

April 22, 1941.

M. W. PETERSON

2,239,200

DEVICE FOR TRAINING FOOTBALL KICKERS

Filed Jan. 8, 1940

Fig. 3.

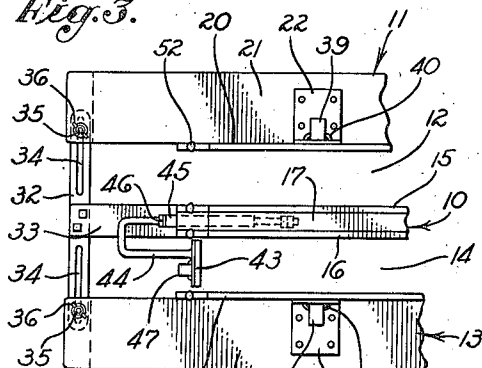


Fig. 1.

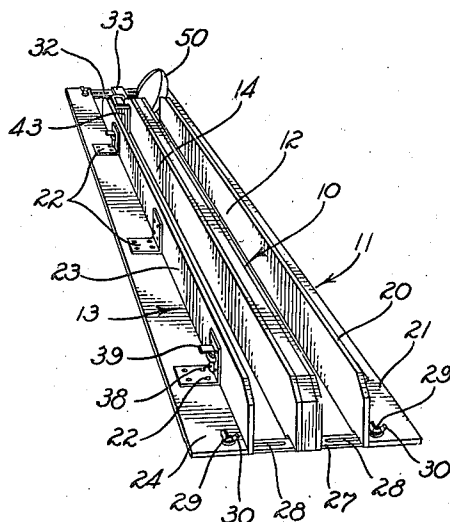


Fig. 4.

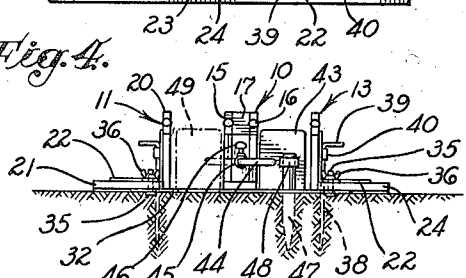


Fig. 5.

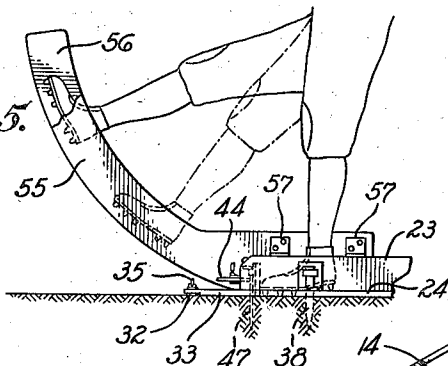
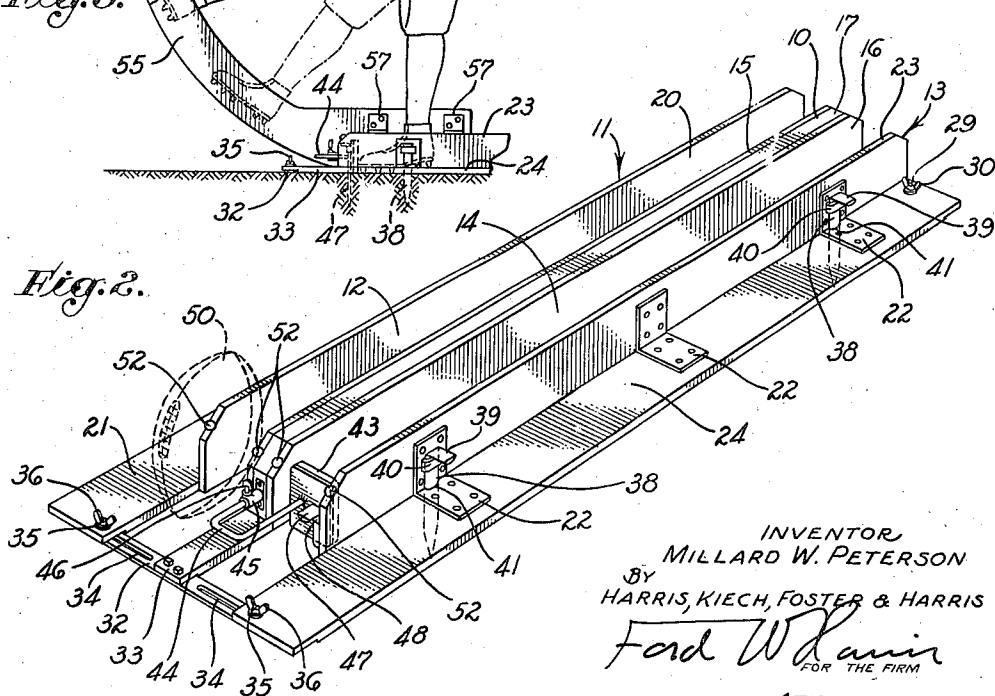


