main control circuit 60 includes a background display command, a pattern display command, a character display command, and the like.

[0059] As mentioned above, the image data ROM 216 stores image data, such as the pattern image data pertaining to a pattern image which is an identification information image; character image data pertaining to a character such as an animal displayed as a presentation screen; and background image data forming the background of the main display device 32, or the like.

[0060] The pattern image data are used for variably displaying or stationarily displaying a pattern on the main display device 32, or the like. The pattern image data include image data of a variety of display modes; e.g., an enlarged image, a scaled-down image, a modified image, or the like. The character image data include image data required to display modes where a character performs a round of actions.

[0061] Control operations performed by the gaming management system 500 according to the embodiment will now be described by reference to Fig. 7. Fig. 7 is a view showing the flow of example control processing which can be performed by the gaming management system 500 according to the embodiment.

[0062] As shown in Fig. 7, in S201 the gaming management system 500 according to the embodiment first awaits insertion of a membership card into the card insertion slot 402 pertaining to the card unit 400. When the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 provided with the card unit 400 has determined that a membership card has been inserted into the card insertion slot 402 by way of the reader/writer 404 (YES in S201), information about whether or not the member has signed up for the game insurance, which has been read from the membership card by the reader/writer 404, and information about whether or not the game insurance is still in effect, which has been read from the membership card by the reader/writer 404, are sent to the insurance management server 1, and processing subsequently proceeds to S401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1.

[0063] In S401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, a determination is made as to whether or not the player has signed up for the game insurance, on the basis of the information about sign-up for the game insurance transmitted from the gaming machine 2 provided with the card unit 400.

[0064] At this time, when the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 has determined that the member has not signed up for the game insurance (NO in S401), processing proceeds to S202 pertaining to the card unit 400, and a determination is made as to whether or not the membership card is to be returned. The CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 provided with the card unit 400 causes the display monitor 403 of the card unit 400 to display a character message indicating, e.g., "Returning your membership card?," thereby prompting the player to determine whether the membership card is to be returned. As a result of the player pressing the button 401 of the card unit 400, the player's determination as to whether or not the membership card is to be returned is ascertained.

[0065] At this time, when the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 provided with the card unit 400 has determined that the membership card is not to be returned (NO in S202), processing proceeds to S101 pertaining to the gaming machine 2. In S101, the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 provided with the card unit 400 causes a game, which is not the insurant of the game insurance, to proceed. Subsequently, processing returns to S401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, whereby the above-described processing operations are repeated.

[0066] When the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 provided with the card unit 400 has determined that the membership card is to be returned (YES in S202), the membership card is discharged from the card insertion slot 402 by way of the reader/writer 404. Subsequently, this control processing control is terminated.

[0067] When, in S401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 has determined that the member has signed up for the game insurance (YES in S401), processing proceeds to S402. A signal requesting transmission of an ID number stored in the membership card is transmitted to the gaming machine 2 provided with the card unit 400. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S203 pertaining to the card unit 400.

[0068] In S203 pertaining to the card unit 400, the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 transmits to the insurance management server 1 the ID number read from the membership card, by way of the reader/writer 404. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S403 pertaining to the insurance management server 1.

[0069] In S403 relating to the insurance management server 1, when the insurance management server 1 has received an ID number from the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400, processing proceeds to S404, where the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 transmits, to the member management server 300, a signal requesting transmission of member information assigned to the ID number. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S301 relating

to the member management server 300.

[0070] In S301 relating to the member management server 300, the CPU 310 of the member management server 300 transmits the member information about the ID number, which has been read from the hard disk drive 318, to the insurance management server 1 by reference to the ID number. Then, processing proceeds to S405 relating to the insurance management server 1.

[0071] When in S405 the insurance management server 1 has received the member information from the member management server 300 relating to the insurance management server 1, processing proceeds to S406, where the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines whether or not the member (player) identified by the ID number has paid the insurance expense of the game insurance, by reference to the ID number and on the basis of the information about the details of insurance read from the hard disk drive 18.

[0072] At that time, when the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines that the member (player) identified by the ID number has not finished paying the insurance expense of the game insurance (NO in S406), processing returns to S406. The CPU 10 awaits ascertainment that the insurance expense of the game insurance pertaining to the member (player) identified by the ID number has been paid as a result of, for instance, an insurance expense being withdrawn from the member's account whose number has been acquired from the member information about the member (player) specified by the ID number, or the member (player) identified by the ID number directly paying the insurance expense.

[0073] When the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines that the member (player) identified by the ID number has finished paying the insurance expense of the game insurance (YES in 5406), processing proceeds to S102 relating to the gaming machine 2.

[0074] In S102 relating to the gaming machine 2, the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 provides the game in a state in which being covered by the game insurance. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S204 relating to the card unit 400, where a determination is made as to whether or not the membership card is to be returned. The CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 causes the display monitor 403 of the card unit 400 to display a character message of, e.g., "Returning your membership card?," to thus prompt the member (player) to determine whether to return the membership card. As a result of the player pressing the buttons 401 of the card unit 400, the player's determination as to whether or not the membership card is to be returned is ascertained.

[0075] At that time, when the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 determines that the membership card is not to be returned (NO in S204), processing returns to S102 pertaining to the gaming machine 2, and the processing operations set above are repeated.

[0076] When the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 determines that the membership card is to be returned (YES in S204), the membership card is discharged from the card insertion slot 402 by way of the reader/writer 404. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S103 pertaining to the gaming machine 2.

[0077] In S103 pertaining to the gaming machine 2, the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 transmits the game information about a result of the game, which is a insurant of the game insurance, to the insurance management server 1. Then, processing proceeds to S407 pertaining to the insurance management server 1.

[0078] In S407 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines whether or not the member (player) identified by the ID number has fulfilled conditions for insurance payout; namely, whether or not insurance coverage is to be paid out, on the basis of the game information sent from the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 and the information about details of insurance read from the hard disk drive 18 by means of the ID number.

[0079] At that time, when the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines payout of insurance coverage (YES in S407), processing proceeds to S408, where an insurance coverage payout list is updated in association with payout of insurance coverage; namely, information about details of insurance in the hard disk drive 18 is rewritten by utilization of the ID number. Subsequently, this control processing is terminated. In the meantime, when the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines not to pay insurance coverage (NO in S407), this control processing is terminated without performing any further process.

[0080] In the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment, the insurance management server 1 determines whether or not the player who inserted the membership card from the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400 is the insurant of the game insurance. To this end, control processing shown in Fig. 9 is performed at point in time W1 immediately after processing pertaining to S403 relating to the insurance management server 1 that is in the course of control processing shown in Fig. 7 has been performed. Control processing shown in Fig. 9 will be described. Fig. 9 is a view showing a flowchart of example control processing that can be performed by the gaming management system of the embodiment.

[0081] In the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment, control processing shown in Fig. 7 is performed. At point in time W1 immediately after processing pertaining to S403 relating to the insurance management server 1 has been performed, processing proceeds to control processing shown in Fig. 9. First, in S2401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 transmits, to the gaming machine 2 equipped

with the card unit 400, a signal that requests transmission of a security code. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S2201 pertaining to the card unit 400.

[0082] In S2201 pertaining to the card unit 400, input and transmission of the security code are performed. The CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 causes the display monitor 403 of the card unit 400 to display a character message of, e.g., "Please enter security code," to thus prompt the player to enter a security code. When the security code is input as a result of the player pressing the buttons 401 of the card unit 400, the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 transits, to the insurance management server 1, the input security code, and processing proceeds to S2402 pertaining to the insurance management server 1.

[0083] In S2402 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, when the insurance management server 1 has received the security code from the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400, processing proceeds to S2403. The CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines whether or not coincidence exists between the security code sent from the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 and the security code contained in the information about details of insurance read from the hard disk drive 18 by reference to the ID number.

[0084] At that time, when the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 has determined existence of coincidence between the security codes (YES in S2403), processing proceeds to S404 pertaining to the insurance management server 1 by means of control processing shown in Fig. 7. Meanwhile, when the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines that no coincidence exists between the security codes (NO in S2403), processing proceeds to S202 pertaining to the card unit 400 by means of control processing shown in Fig. 7.

[0085] When the insurance management server 1 has determined that the player who has inserted the membership card from the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400 is the insurant of the game insurance (YES in S2403 shown in Fig. 9), the player can proceed to playing of a game which is covered by the game insurance (S102 in Fig. 7). When the insurance management server 1 has determined that the person who has inserted the membership card from the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400 is not the insurant of the game insurance (NO in S2403 shown in Fig. 9), the player can proceed to a game which is not covered by the game insurance (S101 shown in Fig. 7).

[0086] As mentioned above, when the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment has performed control processing shown in Fig. 7, the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines whether or not insurance coverage is to be paid (S407) when the membership card 1 is discharged from the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400 (YES in S204); namely, when the player has finished playing the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400.

[0087] In contrast with control processing shown in Fig. 7, the timing when the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines whether to pay insurance coverage can be set for every each game provided on the gaming machine 2 is completed (e.g., every time the reels of the slot machine have stopped spinning) rather than when the whole round of games provided on the gaming machine 2 is completed (e.g., when the player quits playing games on the gaming machine 2).

