March 27, 1928. 1,663,889

C. A. ROLFE

GOLF GAME

Filed Oct. 20, 1925

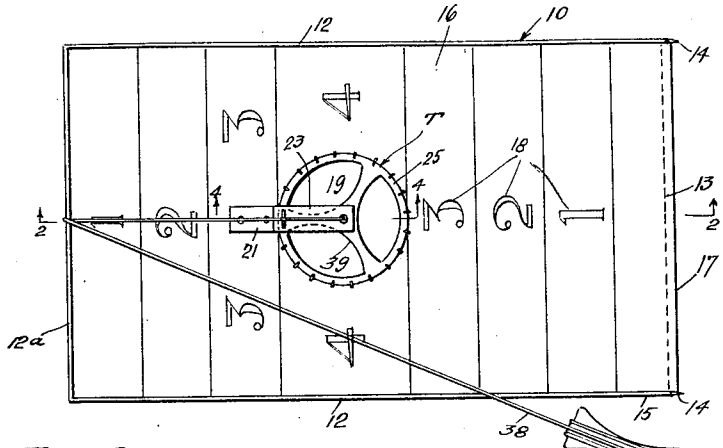


Fig. 1.

Fig. 6.

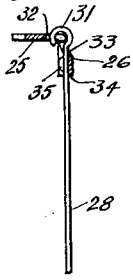


Fig. 2.

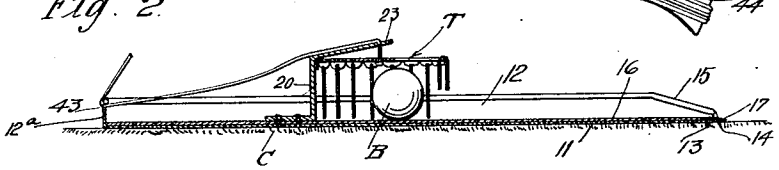


Fig. 5.

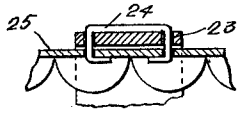
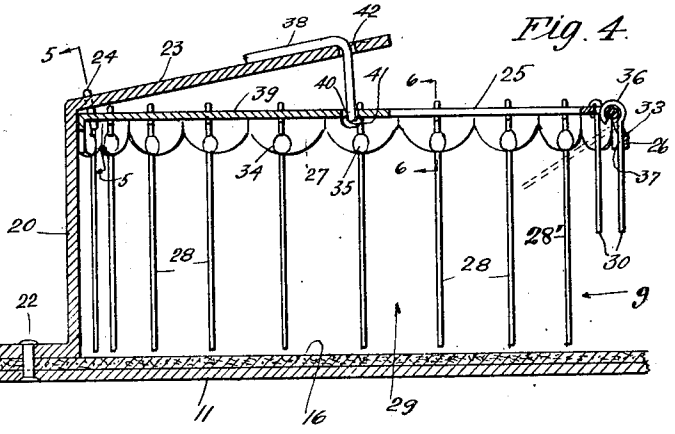


Fig. 4.



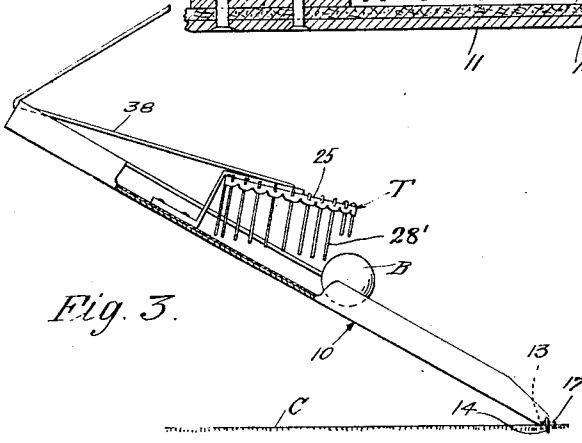


Fig. 3.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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GOLF GAME.

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This invention relates generally to game apparatus, and is more particularly concerned with devices for trapping balls and similar objects of play.

The invention is particularly well adapted for embodiment in a device for entrapping golf balls, thus being available for use in practicing putting strokes, though it is not in any way limited to this specific embodiment. As well as providing a practice field, the playing table may be marked off in zones having different numerical values so competitive games may be played thereon.

The device is of that type wherein the ball trap is positioned on top of a base or playing table in contra-distinction to the type wherein the table or playing surface is cut through to provide a trapping hole. The advantage of the first mentioned type over the second are obvious and need not be discussed in detail here, though it may be emphasized that the actual conditions of a golf course may be more nearly had by reason of the playing surface being horizontal rather than inclined, the inclination being necessary to the second mentioned type of device since the cup mouth must be elevated in order to accommodate the ball beneath the playing surface when it is driven into the cup.