Fig. 2.



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## UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,239,200

DEVICE FOR TRAINING FOOTBALL  
KICKERS

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Application January 8, 1940, Serial No. 312,828

6 Claims. (Cl. 273—55)

My invention relates to football training devices and more particularly is directed to devices for developing accuracy and confidence in kicking a football.

For accuracy in place kicking it is essential that the arc transcribed by the player's foot in kicking the football be aligned with the goal and that the ball be struck squarely, i. e., be struck in such manner that the force of impact is in a radial plane of the football. To favor accuracy in kicking toward a goal, the player takes a position behind the football and aligns himself by sight with the football and the goal. The player then steps forward toward the ball and swings his foot in a kicking arc in the direction of his forward approach. The actual kicking movement is performed so quickly that it is exceedingly difficult, even by using a camera, to ascertain just what fault is committed in executing an inaccurate kick. In the absence of instructive criticism, a player may unknowingly repeat a fault until it becomes a habit and is especially apt to recur in the excitement of a game.

The general object of my invention is to develop skill in place kicking and to do so without the necessity of identifying, analyzing, and correcting the defects in a kicker's form. My invention is characterized by the concept of confining the player to an accurate technique in practice kicks. I propose to provide physical guide means whereby a player with little or no supervision may repeat correct and accurate practice kicks until correct performance and accurate placing becomes so habitual as to make the guide means unnecessary.

One object of my invention is to provide a straight guide channel that is wide enough to permit the forward movement therethrough of a player's foot in approaching and kicking the ball, but is narrow enough to restrict such forward path of the foot substantially to a straight line. Another object is to provide such a channel of approach in combination with means for positioning a football in alignment with the axis of the channel.

In the preferred form of my invention, one object is to guide the forward movement and final positioning of the foot on which the player stands when delivering the kick. I propose to compel the player not only to swing his kicking foot straight forward in kicking the ball but also to follow straight paths with his two feet respectively in walking toward the ball. If a player starts from a standing position aligned with both the stationary football and the goal, accuracy

necessarily follows such a procedure of walking straight toward the ball and kicking straight in the same direction. A specific object in mind is to provide indicating means, preferably in the form of a physical stop, for guidance in the final positioning of the weight-supporting foot of the player when the ball is being kicked. In the preferred form of my invention such an indicating means is adapted to be mounted in either of two guide channels for positioning of the weight-supporting foot of the player the other guide channel being used to direct the foot that kicks the ball.

A still further object of the invention is to provide means, preferably in the form of an attachment, for guiding a player's foot throughout the arc of a kicking stroke, whereby the player may practice the kicking stroke with repeated accuracy.

Other objects in mind relate to the physical construction of the device. One of these objects is to provide a unitary structure that is adjustable for different players, that is portable in that it may be carried on and off the playing field, and that is adapted for releasable anchorage to the ground.

The above and other objects and advantages of my invention will be apparent from the following detailed description, considered with the accompanying drawing.

In the drawing, which is to be taken as illustrative only:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of my invention aligned with a football goal the view being taken from the side and rear;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of the device on a somewhat larger scale taken from the side and front;

Fig. 3 is a fragmentary plan view showing the front portion of the device;

Fig. 4 is a front elevation of the device anchored to the ground; and

Fig. 5 is a side elevation of the device equipped with an attachment for guiding the player's foot in a kicking arc, a portion of the attachment being broken away.

In the preferred form of my invention shown in Figs. 1 to 4, the principal parts are an inner wall means, generally designated 10, an outer wall means generally designated 11, forming with the inner wall means a right-foot guide channel 12, and a second outer wall means 13 forming with the inner wall means a left-foot guide channel 14.