[0088] With reference to Fig. 8, there will now be described control processing of the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment for setting the timing when the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines whether to pay insurance coverage when every each game provided on the gaming machine 2 is completed. Fig. 8 is a view showing the flowchart of example control processing that can be performed by the gaming management system of the embodiment.

[0089] As shown in Fig. 8, in S1201 pertaining to the card unit 400, the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment awaits insertion of a membership card into the card insertion slot 402. When the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 has determined that the membership card has been inserted into the card insertion slot 402 by way of the reader/writer 404 (YES in S1201), information about whether or not the player has signed up for the game insurance, which has been read from the membership card by the reader/writer 404, is sent to the insurance management server 1. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S1401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1.

[0090] In S1401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, a determination is made as to whether or not the player has signed up the game insurance, on the basis of the information about sing-up for insurance transmitted from the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400.

[0091] At this time, when the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 has determined that the player has not signed up for the game insurance (NO in S1401), processing proceeds to S1202 pertaining to the card unit 400, where a determination is made as to whether or not the membership card is to be returned. The CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 causes the display monitor 403 of the card unit 400 to display a character message of, e.g., "Returning your membership card?," to thus prompt the player to determine whether or not the membership card is to be returned. As a result of the player pressing the buttons 401 on the card unit 400, the player's determination as to whether or not the membership card is to be returned is ascertained.

[0092] When the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 has determined not to return the membership card (NO in S1202), processing proceeds to S1101 pertaining to the gaming machine 2. The CPU 66 of

the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 provides a game being covered by the game insurance. Subsequently, processing returns to S1401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, and above-described processing is repeated.

[0093] When the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 has determined to return the membership card (YES in S1202), the membership card is discharged from the card insertion slot 402 by way of the reader/writer 404. Subsequently, control processing is terminated.

[0094] In S1401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, when the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines that the player has signed up for the game insurance (YES in S1401), processing proceeds to S1402. A signal that requests transmission of the ID number stored in the membership card is transmitted to the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S1203 pertaining to the card unit 400.

[0095] In S1203 pertaining to the card unit 400, the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 transmits, to the insurance management server 1, the ID number read from the membership card by way of the reader/writer 404. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S1404 pertaining to the insurance management server 1.

[0096] In S1403 relating to the insurance management server 1, when the insurance management server 1 has received the ID number from the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400, processing proceeds to S1404. The CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 transmits, to the member management server 300, a signal that requests transmission of member information assigned to the ID number. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S1301 pertaining to the member management server 300.

[0097] In S1301 pertaining to the member management server 300, the CPU 310 of the member management server 300 transmits, to the insurance management server 1, the member information about the ID number read from the hard disk drive 318 by utilization of the ID number. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S1405 pertaining to the insurance management server 1.

[0098] In S1405 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, when the insurance management server 1 has received the member information from the member management server 300, processing proceeds to S1406. The CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines that the member (player) identified by the ID number has finished paying the insurance expense of the game insurance, on the basis of the information about details of insurance read from the hard disk drive 18 by means of the ID number.

[0099] At that time, the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 has determined that the member identified by the ID number has not yet finished paying an insurance expense for the game insurance (NO in S1406), processing returns to S1406. The CPU 10 awaits ascertainment that the insurance expense of the game insurance pertaining to the member (player) identified by the ID number has been paid as a result of, for instance, an insurance expense being withdrawn from the member's account whose number has been acquired from the member information about the member (player) specified by the ID number or the member (player) identified by the ID number directly paying the insurance expense.

[0100] When the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines that the member (player) identified by the ID number has finished paying the insurance expense of the game insurance (YES in S1406), processing proceeds to S1102 relating to the gaming machine 2.

[0101] In S1102 relating to the gaming machine 2, the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 provides the game being covered by the game insurance. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S1103, where the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 transmits, to the insurance management server 1, game information about a result of the game being covered by the game insurance, (a result of one game). Subsequently, processing proceeds to S1407 pertaining to the insurance management server 1.

[0102] In S1407 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines whether or not the member (player) identified by the ID number has fulfilled conditions for insurance payout; namely, whether or not insurance coverage is to be paid out, on the basis of the game information sent from the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 and the information about details of insurance read from the hard disk drive 18 by means of the ID number.

[0103] At that time, when the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines payout of insurance coverage (YES in S1407), processing proceeds to S1408, where an insurance coverage payout list is updated in association with payout of insurance coverage; namely, information about details of insurance in the hard disk drive 18 is rewritten by utilization of the ID number. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S1204 pertaining to the card unit 400. Meanwhile, the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines not to pay insurance coverage (NO in 51407), processing proceeds to S1204 pertaining to the card unit 400 without performing any further processing.

[0104] In S1204 pertaining to the card unit 400, a determination is made as to whether or not the membership card is to be returned. The CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 causes the display monitor 403 of the card unit 400 to display a character message of, e.g., "Returning your membership card?, " to thus prompt the player to determine whether or not the membership card is to be returned. As a result of the player pressing the buttons 401 on the card unit 400, the player's determination as to whether or not the membership card is to be returned is

ascertained.

[0105] At this time, when the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 has determined not to return the membership card (NO in S1204), processing returns to S1102, the processing operations set forth are repeated.

[0106] When the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 has determined to return the membership card (YES in S1204), the membership card is discharged (ejected) from the card insertion slot 402 by way of the reader/writer 404. Subsequently, control processing is terminated.

[0107] In the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment, the insurance management server 1 determines whether or not the player who has inserted the membership card from the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400 is the insurant of the game insurance. When control processing shown in Fig. 8 is performed, control processing shown in Fig. 10 is performed at point in time W2 immediately after processing pertaining to S1403 relating to the insurance management server 1 that is in the course of control processing shown in Fig. 8 has been performed. Control processing shown in Fig. 10 will be described. Fig. 10 is a view showing a flowchart of example control processing that can be performed by the gaming management system of the embodiment.

[0108] In the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment, control processing shown in Fig. 8 is performed. At point in time W2 immediately after processing pertaining to S1403 relating to the insurance management server 1 has been performed, processing proceeds to control processing shown in Fig. 10. First, in S3401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 transmits, to the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400, a signal that requests transmission of a security code. Subsequently, processing proceeds to S3201 pertaining to the card unit 400.

[0109] In S2201 pertaining to the card unit 400, input and transmission of the security code are performed. The CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 causes the display monitor 403 of the card unit 400 to display a character message of, e.g., "Please enter security code," to thus prompt the player to enter a security code. When the security code is input as a result of the player pressing the buttons 401 of the card unit 400, the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 transits, to the insurance management server 1, the input security code, and processing proceeds to S3401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1.

[0110] In S3402 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, when the insurance management server 1 has received the security code from the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400, processing proceeds to S3403. The CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines whether or not coincidence exists between the secret cod number sent from the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 and the security code contained in the information about details of insurance read from the hard disk drive 18 by reference to the ID number.

[0111] At that time, when the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 has determined existence of coincidence between the security codes (YES in S3403), processing proceeds to S1404 pertaining to the insurance management server 1 by means of control processing shown in Fig. 8. Meanwhile, when the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines that no coincidence exists between the security codes (NO in S3403), processing proceeds to S202 pertaining to the card unit 400 by means of control processing shown in Fig. 8.

[0112] When the insurance management server 1 has determined that the player who has inserted the membership card from the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400 is the insurant of the game insurance (YES in S3403 shown in Fig. 10), the player can proceed to playing of a game being covered by the game insurance (S1102 in Fig. 8). When the insurance management server 1 has determined that the player who has inserted the membership card from the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400 is not the insurant of the game insurance (NO in S3403 shown in Fig. 10), the player can proceed to a game being not covered by the game insurance (S1101 shown in Fig. 8).

[0113] Accordingly, when the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment has performed control processing shown in Figs. 7 to 10, the CPU 66 of each of the gaming machines 2 serves as "generation means" when executing processing pertaining to S103 shown in Fig. 7 or processing pertaining to S1103 shown in Fig. 8; or serves as "authorization means" when executing processing pertaining to S204 shown in Fig. 7 or processing pertaining to S1204 shown in Fig. 8. When executing processing pertaining to S406 shown in Fig. 7 or processing pertaining to S1406 shown in Fig. 8, the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 serves as "specifying means." When executing processing pertaining to S407 shown in Fig. 7 or processing pertaining to S1407 shown in Fig. 8, the CPU 10 serves as "the game insurance payout determination means." When executing processing pertaining to S2403 shown in Fig. 9 or processing pertaining to S3403 shown in Fig. 10, the CPU 10 serves as "player identification means."

[0114] As has been described in detail, in the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment, with regard to the game insurance covering a game result of each gaming machine 2, the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines, in S408 shown in Fig. 7 or S1408 shown in Fig. 8, whether to pay insurance coverage of the game insurance, on the basis of the game information transmitted from each gaming machine 2 in 5407 shown in Fig. 7 or S1407 shown in Fig. 8. Even when details of an insurance contract made by each player changes, a variety of services fulfilling players' demands can be provided by utilization of information about the details of insurance stored in the hard disk drive 18 of the insurance management server 1.

