

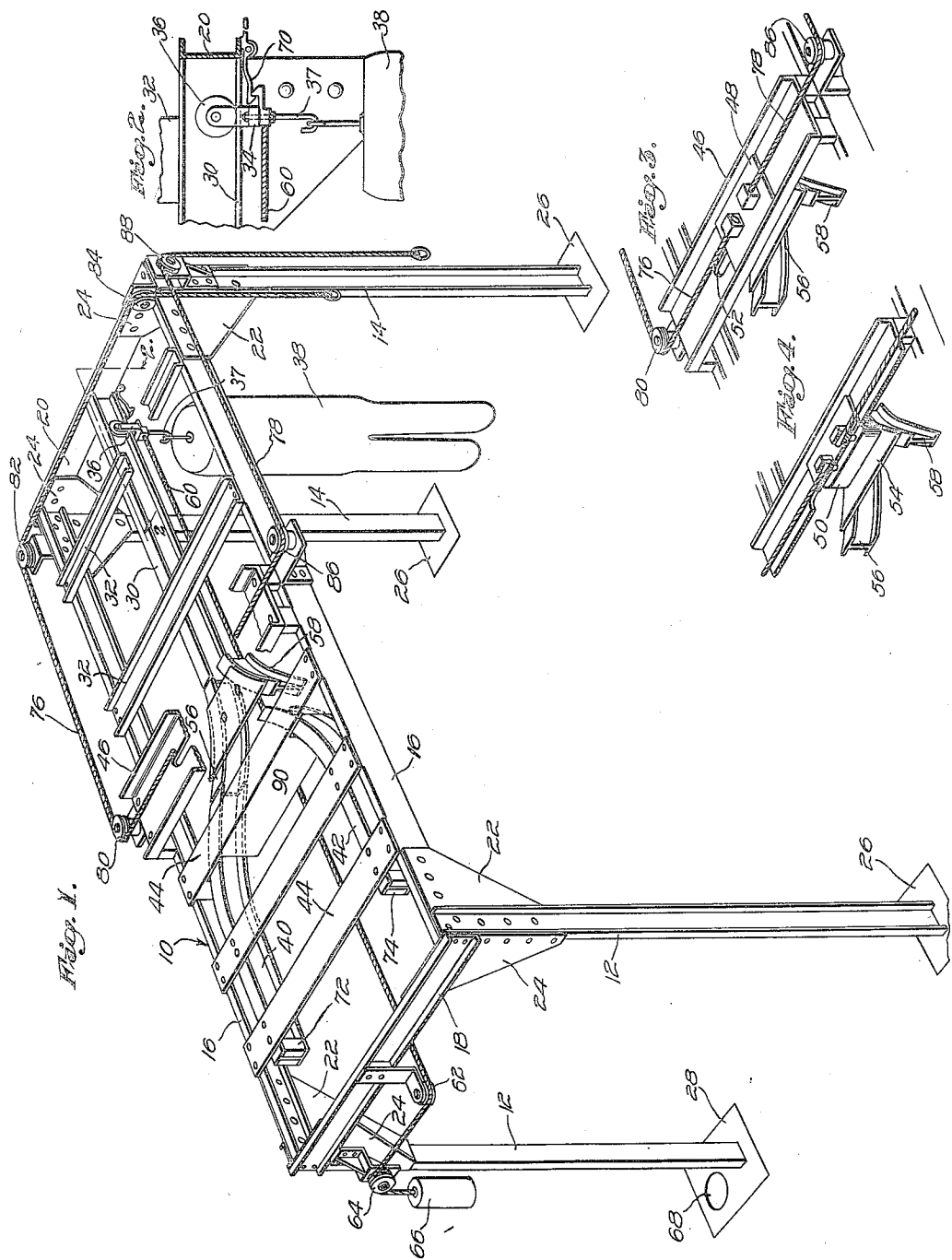
Dec. 5, 1950

R. H. BANBURY

2,532,880

FOOTBALL PRACTICE APPARATUS

Filed Jan. 23, 1946



Inventor
Richard H. Banbury
by S. Jay Teller
Attorney

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,532,880

FOOTBALL PRACTICE APPARATUS

Richard H. Banbury, Hartford, Conn.

