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Domka et al.

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[54] **BALL GAME DEVICE HAVING A FLEXIBLE HANDLE**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **273/110,** 273/113, 273/115

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63f 7/16**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/108, 109, 110, 113, 273/115, 118 R, 1 R, 111, 112, 114, 116, 117, 153 R, 144, 145 R, 145 A, 145 C

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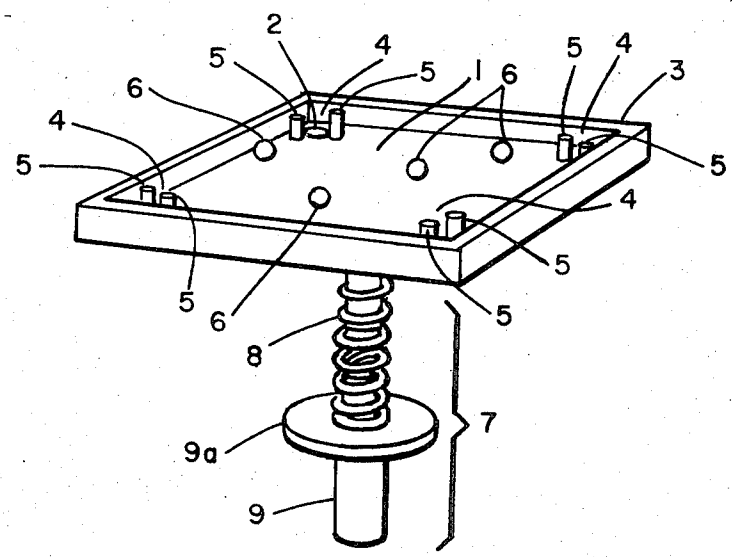
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Assistant Examiner—Harry G. Strappello
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A hand-held game device having a platform with cavities to receive spherical objects is described. The device features a single flexible handle by which the platform is manipulated.