[0115] In the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment, the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 determines, in S2403 shown in Fig. 9 or S3403 shown in Fig. 10, whether or not coincidence exists between the security code transmitted from the gaming machine 2, in S2201 shown in Fig. 9 or S3201 shown in Fig. 10, by way of the buttons 401 of the card unit 400 and the security code read from the information about details of insurance stored in the hard disk drive 18 of the insurance management server 1 by reference to the ID number. Thus, the person who has inserted the membership card from the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400 is ascertained to be the subject of insurance. Accordingly, a system exhibiting superior security can be provided.

[0116] In the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment, the CPU 10 of the insurance management server 1 identifies the member (player) as a insurant of the game insurance in S408 shown in Fig. 7 or S1408 shown in Fig. 8, on the basis of the ID number of the membership card transmitted from the card unit 400 in S203 shown in Fig. 7 or S1203 shown in Fig. 8 by way of the gaming machine 2 and the member information transmitted from the member management server 300 in S301 shown in Fig. 7 or S1301 shown in Fig. 8 by way of the hard disk drive 318. Even when details of the insurance contract made by each player change, a variety of services fulfilling players' demands can be provided by utilization of the member information stored in the hard disk drive 318 of the member management server 300.

[0117] The present invention is not limited to the embodiments provided above and susceptible to various modifications without departing from the gist of the invention.

For instance, in relation to the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment, the following cases are conceivable as a mode of making a contract for the game insurance. Specifically, the member (player), who is an insurant of the game insurance, causes the card unit 400 to be able to determine an ID number of a membership card, and causes the main display unit 32 or the sub-display devices 34, 38 of the gaming machine 2 to display a screen by means of which a player takes out insurance. When the member has performed operation for taking out insurance on the gaming machine 2, the member management server 300 is caused to transmit member information associated with the ID number of the membership card to the insurance management server 1. Thereby, the insurance management server 1 withdraws an insurance expense from the account whose number is acquired from the member information, and information about details of insurance is stored in the hard disk drive 18, thereby making the contract of the game insurance come into effect. Alternatively, payment of an insurance expense may also be carried out by cash, and the contract for the game insurance may be brought into effective in writing. The insurance management server 1 may store information about details of insurance into the hard disk drive 18 by means of the input device 26.

[0118] In the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment, the security code is stored in advance in the membership card. When control processing shown in Fig. 7 is performed, control processing shown in Fig. 11 may be performed during the course of processing proceeding from S201 pertaining to the card unit 400 that is in the course of control processing shown in Fig. 7 to S401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, thereby causing the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 to determine whether or not the person who has inserted the membership card from the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400 is the insurant of the game insurance. Control processing shown in Fig. 11 will be described. Fig. 11 is a view showing a flowchart of example control processing that can be performed by the gaming management system of the embodiment.

[0119] In the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment, control processing shown in Fig. 7 is performed. During the course of processing proceeding from S201 pertaining to the card unit 400 to S401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, processing jumps to control processing shown in Fig. 11, so that the person is authenticated in S4201 pertaining to the card unit 400. The CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 causes the display monitor 403 of the card unit 400 to display a character message of, e.g., "Please enter security code," to thus prompt the player to enter a security code. When the security code is input as a result of the player pressing the buttons 401 of the card unit 400, the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 compares the input security code with the security code read from the membership card by the reader/writer 404 of the card unit 400. At this time, when the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 has determined existence of coincidence between the security codes (YES in S4201), processing proceeds to S401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1 by means of control processing shown in Fig. 7. Meanwhile, the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 has determined that no coincidence exists between the security codes (NO in S4201), processing proceeds to S202 pertaining to the card unit 400 by means of control processing shown in Fig. 7.

[0120] When the gaming machine 2 has determined that the player who has inserted the membership card from the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400 is the insurant of the game insurance (YES in S4201 shown in Fig. 11), the player can proceed to playing of a game being covered by the game insurance (S102 in Fig. 7). When the gaming machine 2 has determined that the person who has inserted the membership card from the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400 is not the insurant of the game insurance (NO in S4201 shown in Fig. 11), the player can proceed to a game being not covered by the game insurance (S101 shown in Fig. 7).

[0121] In the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment, when a security code is stored in advance in the membership card and control processing shown in Fig. 8 is performed, control processing shown in Fig. 12 is performed during the course of processing proceeding from S1201 pertaining to the card unit 400 that is in the course of control

processing shown in Fig. 8, to S1401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 may determine whether or not the player who has inserted the membership card into the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400. Control processing shown in Fig. 12 will now be described. Fig. 12 is a view showing a flowchart of example control processing that can be performed by the gaming management system of the embodiment.

[0122] In the gaming management system 500 of the embodiment, control processing shown in Fig. 8 is performed. During the course of processing proceeding from 51201 pertaining to the card unit 400 to S1401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1, processing jumps to control processing shown in Fig. 12, so that the person is authenticated in S5201 pertaining to the card unit 400. The CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 causes the display monitor 403 of the card unit 400 to display a character message of, e.g., "Please enter security code," to thus prompt the player to enter a security code. When the security code is input as a result of the player pressing the buttons 401 of the card unit 400, the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 compares the input security code with the security code read from the membership card by the reader/writer 404 of the card unit 400. At this time, when the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 has determined existence of coincidence between the security codes (YES in S5201), processing proceeds to S1401 pertaining to the insurance management server 1 by means of control processing shown in Fig. 8. Meanwhile, the CPU 66 of the gaming machine 2 equipped with the card unit 400 has determined that no coincidence exists between the security codes (NO in S5201), processing proceeds to S1202 pertaining to the card unit 400 by means of control processing shown in Fig. 8.

[0123] When the gaming machine 2 has determined that the player who has inserted the membership card from the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400 is the insurant of the game insurance (YES in S5201 shown in Fig. 12), the player can proceed to playing of a game being covered by the game insurance (S1102 in Fig. 8). When the gaming machine 2 has determined that the player who has inserted the membership card from the card insertion slot 402 of the card unit 400 is not the insurant of the game insurance (NO in S5201 shown in Fig. 12), the player can proceed to a game being not covered by the game insurance (S1101 shown in Fig. 8).

In the above described embodiment, a security code is used as player identification information for identifying the player as the insurant. However, arbitrary information that is usable to identify the player from others, such as a password configured by a combination of numbers and alphabets, may be used as the player identification information.

As described in detail with reference to the embodiment, according to one aspect, there is provided a gaming management system (e.g., a gaming management system 500) which has one or a plurality of gaming machines (e.g., a gaming machine 2), a member management server (e.g., a member management server 300), and an insurance management server (e.g., an insurance management server 1) and which interconnects the gaming machine (s) (e.g., the gaming machines 2), the member management server (e.g., a member management server 300), and the insurance management server (e.g., an insurance management server 1) by way of a network (e.g., a network N), wherein the gaming machine (e.g., the gaming machine 2) has a card unit (e.g., a card unit 400) which is additionally provided on the gaming machine (e.g., the gaming machine 2) and reads an ID number of a member card, an authorization means (e.g., a CPU 66, S204 and S1204) for permitting playing of a game on the gaming machine (e.g., the gaming machine 2) on condition that the card unit (e.g., the card unit 400) has detected the member card, a generation means (e.g., the CPU 66, S103 and S1103) for generating game information pertaining to a game result of the gaming machine (e.g., the gaming machine 2), and input means (e.g., buttons 401) provided on the card unit (e. g. , the card unit 400); the member management server (e.g., the member management server 300) has a member management storage means (e.g., a hard disk drive 318) which stores member information assigned to the ID number read by the card unit (e.g., the card unit 400) of the gaming machine (e.g., the gaming machine 2); and the insurance management server (e.g., the insurance management server 1) has a insurance management storage means (e. g., a hard disk drive 18) which stores insurance information assigned to a subject of game insurance and player identification information, player identification means (e.g., a CPU 10, S2403 and S3403) for identifying a insurant of game insurance determining whether or not the player identification information stored in the insurance management storage means (e.g., the hard disk drive 18) coincides with information input from the input means (e.g. buttons 401) of the card unit (e.g., the card unit 400); a specifying means (e.g., the CPU 10, S407 and S1407) for specifying any one of subjects of game insurance, when the player identification means (e.g., the CPU 10, S2403 and S3403) has ascertained the insurant of game insurance, on the basis of member information stored in the member management storage means (e.g., the hard disk drive 318) of the member management server (e.g., the member management server 300) and the ID number read by the card unit (e.g., the card unit 400) of the gaming machine (e.g., the gaming machine 2); and a game insurance payout determination means (e.g., the CPU 10, 5408 and. S1408) which determines whether or not insurance money of game insurance is paid to the subject of game insurance specified by the specifying means (e.g., the CPU 10, S407 and S1407), on the basis of game information from the generation means (e.g., the CPU 66, S103 and S1103) of the gaming machine (e.g., the gaming machine 2) and insurance information stored in the insurance management storage means (e.g., the hard disk drive 18).

In the gaming management system of the present invention, with regard to the game insurance targeted for a game result of a gaming machine, the insurance management server determines whether to pay insurance coverage of game

insurance, on the basis of the game information output from the gaming machine and the insurance information output from the insurance management server. Hence, a variety of services meeting players' demands can be provided by utilization of insurance information from the insurance management server.