The inner wall means 10 may be of hollow

construction comprising a right plate 15, a left plate 16, and a plate or web 17 interconnecting the top edges and the end edges of the plates 15 and 16. The outer wall means 11 may comprise a vertical wall or plate 20 extending from a base plate 21 and connected thereto by a plurality of spaced angle members 22. In like manner the outer wall means 13 may comprise a vertical wall or plate 23 that is likewise connected to a base plate 24 by angle members 22.

The three wall means 10, 11, and 13 may be physically independent of each other, but in the preferred form of my invention the three wall means are adjustably inter-connected to constitute a unitary device. In the particular construction suggested by the drawing, a cross bar 27 is attached to the base of the inner wall means 10 at the rear end of the device, the cross bar extending laterally under each of the outer wall means 11 and 13. Each arm of the cross bar 27 is provided with a slot 28 through which passes a screw 29 mounted in the corresponding base plate 21 or 24, the screw being provided with a suitable thumb nut 30 for releasably clamping the base plate to the cross bar. In like manner a cross bar 32 on a forward extension 33 of the inner wall means 10 has a slot 34 on each side to receive a screw 35 mounted in the corresponding base plate, a thumb screw 36 being carried by the screw. One advantage of this construction is that a relatively wide base is provided to hold each of the three wall means upright in a stable manner.

The device may be made of such weight that no anchorage means is necessary to maintain it in a selected disposition on the ground of the playing field. The preferred form of my invention, however, is relatively light to favor portability, and it is desirable therefore to add some means for releasably anchoring the device to the soil. As best shown in Fig. 2, such means may comprise a plurality of spikes or blades 38 for pinning the structure to the ground. In the particular form shown in the drawing, each blade 38 is formed with a head flange 39 to receive blows for driving the blade into the soil, and the blade is guided by a metal loop 40 and an aperture 41 in one of the angle members 22.

I have found that for accuracy in kicking, the foot on which the player supports his weight while kicking the ball should have the same position relative to the ball each time the ball is kicked. To form an ingrained habit on the part of the player of placing his weight-supporting foot at the same relative position each time he kicks the ball, I provide in the preferred form of my invention a footstop. In the drawing the stop comprises a stop plate 43 in the left-foot guide channel 14, it being assumed that the particular player for whom the apparatus is adjusted habitually stands on his left foot while kicking the ball with his right foot. The stop plate 43 is mounted on a connection to the left plate 16 or the plate 23, and, as illustrated in the drawing, is mounted on an arm 44, which may be U-shaped. The arm 44 is in turn rotatably and slidably mounted in a sleeve 45 on the front end of the inner wall means 10, the arm being adjustably retained in the sleeve by a thumb screw 46. Preferably the stop plate 43 is anchored to the ground by a blade 47 similar to the blades 38, the blade 47 extending through a metal loop 48 on the forward face of the stop plate. It is to be noted that the stop plate 43 may be swung to the dotted position 49 in Fig. 4 if the particular player for whom the

device is adjusted habitually stands on his right foot while kicking the ball with his left foot. It is apparent that either of the guide channels 12 and 14 may be employed to guide the foot that kicks the ball.

A football 50 to be kicked by guidance of the device may be positioned in alignment with one or the other of the channels 12 and 14 in any suitable manner. In the preferred form of my invention, the ball simply rests against the ends of the channel so that the channel walls serve as guide means to favor positioning the ball with the axis of the ball intersecting the axis of the channel. To avoid damage to the covering of the ball by the edges of the channel walls and to maintain the ball in proper position, means such as a small cushion 52 of rubber may be mounted on the end of each of the four wall plates 15, 16, 20, and 23.

To employ my invention for practicing place kicks, the device is aligned with a football goal 53, as indicated in Fig. 1, and the football 50 is placed in inclined position in engagement with a pair of the cushions 52. The apparatus in Figs. 1 and 2 is set up for a right-foot kicker, the ball being at the end of the right-foot guide channel 12 and the stop plate 43 being in the left-foot guide channel 14. The player stands in the rear portion of the device with his right foot in the channel 12 and his left foot in the channel 14, the position of the player being in alignment with the ball and the goal 53. The player then strides forward with each foot guided in a straight path by one of the guide channels, the walls of each channel being high enough to confine the player's foot at the top of each step as the player walks forward. The starting position of the individual player in the device is so selected relative to the length of his particular stride that the player ends with his left foot against the stop plate 43, which stop is adjusted at the position at which the player should stand on his left foot while he swings his right foot forward in a kicking arc. The right-foot guide channel 12 guides the kicking foot as the foot approaches the ball in the initial portion of the kicking arc. Since the kicking foot is guided in a straight line and since the ball is resting in a position symmetrical with that straight line, the ball is necessarily propelled forward in alignment with the axis of the right-foot guide channel and therefore is directed toward the distant goal 53.