10 Claims, 7 Drawing Figures



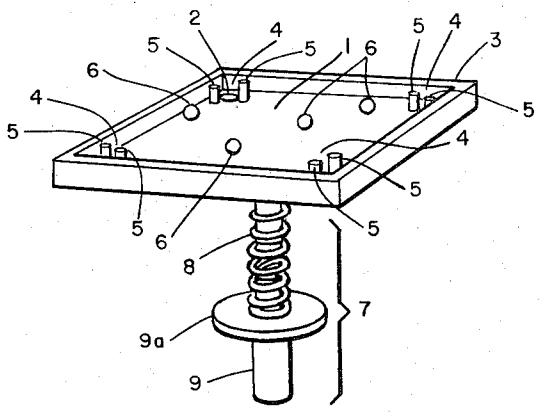


FIGURE 1

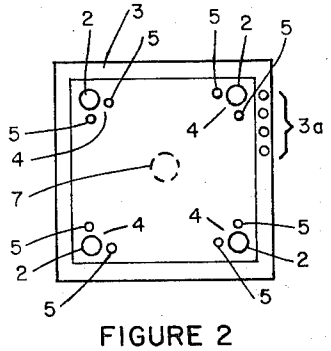


FIGURE 2

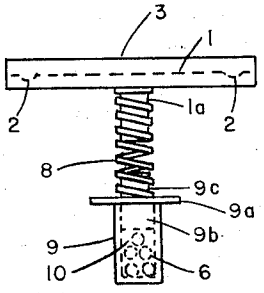


FIGURE 3

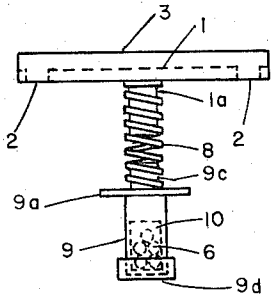


FIGURE 4

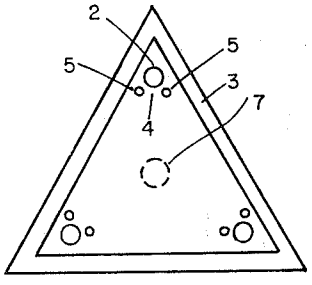


FIGURE 5

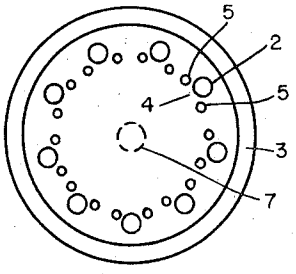


FIGURE 6

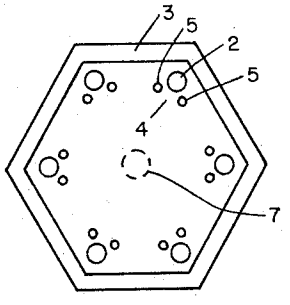


FIGURE 7

BALL GAME DEVICE HAVING A FLEXIBLE HANDLE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is concerned with a platform game device in which spherical objects are directed to seat in cavities provided in the platform. The device features (1) guard means defining a gateway at each cavity, and (2) single flexible handle to control movement of the platform. The game device object is to manipulate the platform until one spherical object is seated in each cavity on the platform. Since the device is hand held, the handle is flexible and the spherical objects must pass through gateway, (1) it makes it more difficult to achieve the game device's object, (2) it requires greater skill on the part of player to achieve the object, and (3) it provides greater challenge to and more enjoyment for the player. Furthermore, the game device is completely portable and self-contained, requiring no other supporting member, e.g., a table.

Game devices having an enclosed platform with cavities and holding spherical objects which, by moving the platform, are caused to seat in the cavities, are known. (See U.S. Pat. No. 574,394; U.S. Pat. No. 1,567,966; U.S. Pat. No. 1,768,016; U.S. Pat. No. 3,236,522)

The present game device, however, is unique in structure and design, is completely portable, and provides the playing advantages set out above.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A game device for use with spherical objects comprising (1) a platform having a top and bottom, (2) with a peripheral enclosing member, (3) cavities in said top adjacent to the periphery, (4) with guard elements provided at each cavity, said guard elements defining openings through which the spherical objects must pass to enter the cavity, and (5) a single flexible handle means attached to said bottom whereby the platform holding the spherical objects is manipulated with the handle to cause the spherical objects to seat in the cavities.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** is a full view of a game device of the present invention.

FIG. **2** is a top view of the FIG. **1** device.

FIG. **3** is a side view of a FIG. **1** device. It illustrates, in phantom, one type of platform cavity and sphere storage space construction.

FIG. **4** is a side view of a FIG. **1** device. It illustrates, in phantom, another type of platform cavity and sphere storage space construction.

FIGS. **5, 6** and **7** are top views of the present game device, illustrating other platform shapes and cavity arrangements.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

A preferred embodiment of the present invention is a game device for use with spherical objects comprising

1. a platform having a top and a bottom,

2. enclosing member circumscribing said platform,

3. cavities in the top of said platform adjacent to said enclosing member to receive said spherical objects, each of said cavities (a) being capable of receiving one of said spherical objects, and (b) having guard means arranged and spaced to define an opening through which said spherical object must pass to seat in said cavity, and

4. single handle means extending from the bottom of said platform, said handle means having at least one flexible member,

whereby said platform is manipulated by said handle means in order to cause said spherical objects to seat in said cavities.

In still another embodiment, the handle means can also provide a space for storing the spherical objects when the device is not being used.

For a fuller understanding of the present invention, we will consider the device illustrated in FIGS. **1–7.** The same number is used to designate the same element in the Figures.

FIG. **1** illustrates, in full view, a game device of the present invention. The platform **1** has a number of cavities located in the four corners, one of which **2** is shown. The cavity **2** is adjacent to the retaining member **3.** Each cavity **2** has a gateway (opening) **4.** This opening **4** is formed by the guard means **5.** The guard means **5** are positioned so that the opening **4** offers the only path to a cavity **2** for a spherical object **6.** A handle means **7** extends from the bottom of the platform **1.** This handle means **7** includes a flexible element **8,** a hand placement element **9,** having a rest element **9***a.*

In using the device (playing the game), the device is held by hand at the placement element **9.** A number of spherical objects **6,** usually one for each cavity **2** in the platform **1,** are placed in the center of the platform **1.** The platform **1** is then manipulated by the handle **7** in order to cause the spherical objects **6** to pass through the openings **4** and be seated in the cavities **2.** When each cavity **2** has a spherical object seated therein, the game is completed. It is evident that movement of the handle **7** will cause the platform **1** to tilt from the horizontal in one direction, and the action of flexible element **8** will be to return the platform **1** back to the horizontal and further to a position opposite initial tilt direction. The extent of this tilt-return-tilt movement is to a degree dependent on the flexibility of the flexible means **8.** The amount of flexibility in this element is not fixed and can be varied as is desired. The more flexible the element **8** is the more difficult and more challenging use of the device to achieve the object, i.e., to seat a spherical object in each cavity, will be.