In the gaming management system of the present invention, the insurance management server verifies that the player is the insurant of game insurance, by means of coincidence between information input from the input means of the card unit of the gaming machine and player identification information from the insurance management server. Accordingly, a system exhibiting superior security can be provided.

In the gaming management system of the present invention, the insurance management server specifies the insurant of the game insurance on the basis of the ID number read by the card unit of the gaming machine and the member information in the member management server. Hence, a variety of services meeting players' demands can be provided by utilization of member information from the member management server.

[0124] The present invention can be applied to a gaming management system that performs a round of processes from establishment of a contract for the game insurance to payout of insurance coverage by use of a membership card.

The foregoing description of the embodiment 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 form disclosed, and modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teachings or may be acquired from practice of the invention. The embodiment was chosen and described in order to explain the principles of the invention and its practical application to enable those skilled in the art to utilize the invention in various embodiments and with various modifications as are suited to the particular use contemplated. It is intended that the scope of the invention be defined by the claims appended hereto, and their equivalents.

Claims

1. A gaming management system comprising:

a gaming machine that provides a game to a player;
a member management server that is connected to the gaming machine through a computer network; and an insurance management server that is connected to the gaming machine and the member management server through the computer network,

wherein the gaming machine comprises:

a card unit that reads an ID number of a membership card;
an authorization means for permitting playing of the game on the gaming machine when the card unit detects the membership card;
a generation means for generating game information pertaining to a result of the game; and
an input means that is provided on the card unit,

wherein the member management server comprises a member management storage means for storing member information associated with the ID number read by the card unit, and
wherein the insurance management server comprises:

an insurance management storage means for storing insurance information and player identification information, which are associated with the player as an insurant of a game insurance;
a player identification means for identifying the player as the insurant of the game insurance by determining whether of not information input through the input means coincides with the player identification information stored in the insurance management unit;
a specifying means for specifying the insurant based on the member information stored in the member management storage means and the ID number read by the card unit, when the player identification means identifies the player as the insurant; and
a game insurance payout determination means for determining whether or not to pay the insurance coverage of the game insurance to the insurant specified by the specifying means based on the game information generated by the generation means and the insurance information stored in the insurance management storage means.

2. A gaming management system comprising:

a gaming machine that provides a game to a player;

a member management server that is connected to the gaming machine through a computer network; and
an insurance management server that is connected to the gaming machine and the member management server through the computer network,

wherein the gaming machine comprises:

a game processing means for providing the game to the player;
a card unit that reads identification information stored in a membership card, the identification information being set unique to each of the membership cards;
a generation means for generating game information pertaining to a result of the game; and
an input means for allowing the player to input a command and information,

wherein the member management server comprises a member management storage means for storing member information for identifying the player, the member information being associated with the identification information,
wherein the insurance management server comprises:

an insurance management storage means for storing insurance information for the player as an insurant of a game insurance;
a specifying means for specifying the insurant based on the member information and the identification information; and
a game insurance payout determination means for determining whether or not to pay the insurance coverage of the game insurance to the insurant specified by the specifying means based on the game information generated by the generation means and the insurance information stored in the insurance management storage means,

wherein the gaming management system further comprises a player identification means for identifying the player as the insurant of the game insurance by determining whether of not the information input through the input means coincides with a player identification information previously registered, and
wherein the specifying means specifies the insurant when the player identification means identifies the player as the insurant.

3. The gaming management system according to claim 2, wherein the player identification means is provided in the insurance management server.

4. The gaming management system according to claim 2, wherein the player identification means is provided in the gaming machine.

5. The gaming management system according to claim 2, wherein the player identification information is stored in the insurance management storage means.

6. The gaming management system according to claim 2, wherein the player identification information is stored in the membership card.

7. The gaming management system according to claim 2, wherein the card unit allows the game processing means to provide the game to the player when the identification information is read from the membership card.

8. The gaming management system according to claim 2, wherein the game processing means provides the game in a state in which covered by the game insurance when the player is specified as the insurant by the specifying means, and provides the game in a state in which uncovered by the game insurance when the player is not specified as the insurant by the specifying means.

9. The gaming management system according to claim 2, wherein the card unit reads the identification information when the membership card is inserted into the card unit.

10. The gaming management system according to claim 9, wherein the card unit retains the membership card in the card unit during the game processing means providing the game.

11. The gaming management system according to claim 10, wherein the card unit ejects the membership card when a command to eject the membership card is input through the input means.