Since the device compels the player on each practice kick to stride toward the ball in a straight line with accurately directed straight-line steps and to make accurately directed impact with the ball, the player soon becomes so accustomed to the predetermined alignment that accuracy in the kicking technique may be performed by habit without the assistance of the device.

The purpose of the attachment shown in Fig. 5 is to provide guidance throughout the kicking arc in addition to guidance in striding toward the stationary football, the attachment being intended to be used for practice motions without the ball. The attachment comprises two parallel arcuate plates 55 and 56 adapted to be mounted on the two walls of one of the guide channels 12 and 14 to serve as an arcuate extension of the guide channel. In Fig. 5 the two arcuate plates 55 and 56 are mounted respectively on the inner wall means 10 and the outer wall means 11 to serve as an extension of the right-foot guide channel 12. Preferably the arcuate plates are adapted to lie in the same planes as the corresponding channel walls and therefore are cut

away to conform with the top and front edges of the channel walls. Any suitable means may be employed for detachably securing the arcuate plates 55 and 56 in the required dispositions. Thus, angle clips 57 resting on the top of the inner wall means 10 may be employed to secure the leftward arcuate plate 55, and other suitable clip means may be employed for the other arcuate plate 56.

Fig. 5 shows the position of the player at the end of his forward approach through the two guide channels 12 and 14, the left foot being in the guide channel 14 against the stop plate 43 and the right foot swinging in a forward arc, the swinging foot being confined to a vertical plane by the two arcuate plates 55 and 56. After the player becomes thoroughly grounded in the vertical kick, the arcuate plates 55 and 56 are removed, and the football is substituted for the previously described practice procedure.

The preferred form of my invention described herein in specific detail will suggest to those skilled in the art various changes, modifications, and substitutions that do not depart from my underlying concept, and I reserve the right to all such changes, modifications, and substitutions that properly come within the scope of my appended claims.

I claim as my invention:

1. A device for training football players to kick a stationary football accurately toward a goal, said device having: a first wall; a second wall adjustably spaced from said first wall to form therewith a channel to guide a player's foot in a straight line toward said stationary football; and means to hold said two walls stationary on the ground in alignment with said goal.

2. A device for training football kickers having: two upright walls forming a channel to guide the kicker's foot in a straight line; and means to hold a football with the axis of the football at least approximating a position intersecting the axis of said channel.

3. A device for training football players to kick a stationary football accurately toward a goal, said device having: walls forming a first

channel adapted to guide the kicking foot of a player in a substantially straight line as the player swings his foot against the football; and walls forming a second channel spaced laterally from said first channel to guide the other foot of the player in a substantially straight line as he walks toward the football.

4. A device for training football players to kick a stationary football accurately toward a goal, said device having: walls forming a first channel adapted to guide the kicking foot of a player in a substantially straight line as the player swings his foot against the football; walls forming a second channel spaced laterally from said first channel to guide the other foot of the player in a substantially straight line as he walks toward the football; and a stop to limit the forward movement of the player's foot in said second channel at a proper position for carrying the player's weight while the ball is being kicked by the other foot.

5. A device as set forth in claim 4 in which said stop is movable between a first position for cooperation with one of said channels and a second position for cooperation with the other of said channels whereby either channel may be used to guide the kicking foot or the weight-bearing foot of a player.

6. A device for training football players to kick a stationary football accurately toward a goal, said device having: an inner wall means; a first outer wall adjustably connected with said inner wall means to form therewith a first channel to guide a player's foot in a straight line as the player approaches the stationary football; a second outer wall adjustably connected with said inner wall means to form therewith a second channel to guide the other foot of the player in a straight line as the player approaches the football; means to indicate in one of said channels the position of the weight-supporting foot of the player when the ball is being kicked; and means to anchor said interconnected walls to the ground in alignment with said goal.

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