FIG. **2** is a top view of the FIG. **1** device. It shows the platform **1** to be substantially square and the position of the handle means **7** (in phantom) to be substantially centered. A series of openings (**3***a*) are shown in the retaining member **3.** These can be used to hold a pin, or pins, (not shown) to indicate the "score" of the game being played.

FIG. **3** is a side view of the FIG. **1** type device. The flexible means **8** is shown as a spring which fits over a first post **1***a.* The hand placement element **9** is shown (in phantom) to provide a space **10** in which spherical objects **6** can be stored. The hand placement element **9** is hollow and fits over a second post **9***b* which extends from the bottom of the rest element **9***a.* The flexible means **8** fits over a third post **9***c* which extends in direction directly opposite to the second post **9***b.* Although the posts **1***a,* **9***b* and **9***c* are shown to be smooth and cylindrical, other configurations are possible. For a more

positive and secure fit, the posts can be threaded so that the flexible means **8** and the hand placement element **9** can be screwed onto the positions. Likewise, the flexible element **8,** shown as a spring in the figure, can also be of another construction. For example, this element can be an elastomer tube, or a solid piece of elastomeric material. The primary requirement for this element **8** is that it be flexible.

FIG. **3** also shows (in phantom) the configuration of the cavities **2.**

FIG. **4** is a side view of a FIG. **1** type device. It shows, in phantom, another construction for storage space **10** in the hand placement element **9.** In this arrangement, the rest element **9***a* and the hand placement element **9** are one unit. A cap **9***d* is provided to retain the spherical objects **6** in the storage space **10.**

FIG. **4** also shows, in phantom, another cavity **2** configuration. The cavity **2** is simply a hole in the platform **1.**

Although dimensions of the various elements of the device in general can be varied, a dimension of importance is the gateway or opening **4** through which the spherical objects pass. It must be at least equal to, and preferably just slightly larger than, the diameter of the spherical objects. If this opening is substantially larger than the spherical object diameter, the device will still be useful but will not be as challenging or entertaining in use.

With regard to the guard means **5,** they are shown in the figures as two individual posts. This is not meant to limit their configuration. For example, they can be a single unit or they can be joined across the top. The only requisite for the guard members **5** is that they be positioned so that they provide an opening through which the spherical object can and must pass in order to become seated in the cavities **2.** For packaging and storage convenience, of course, the guard means should probably not be substantially higher than the retaining member **3.**

As FIGS. **3** and **4** show, the game device can also be disassembled, if desired, for storage.

FIGS. **5, 6** and **7** are top views illustrating other useful platform **1** shapes (triangle, circle, hexagon, respectively).

The present game device can be constructed of any material or combination of materials having the requisite physical properties, durability and rigidity. Thus, elements of the device can be made of wood; synthetic materials such as polystyrene, ABS resin, rigid polyvinyl chloride, or other such materials. It is quite conveniently made of wood and metal.

The spherical objects also can be of any material. Marbles are commonly used. If desired, the marbles can be color-keyed to the cavities. Thus, a yellow cavity would take a yellow marble, etc. This can add to the game play — but is not a requirement for the present device.

Claims to the invention follow.

We claim:

1. A game device for use with spherical objects consisting essentially of

1. a platform having a top and a bottom,
2. enclosing member circumscribing said platform,
3. cavities in the top of said platform adjacent to said enclosing member to receive said spherical objects, each of said cavities (a) being capable of receiving one of said spherical objects, and (b) having guard means arranged and spaced to define an opening through which said spherical object must pass to seat in said cavity, and
4. single, flexible handle means extending from the bottom of said platform, said handle means comprising a hand placement element and flexible element, said flexible element being positioned between and attached to said hand placement element and said platform bottom

whereby said platform is manipulated by said handle means in order to cause said spherical objects to said in said cavities.

2. The device of claim **1** wherein said handle means includes a storage chamber for said spherical objects.

3. The device of claim **1** wherein said platform is circular.

4. The device of claim **1** wherein said platform is polygonal.

5. The device of claim **4** wherein said cavities are located in two or more corners and said handle means extends from the center of said platform.

6. The device of claim **5** wherein said cavities are located in each corner.

7. The device of claim **6** wherein said platform is square.

8. The device of claim **7** wherein said opening is sized slightly larger than said spherical objects.

9. The device of claim **8** wherein said flexible element is a spring.

10. The device of claim **1** wherein said flexible element is a spring.

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