FIG. 1

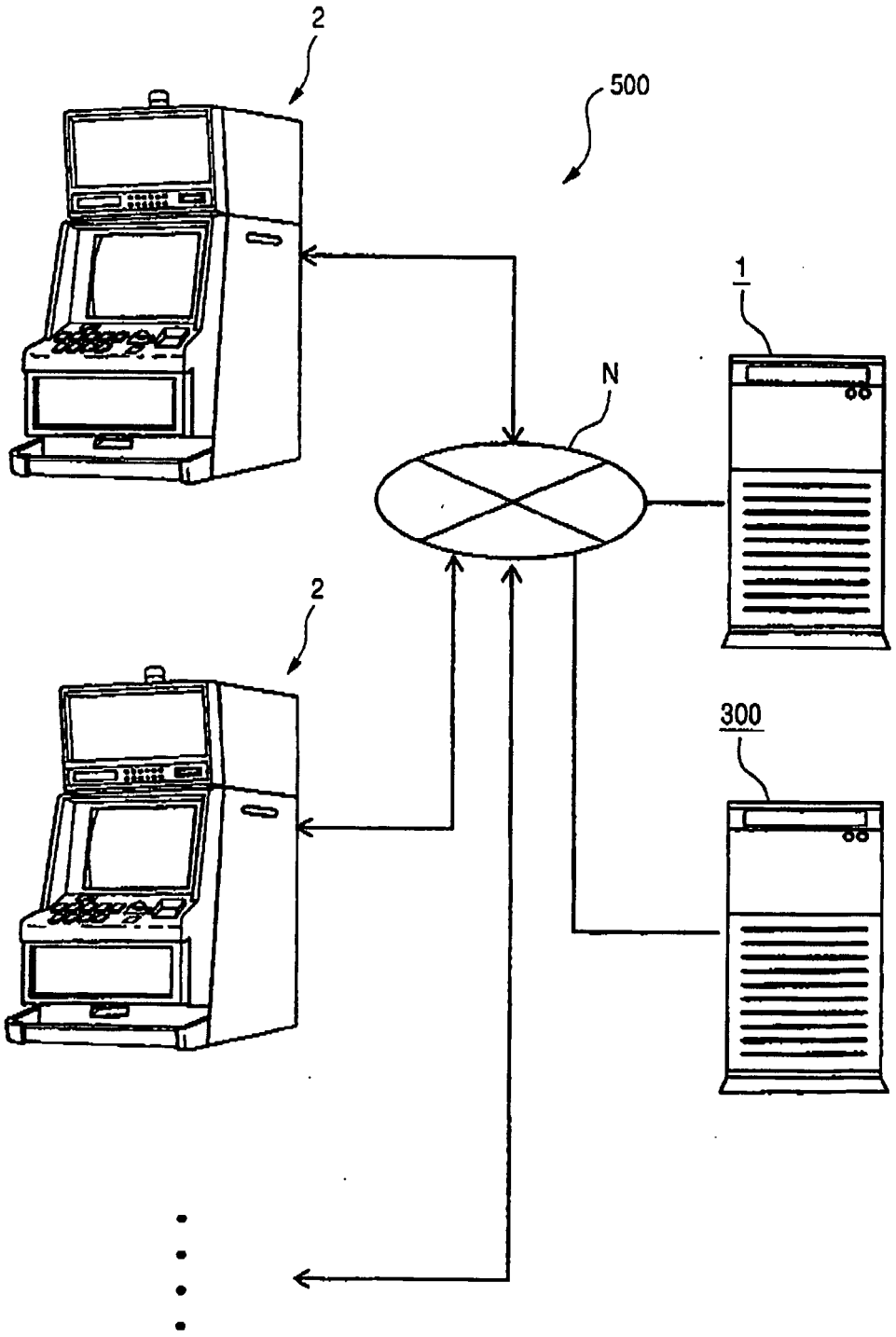


FIG. 2

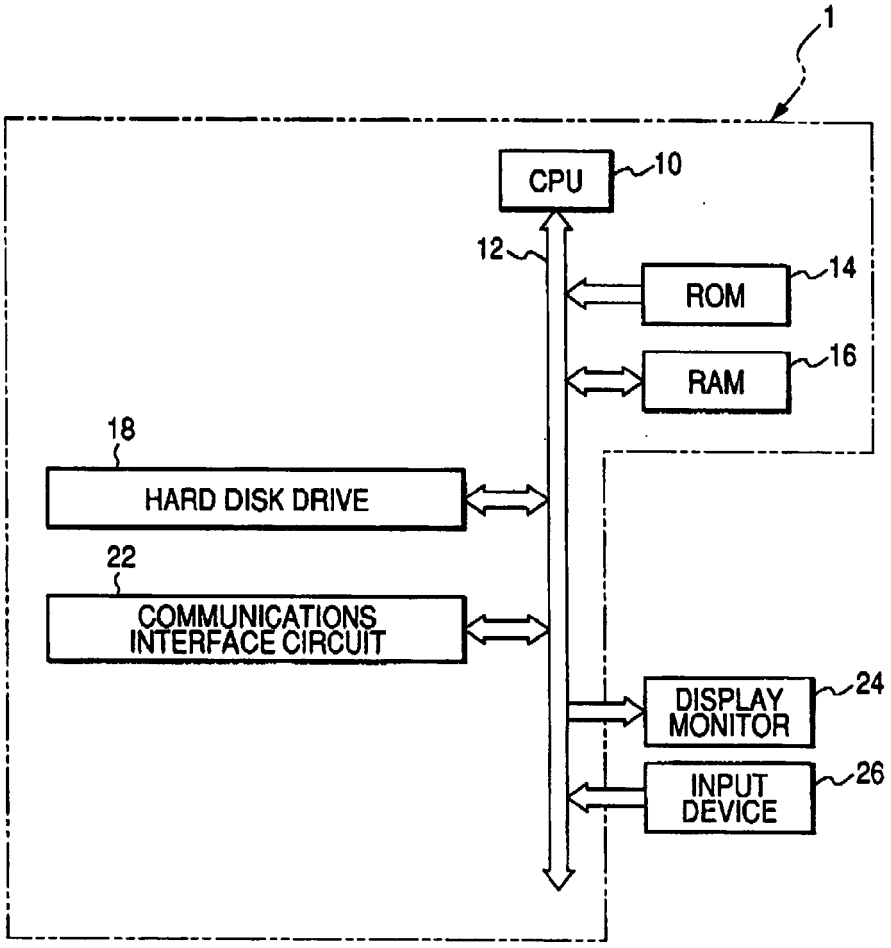

1
CPU
10
12
ROM
14
RAM
16
18
HARD DISK DRIVE
22
COMMUNICATIONS INTERFACE CIRCUIT
DISPLAY MONITOR
24
INPUT DEVICE
26

FIG. 3

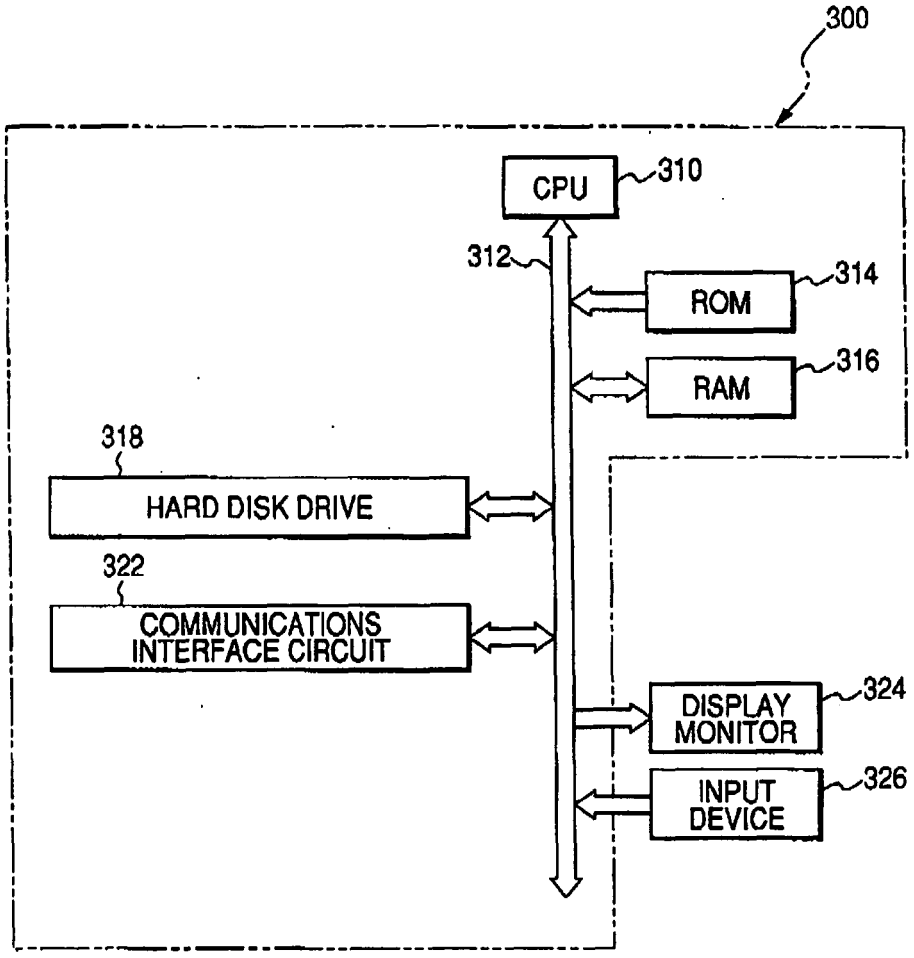

300
CPU
310
312
ROM
314
RAM
316
318
HARD DISK DRIVE
322
COMMUNICATIONS INTERFACE CIRCUIT
DISPLAY MONITOR
324
INPUT DEVICE
326