Application January 23, 1946, Serial No. 642,807

10 Claims. (Cl. 273--55)

1

The invention relates particularly to an apparatus for instructing football players and for giving them practice and experience in tackling. A tackling dummy suspended from a framework has heretofore been commonly provided, the dummy being tackled by the players in order to develop skill in tackling. However, a stationary dummy or even a dummy movable along a fixed path does not closely simulate the conditions of a football game, as the player knows in advance what the position of the dummy is or will be, and there is no element of uncertainty or surprise. Tackling dummies as heretofore provided, although useful, failed to provide the players with any close simulation of the conditions encountered in actual play.

The principal object of the present invention is to provide a means for supporting and moving a practice tackling dummy in such a way that its movement involves uncertainty or surprise, the dummy moving in a path which is unpredictable by the player.

Other objects of the invention relate to various features of construction and arrangements of parts which are incident to the principal object stated above.

In the drawing I have shown in detail a preferred embodiment of the invention, but it will be understood that various changes may be made from the construction shown, and that the drawing is not to be construed as defining or limiting the scope of the invention, the claims forming a part of this specification being relied upon for that purpose.

Of the drawing, Fig. 1 is a perspective view of an apparatus embodying the invention, a portion thereof near the center being broken away to more clearly show some of the parts.

Fig. 2 is a fragmentary sectional view taken along the line 2--2 of Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is a fragmentary perspective view similar to the central portion of Fig. 1 but completely showing some of the parts which are broken away in Fig. 1.

Fig. 4 is a view similar to Fig. 3 with some of the parts broken away and shown in section.

Referring to the drawing, particularly Fig. 1 thereof, it will be seen that the apparatus includes a main generally rectangular framework 10 mounted on upright supporting posts 12, 12 and 14, 14. The details of the framework 10 may be widely varied, but as shown it comprises main longitudinal side bars 16, 16 and front and rear crossbars 18 and 20. At the corners of the frame-

2

work the bars 16, 16, 18 and 20 are connected with each other and with the upright posts 12, 12 and 14, 14 by means of suitable corner plates 22 and 24. The upright posts 12, 12 and 14, 14 are suitably supported in the ground, and as shown, they are imbedded in concrete foundation blocks 26, 26 and 28.

In accordance with the invention, I provide means for moving a tackling dummy in a generally longitudinal forward direction and I also provide means for varying the path of the said movement of the dummy so that the player cannot foresee the exact path, it being necessary for him to move quickly in one direction or another according to the particular path of movement of the dummy which he is unable to predict or anticipate. The means for varying the path of movement of the dummy may be widely varied but a preferred construction is shown in the drawing and will be described in detail.

Supported on the rear portion of the main framework is a longitudinal guide rail 30, this being shown as an I-shaped rail supported on the framework by cross members 32, 32. A carrier is longitudinally movable in a fixed path along the rail 30, this carrier being in the form of a trolley 34 having supporting wheels 36 engaging the top surfaces of the two lower flanges of the I-shaped rail. Only one of the wheels 36 is shown in the drawing, but it will be understood that there is a similar wheel 36 at the opposite side of the rail 30. The carrier 34 is provided with a hook 37 which serves to support and carry a tackling dummy 38. The dummy 38 can be of any usual or preferred construction.

In order that the path of movement of the carrier 34 may be varied when it reaches the front portion of the framework two optionally usable branch rails 40 and 42 are provided which are similar in size and in cross sectional shape to the main rail 30. The rails 40 and 42 are supported on the front portion of the main framework by cross members 44, 44. The two rails 40 and 42 are oppositely curved inward at their rear portions as shown, and a switch device is provided for alternatively and optionally connecting one or the other of them with the main rail 30. As shown, the switch device is carried by a transverse channel member 46 supported on the main framework near the center thereof. A plate 48 is slidably movable in the channel 46 and the plate carries a depending member 50 which extends through a slot 52 in the channel 46. Carried by the member 50 at the bottom thereof is a plate 54 which carries

two oppositely inclined rail elements 56 and 58 which are similar in size and in cross sectional shape to the main rail 30 and to the branch rails 40 and 42. The plate 48 and the parts carried thereby including the rail elements 56 and 58 are movable transversely either to bring the rail element 56 into position to bridge the space between the main rail 30 and the branch rail 40, or to bring the rail element 58 into position to bridge the space between the main rail 30 and the branch rail 42. Fig. 1 shows the rail element 56 connecting the main rail 30 and the branch rail 40 but by moving the switch toward the left the rail element 58 may be moved into position to connect the main rail 30 with the branch rail 42.

