

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,171,118

METHOD OF COVERING TENNIS BALLS

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No Drawing. Application November 4, 1937, Se-
rial No. 172,777. In Great Britain October 13,
1936

7 Claims. (Cl. 154—16)

My invention relates to balls for tennis and the like games, and in particular to the external fabric covering of inflated or inflatable covered rubber balls.

Heretofore, the covering envelope of such balls has commonly been formed of a plurality of pieces or sections of textile cloth, such as melton cloth. By employing certain methods, such as a cloth covering in the resulting product may present a seamless or substantially seamless envelope to the ball.

A method by which this may be achieved is, briefly, to provide the pieces or sections of cloth in the unfulled state, apply these to the ball and utilise a subsequent fulling operating to create a seamless covering.

My present invention provides a method by which there is formed a seamless or substantially seamless ball covering, employing a plurality of pieces or sections of cloth in which the "nap" characteristic so desirable particularly in the covering of a tennis ball, shall be at a maximum, or at any rate appreciably greater than that previously known in a seamless covering of this type.

According to my invention in a covered rubber ball for tennis and like games, a covering is achieved by taking textile cloth which has been milled until it is only partly fulled, or is fulled to a predetermined or limited extent with a consequent limited shrinkage, then applying suitable pieces or sections of such prepared cloth to the ball, so that upon renewal or repetition of the fulling operation, the result is a substantially seamless cloth covering.

Preferably, after the initial milling and fulling, and before pieces or sections of the cloth are applied to the ball, the cloth is subjected to treatment such as teaselling or the like, whereby the "nap" of the cloth is effectively raised.

It will, of course, be understood that the teaselling or like nap-raising treatment is applied to that side of the cloth which is ultimately to constitute the external ball surface.

In an alternative arrangement, after the initial milling and fulling, the pieces or sections of the cloth are applied to the ball and then sub-

jected to treatment, such as teaselling and finally the fulling operation is renewed or repeated to effect a substantially seamless ball covering.

Or, the pieces of cloth are applied to the ball, the fulling operation then renewed or repeated to effect a substantial seamless ball covering and then finally the cloth covering is subjected to treatment, such as teaselling.

In this latter case, if desired, instead of the treatment, such as teaselling being the final operation, a further fulling operation takes place to, as it were, consolidate the nap created by the treatment, such as teaselling.

Having described my invention and in what manner the same is to be performed, I claim—

1. A method for forming cloth covered tennis balls which comprises partly fulling a textile cloth, applying sections of said partly fulled cloth to a rubber ball to cover the latter and thereafter completing the fulling of said cloth.

2. The process of claim 1, in which after the initial partial fulling the cloth is teaseled to raise a nap on the side to constitute the external ball surface.

3. The method of claim 1, in which the cloth is teaseled after being mounted on the ball and before the final fulling operation.

4. The process of claim 1, in which said cloth is teaseled after being fulled on said ball.

5. The method of claim 1, in which said cloth is teaseled after being fulled on the ball and is thereafter further fulled.

6. A method for forming cloth covered tennis balls which comprises fulling a textile cloth to a predetermined extent to limit the subsequent shrinkage of said cloth, applying sections of said partly fulled cloth to a ball to cover the latter, and thereafter completing the fulling of said cloth on said ball.

7. A method of forming cloth covered tennis balls which comprises applying sections of a partly fulled cloth of predetermined limited shrinkage to a rubber ball to cover the latter, and thereafter completing the fulling and shrinking of said cloth on said ball.

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