FIG. 4

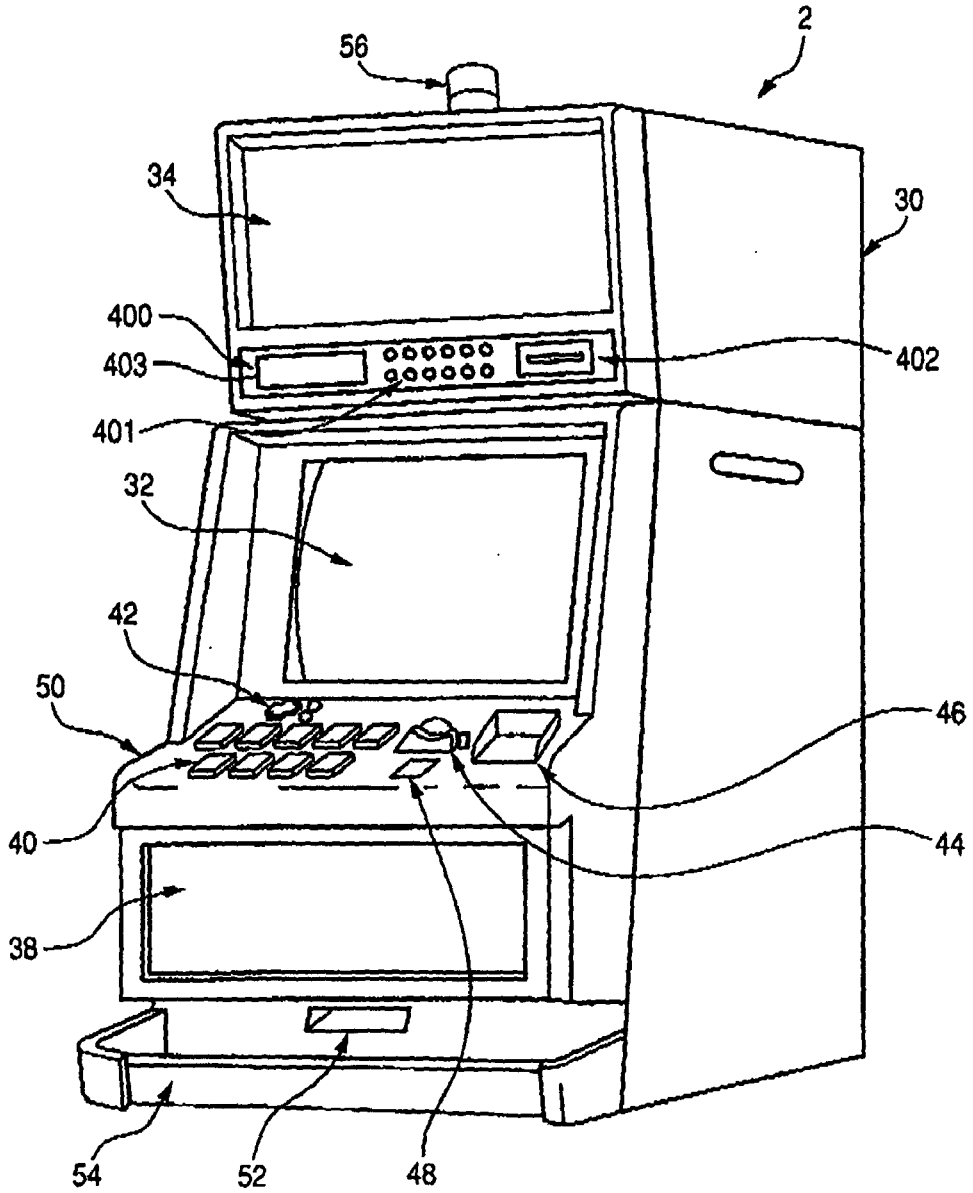


FIG. 5

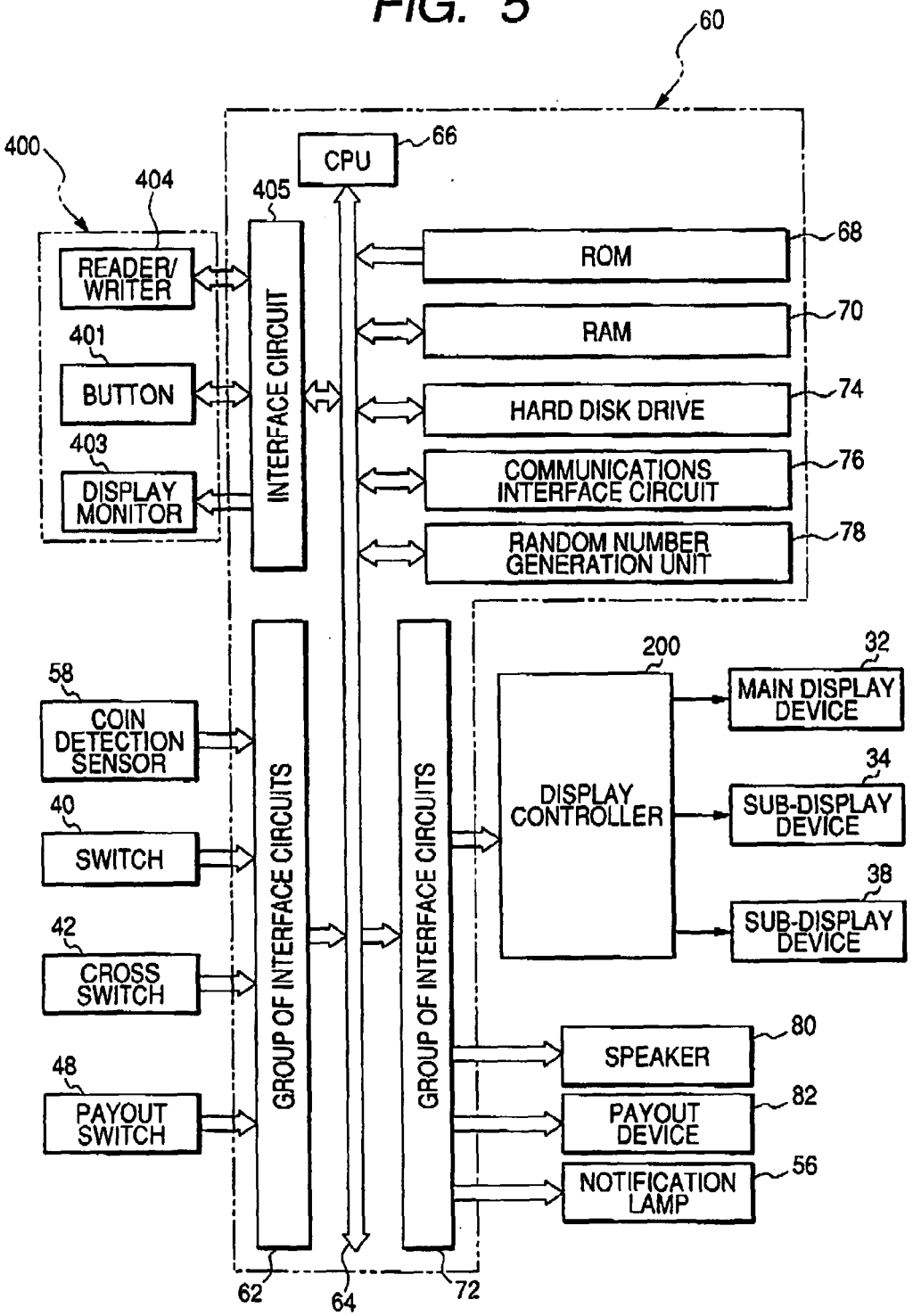

60
400
404
405
CPU
66
READER/ WRITER
401
BUTTON
403
DISPLAY MONITOR
INTERFACE CIRCUIT
ROM
68
RAM
70
HARD DISK DRIVE
74
COMMUNICATIONS INTERFACE CIRCUIT
76
RANDOM NUMBER GENERATION UNIT
78
200
32
MAIN DISPLAY DEVICE
34
SUB-DISPLAY DEVICE
38
SUB-DISPLAY DEVICE
DISPLAY CONTROLLER
58
COIN DETECTION SENSOR
40
SWITCH
42
CROSS SWITCH
48
PAYOUT SWITCH
GROUP OF INTERFACE CIRCUITS
GROUP OF INTERFACE CIRCUITS
80
SPEAKER
82
PAYOUT DEVICE
56
NOTIFICATION LAMP
62
64
72

FIG. 6

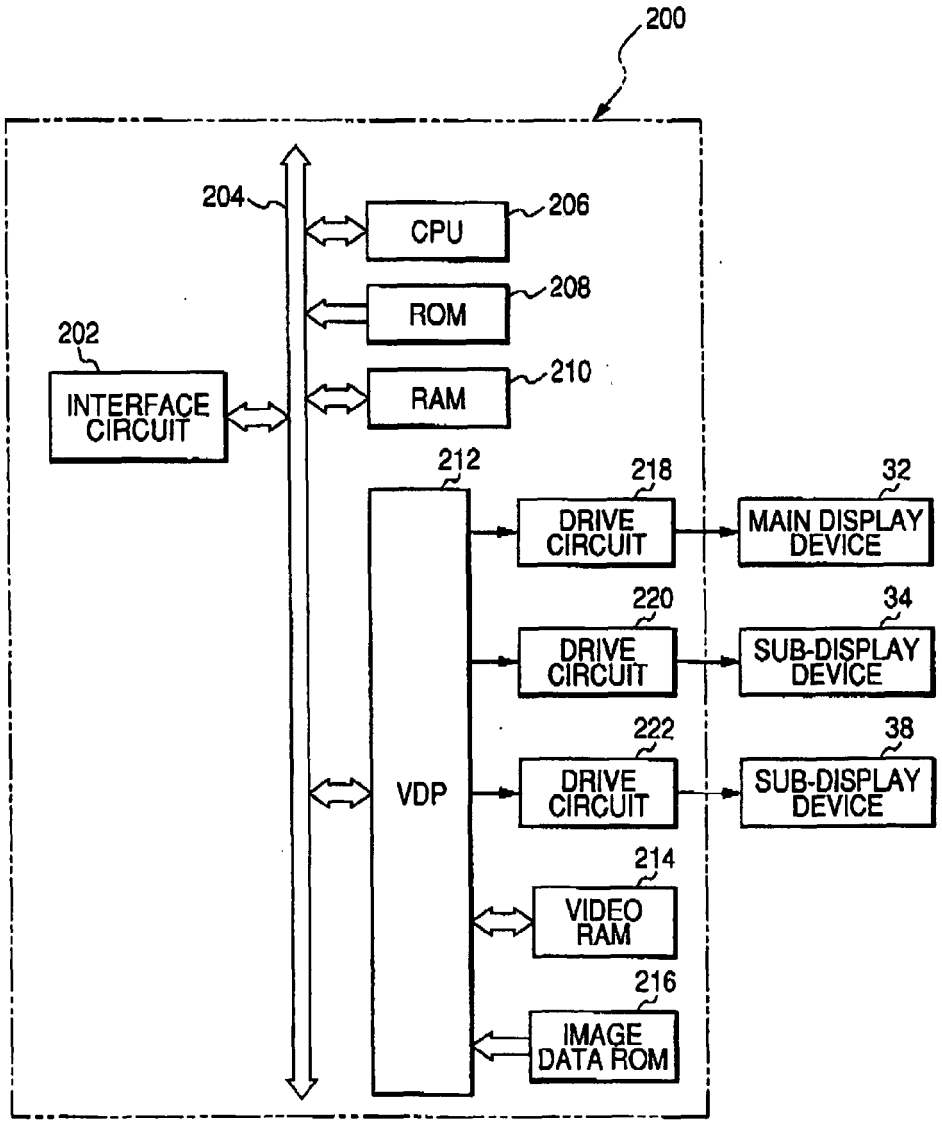

200
204
CPU
206
ROM
208
202
INTERFACE CIRCUIT
RAM
210
212
218
DRIVE CIRCUIT
32
MAIN DISPLAY DEVICE
220
DRIVE CIRCUIT
34
SUB-DISPLAY DEVICE
222
DRIVE CIRCUIT
38
SUB-DISPLAY DEVICE
VDP
214
VIDEO RAM
216
IMAGE DATA ROM