The guide rail 30, the movable rail elements 56 and 58 and the rails 40 and 42 collectively constitute manually adjustable guiding means for the carrier 34, the carrier and dummy being guided by the guide means for movement in a generally longitudinal forward direction. By manually adjusting the guiding means, specifically by moving the rail elements 56 and 58, the carrier and dummy are guided along optionally different paths during the generally longitudinal forward movement thereof.

A suitable means is provided for rapidly moving the carrier 34 and the dummy 38 in the generally longitudinal forward direction. As shown, this means is a rope 60 connected with the carrier 34 and extending at the front over sheaves 62 and 64. At the front the rope 60 carries a weight 66 which tensions the rope to rapidly move the carrier and dummy forward. The weight is movable downward and upward in a substantially fixed path, and if necessary in order to provide a sufficient distance of travel for the weight 66, the concrete foundation block 29 may be provided with a hole 68 of sufficient size and depth to permit the weight to enter it and move downward far enough to complete the necessary movement of the carrier and the dummy. The sheaves 62 and 64 constitute guiding means for the rope, and the sheave 62 enables a portion of the rope to shift transversely in accordance with variations in the path of movement of the carrier and dummy. The carrier 34 can be held against movement by the rope 60 by means of a manually releasable latch 70 connected with the rear crossbar 20 of the framework. The rails 40 and 42 are provided with stops 72 and 74 to prevent the carrier from running off from the front ends of the said rails.

A suitable means is provided for operating the switch device at a point remote therefrom, and as shown there are two ropes 76 and 78 both connected with the plate 48. The rope 76 at the left passes over sheaves 80, 82 and 84 to a position at or near the rear of the main framework. The rope 78 at the right passes over sheaves 86 and 88 to a position adjacent that of the rear portion of the rope 76.

In order that the player may not observe the position of the switch so as to be able to anticipate or predict the path of movement of the carrier and the dummy, I preferably provide a shield or baffle at the front of the switch device and so positioned as to obstruct the view thereof from the front. As shown, there is a baffle 90 depending from the rear cross member 44, this having slots through which the rails 40 and 42 extend.

In using the apparatus the player to be instructed stands at the front of the apparatus,

and if desired, between the front upright posts 12, 12. The instructor, by manipulating the ropes 76 and 78, adjusts the switch device to one position or the other so as to connect either the branch rail 40 or the branch rail 42 with the main rail 30. On account of the baffle 86 the player cannot see the position of the switch device and therefore cannot know what the path of movement of the dummy will be. Then the instructor releases the latch 70 to permit the carrier and the dummy to be rapidly moved forward by means of the rope 60 and the weight 66. When the carrier reaches the front end of the rail 30 it is guided to the left or to the right according to the setting of the switch device and continues to travel along either the branch rail 40 or the branch rail 42. The player then tackles the dummy and inasmuch as he cannot know in advance which path the dummy will follow, he is confronted with a condition closely simulating that encountered in actual play and obtains valuable practice and experience. The instructor can observe his technique in tackling and can point out any errors and can instruct him as to proper tackling procedure.

What I claim is:

1. In a football practice apparatus, the combination of a main supporting framework, a movable carrier for a tackling dummy, means for moving the carrier and dummy in a generally longitudinal forward direction, and manually adjustable means supported by the framework for guiding the carrier and dummy along optionally different paths during the generally longitudinal forward movement thereof.

2. In a football practice apparatus, the combination of a main supporting framework, a movable carrier for a tackling dummy, means supported by the framework for guiding the carrier and the dummy for movement in a generally longitudinal forward direction, the said guiding means including a portion transversely movable relatively to the framework, and means manually operable from a position remote from the movable portion of the guiding means for transversely moving the said portion to vary the path of the generally longitudinal forward movement of the carrier and dummy.

3. In a football practice apparatus, the combination of a main supporting framework, a movable carrier for a tackling dummy, means supported by the framework for guiding the carrier and the dummy for movement in a generally longitudinal forward direction, the said guiding means including a portion transversely movable relatively to the framework, means for rapidly moving the carrier and dummy along the guiding means in the forward direction, and means manually operable from a position remote from the movable portion of the guiding means for transversely moving the said portion to vary the path of the generally longitudinal forward movement of the carrier and dummy.