FIG. 7

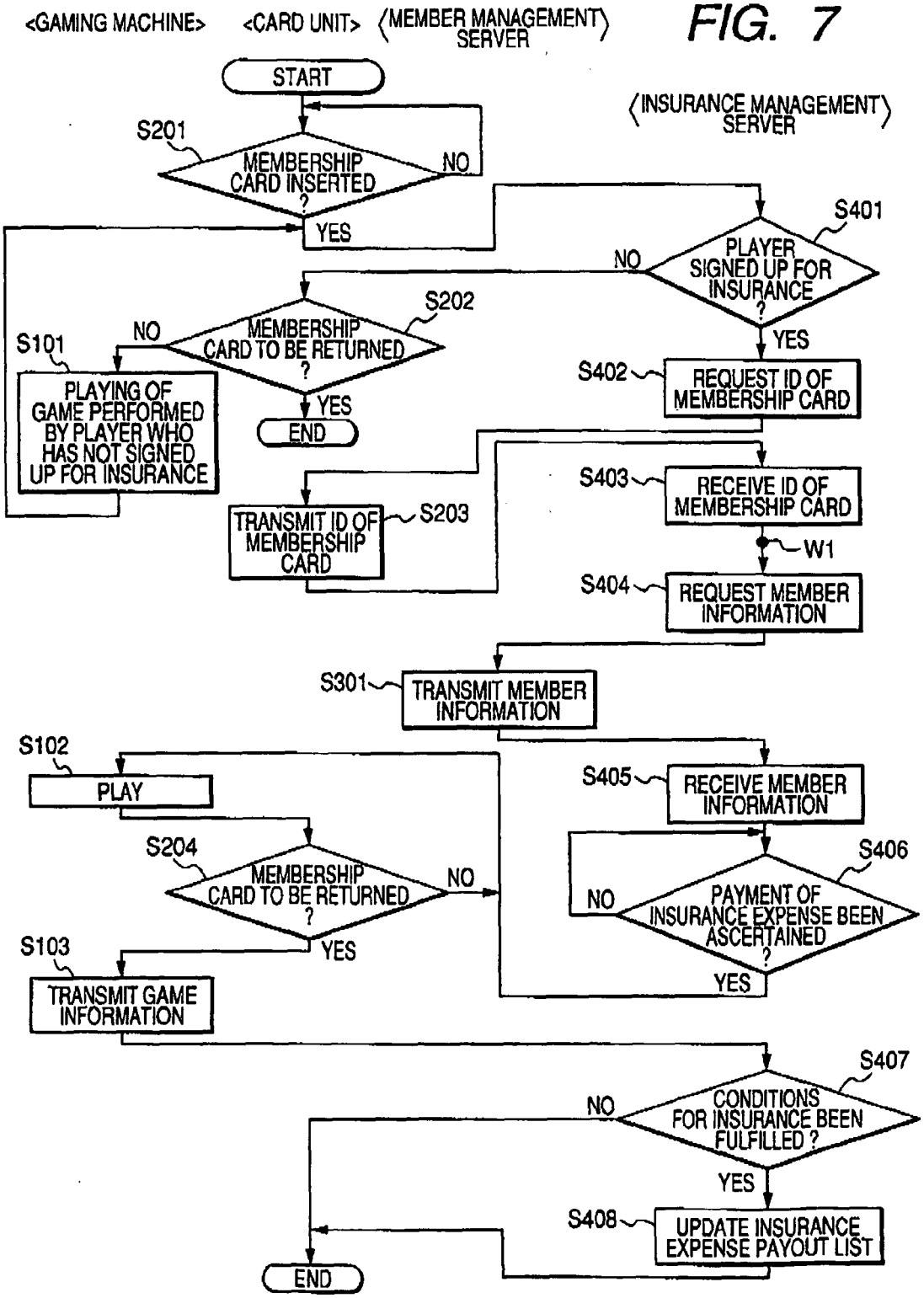

<GAMING MACHINE>
<CARD UNIT>
〈MEMBER MANAGEMENT SERVER〉
〈INSURANCE MANAGEMENT SERVER〉
START
S201
MEMBERSHIP CARD INSERTED ?
NO
YES
S401
PLAYER SIGNED UP FOR INSURANCE ?
NO
YES
S202
MEMBERSHIP CARD TO BE RETURNED ?
NO
YES
S101
PLAYING OF GAME PERFORMED BY PLAYER WHO HAS NOT SIGNED UP FOR INSURANCE
END
S402
REQUEST ID OF MEMBERSHIP CARD
S403
RECEIVE ID OF MEMBERSHIP CARD
TRANSMIT ID OF MEMBERSHIP CARD
S203
W1
S404
REQUEST MEMBER INFORMATION
S301
TRANSMIT MEMBER INFORMATION
S102
PLAY
S405
RECEIVE MEMBER INFORMATION
S204
MEMBERSHIP CARD TO BE RETURNED ?
NO
YES
S406
NO
PAYMENT OF INSURANCE EXPENSE BEEN ASCERTAINED ?
YES
S103
TRANSMIT GAME INFORMATION
S407
NO
CONDITIONS FOR INSURANCE BEEN FULFILLED ?
YES
S408
UPDATE INSURANCE EXPENSE PAYOUT LIST
END

FIG. 8

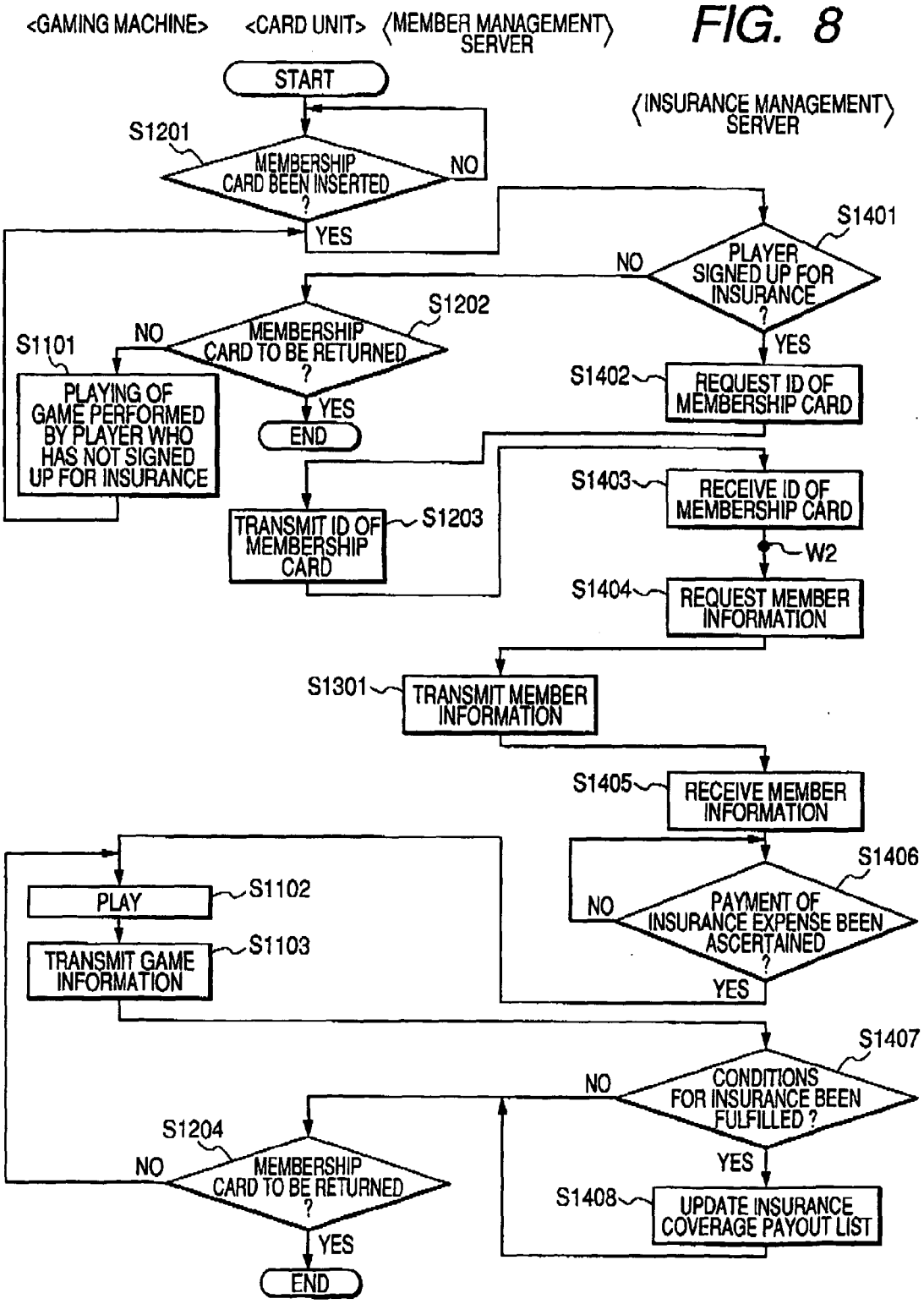

<GAMING MACHINE>
<CARD UNIT>
〈MEMBER MANAGEMENT SERVER〉
〈INSURANCE MANAGEMENT SERVER〉
START
S1201
MEMBERSHIP CARD BEEN INSERTED ?
NO
YES
S1401
PLAYER SIGNED UP FOR INSURANCE ?
NO
YES
S1202
MEMBERSHIP CARD TO BE RETURNED ?
NO
YES
S1101
PLAYING OF GAME PERFORMED BY PLAYER WHO HAS NOT SIGNED UP FOR INSURANCE
END
S1402
REQUEST ID OF MEMBERSHIP CARD
S1403
RECEIVE ID OF MEMBERSHIP CARD
W2
S1404
REQUEST MEMBER INFORMATION
TRANSMIT ID OF MEMBERSHIP CARD
S1203
S1301
TRANSMIT MEMBER INFORMATION
S1405
RECEIVE MEMBER INFORMATION
S1406
PAYMENT OF INSURANCE EXPENSE BEEN ASCERTAINED ?
NO
YES
PLAY
S1102
TRANSMIT GAME INFORMATION
S1103
S1407
CONDITIONS FOR INSURANCE BEEN FULFILLED ?
NO
YES
S1204
MEMBERSHIP CARD TO BE RETURNED ?
NO
YES
END
S1408
UPDATE INSURANCE COVERAGE PAYOUT LIST

FIG. 9

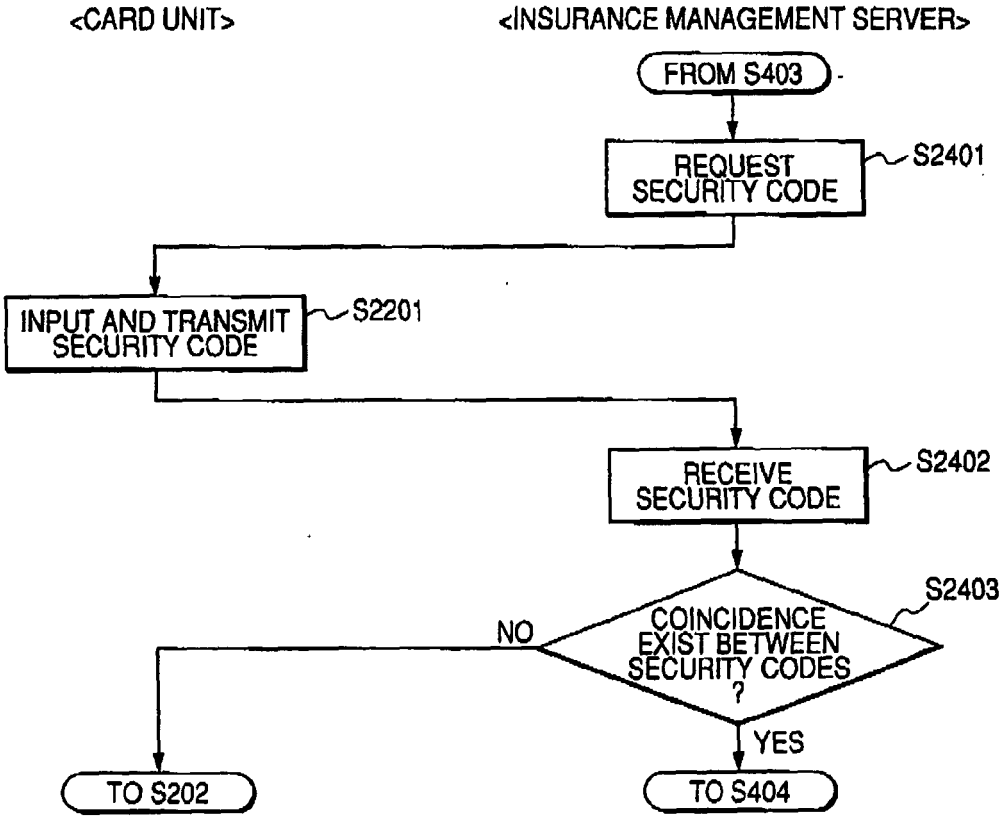

<CARD UNIT>
<INSURANCE MANAGEMENT SERVER>
FROM S403
REQUEST SECURITY CODE
S2401
INPUT AND TRANSMIT SECURITY CODE
S2201
RECEIVE SECURITY CODE
S2402
COINCIDENCE EXIST BETWEEN SECURITY CODES ?
S2403
NO
YES
TO S202
TO S404

FIG. 10

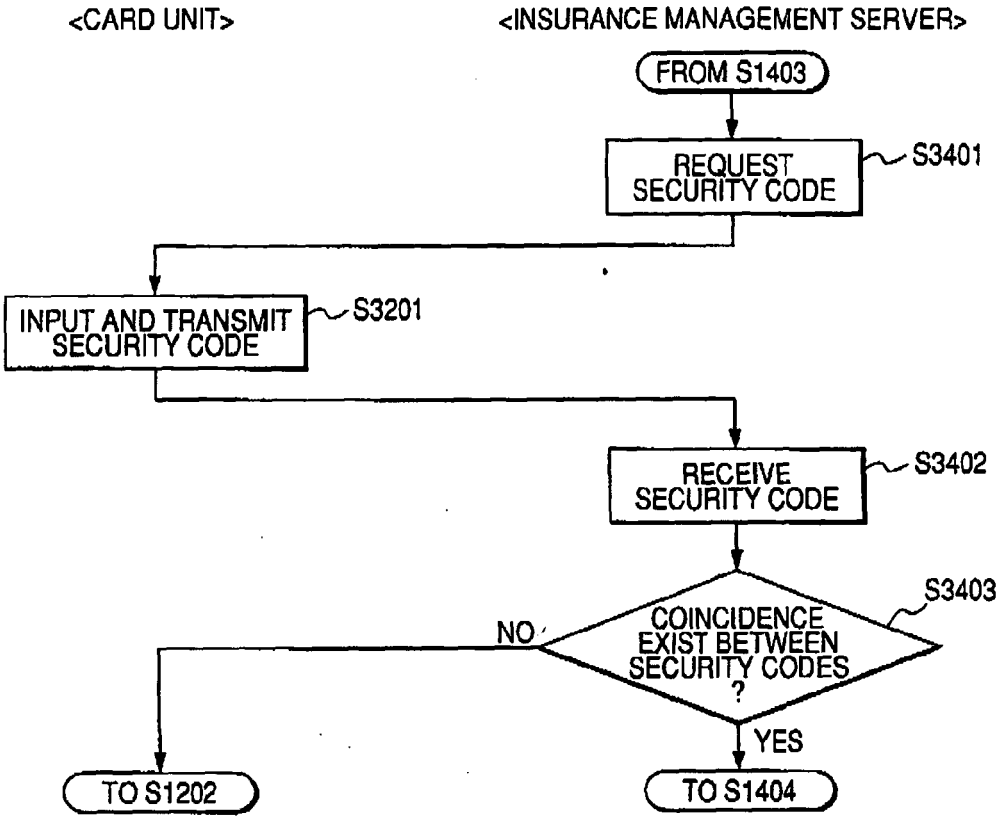

<CARD UNIT>
<INSURANCE MANAGEMENT SERVER>
FROM S1403
REQUEST SECURITY CODE
S3401
INPUT AND TRANSMIT SECURITY CODE
S3201
RECEIVE SECURITY CODE
S3402
COINCIDENCE EXIST BETWEEN SECURITY CODES ?
S3403
NO
YES
TO S1202
TO S1404

FIG. 11

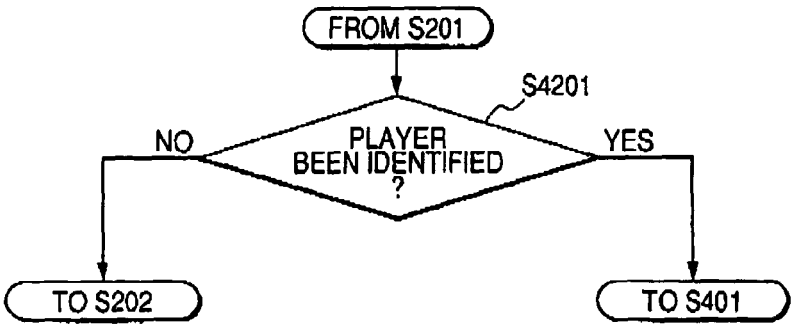
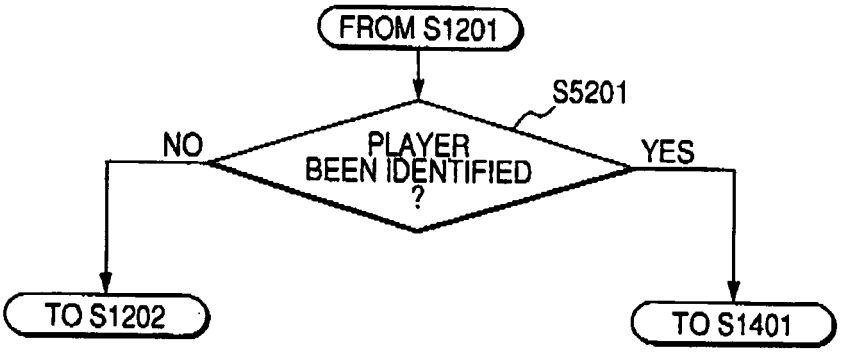

FROM S201
S4201
PLAYER BEEN IDENTIFIED ?
NO
YES
TO S202
TO S401

FIG. 12


FROM S1201
S5201
PLAYER BEEN IDENTIFIED ?
NO
YES
TO S1202
TO S1401

European Patent Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 06 00 4843

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
X	US 2003/220138 A1 (WALKER JAY S ET AL) 27 November 2003 (2003-11-27) * the whole document *	1-11	INV. G07F17/32
X	US 2003/119585 A1 (WALKER JAY S ET AL) 26 June 2003 (2003-06-26) * the whole document *	1-11	
X	US 2003/224854 A1 (JOAO RAYMOND ANTHONY) 4 December 2003 (2003-12-04) * the whole document *	1-11	
X	EP 0 497 562 A (KABUSHIKI KAISHA UNIVERSAL) 5 August 1992 (1992-08-05) * the whole document *	1-11	

TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC)

G07F

The present search report has been drawn up for all claims

Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner
The Hague	26 June 2006	Van Dop, E

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26-06-2006

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- JP 4244178 A **[0002]**