4. In a football practice apparatus, the combination of a main supporting framework, a movable carrier for a tackling dummy, means supported by the framework for guiding the carrier and the dummy for movement in a generally longitudinal forward direction, the said guiding means including a portion transversely movable relatively to the framework, means manually operable from a position remote from the movable portion of the guiding means for transversely moving the said portion to vary the path of the generally longitudinal forward move-

5

ment of the carrier and dummy, a weight vertically movable in a substantially fixed path, a rope connected with the weight and with the carrier and enabling the former to rapidly move the latter in the forward direction along the guiding means, and rope guiding means supported by the framework and enabling a portion of the rope to shift transversely during movement of the carrier and dummy in accordance with variations in the path of the said movement.

5. In a football practice apparatus, the combination of a main supporting framework, a movable carrier for a tackling dummy, means supported by the framework for guiding the carrier and the dummy for movement in a generally longitudinal forward direction, the said guiding means including a portion transversely movable relatively to the framework, tension means for rapidly moving the carrier and dummy along the guiding means in the forward direction, a latch supported by the framework near the rear thereof for holding the carrier and dummy against movement by the tension means, the said latch being optionally releasable manually to permit such movement, and means manually operable from a position near the rear of the framework and adjacent the latch for transversely moving the said movable portion of the guiding means to vary the path of the generally longitudinal forward movement of the carrier and dummy.

6. In a football practice apparatus, the combination of a movable carrier for a tackling dummy, a main guide rail for the carrier, a plurality of selectively usable branch guide rails for the carrier, a movable switch for connecting the main rail with any one of the branch rails, means manually operable from a position remote from the switch for moving the said switch, and means for rapidly moving the carrier and dummy along the main rail and along the branch rail connected therewith by the switch.

7. In a football practice apparatus, the combination of a movable carrier for a tackling dummy, a main guide rail for the carrier, a plurality of selectively usable branch guide rails for the carrier, a movable switch for connecting the main rail with any one of the branch rails, means manually operable from a position at the rear of the apparatus for moving the said switch, and means for rapidly moving the carrier and dummy along the main rail and along the branch rail connected therewith by the switch.

8. In a football practice apparatus, the combination of a main framework, a movable carrier for a tackling dummy, a main guide rail

6

for the carrier supported on the rear portion of the framework, a plurality of selectively usable branch guide rails for the carrier supported on the front portion of the framework, a movable switch for connecting the main rail with any one of the branch rails, tension means for moving the carrier and dummy from rear to front along the main rail and along the branch rail connected therewith, a latch at the rear of the framework for holding the carrier and dummy against movement by the tension means, the said latch being optionally releasable manually to permit such movement, and means manually operable from a position at the rear of the framework and adjacent the latch for moving the switch.

9. In a football practice apparatus, the combination of a main framework, a movable carrier for a tackling dummy, a main guide rail for the carrier supported on the rear portion of the framework, a plurality of selectively usable branch guide rails for the carrier supported on the front portion of the framework, a manually operable switch for connecting the main rail with any one of the branch rails, means for moving the carrier and dummy from rear to front along the main rail and along the branch rail connected therewith, and means at the front of the switch for preventing observation thereof from a position at the front of the framework.

10. In a football practice apparatus, the combination of a main framework, a movable carrier for a tackling dummy, a main guide rail for the carrier supported on the rear portion of the framework, a plurality of selectively usable branch guide rails for the carrier supported on the front portion of the framework, a manually operable switch for connecting the main rail with any one of the branch rails, means remote from the switch for manually operating it, means for moving the carrier and dummy from rear to front along the main rail and along the branch rail connected therewith, and means at the front of the switch for preventing observation thereof from a position at the front of the framework.

RICHARD H. BANBURY.

REFERENCES CITED

The following references are of record in the file of this patent:

UNITED STATES PATENTS.

Number	Name	Date
784,037	Cundall	Mar. 7, 1905
814,192	Dentler	Mar. 6, 1906
1,670,703	Wylie et al.	May 22, 1928
2,153,384	Mazza	Apr. 4, 1939