However, the usual device of the horizontal playing surface type, has the disadvantage that there is no provision for returning the trapped ball to the player without the latter leaving his playing position and stooping to remove the ball from the trap. The disadvantages of such a condition are self-evident, and it is one of the principal objects of the present invention to provide a device which shall have all the advantages of the horizontal playing surface and yet so arranged that the ball may be released from the trap and retrieved by the player at his position of play.

Another novel and highly advantageous feature of the present invention lies in the provision of means whereby the trap is adapted automatically to release the ball when it is driven thereinto with such force that it would over-run the hole of a natural putting green. How this is done may be pointed out to better advantage in the following detailed description, in which other novel features and objects will be made apparent. Reference will be had to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a top plan view of a preferred embodiment of my invention;

Fig. 2 is a longitudinal section on line 2—2 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a side elevation of the device showing it tilted to discharge position;

Fig. 4 is an enlarged section on line 4—4 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 5 is a section on line 5—5 of Fig. 4; and

Fig. 6 is a section on line 6—6 of Fig. 4.

In general, my device may be described as a base member upon which is supported a ball trap, the base member here being shown as a playing surface and the trap being in the nature of an inverted cup having entrance gates for the admission of balls thereto, the trap being bodily movable to release position. However, it will be understood that the invention, considered in its broader aspects, is not limited to a base having the characteristics shown, nor need the ball trap release operate in the precise manner described.

Furthermore, the feature of automatic release when the ball is driven into the trap with predetermined force, may be incorporated in a device having a different type of base and a different type of trap without departing from the spirit and scope of certain of my broad claims; while the tiltable arrangement of the playing table and means for tilting it are the subject-matter of other claims which are not limited to a ball trap of any particular nature.

In the drawings, numeral 10 designates generally a base which, in the preferred embodiment of the invention, comprises a playing table or surface, adapted to lie in a horizontal position on the ground or on a floor, preferably carpeted. The base is made up of a sheet or plate 11 having marginal flanges 12 on its sides and back, while its forward edge 13 contacts with the supporting surface so the ball may be rolled onto the table from a playing position outside the boundaries of the device. Base 11 may be made of metal, wood, fiber, composition or any other suitable and desirable material.

Preferably, though not necessarily, I provide gripping means on the base near edge 13. For instance, down-turned points or prongs 14 may be clamped within the ends of finishing beads or rolls 15 provided at the upper edges of side flanges 12. These points extend below the lower face of plate

11 and are adapted to bite into the carpet C or ground upon which the device rests and are for a purpose to be later made evident.

Preferably, though not necessarily, plate 11 is covered with fabric 16, felt, for instance, to give a frictional playing surface approximately equivalent to that of a putting green, and the forward, free edge 17 of the fabric preferably extends beyond edge 13 and is adapted to lie on the supporting surface so the ball may more readily roll onto the playing surface of the device from the supporting surface.

In order that competitive games may be played on the device, I may mark off zones on the fabric, giving each zone a numerical value by indicia 18, the zone 19 of highest value being that immediately underlying trap T.

Trap T is in the nature of an inverted cup, and while it lies within the scope of my invention, considered in its broader aspects, to provide a solid cup with a suitable entrance gate, I prefer to make it of the skeleton nature illustrated.

An upright support or standard 20 has an angle foot 21 secured to plate 11 at 22, and an extension arm 23 which inclines upwardly from the horizontal. Hinged to arm 23 by loop 24 (Fig. 6) or any other suitable means, is a plate or ring 25 having a depending annular flange 26 which may be serrated or scalloped at 27 to give it a pleasing appearance. Flange 26 normally bears against standard 20 to maintain ring 25 in elevated and substantially horizontal position.

Depending from flange 26 are pendant wires 28 which provide a circular enclosure defining trap compartment 29 and extend downwardly into proximity with fabric 16. These pendants may either be hingedly supported so as to swing inwardly, only, in the manner hereinafter described in connection with gate members 30, or they may be fixed against movement, as illustrated. A convenient method of attaching the pendants is to bend their upper ends 31 into loops or eyes, and pass the eyes through suitable apertures 32 in ring 25 and apertures 33 in flange 26, thus bringing the shanks of the pendants to the inside of the flange which is bent outwardly to provide receiving channels 34. By then soldering over the channel mouths at 35, the pendants are held from movement with respect to plate 25 and its flange.

Gate members or pendants 30, at the front of the compartment and, preferably arranged substantially diametrically opposite support 20, have eyes 36 which are looped through plate and flange in a manner similar to that described in connection with pendants 28, their shanks 37 abutting the inner wall of the flange, as clearly illustrated in Fig. 4, to prevent the gates from swinging outwardly, while the mouths of flange channels 38, similar to channels 34, are left open so the gates may swing inwardly to admit ball B to compartment 29. The gate members normally hang in ball-confining position, and it will be seen that the adjacent pendants at the front of the compartments are rigidly fixed against inward movement.

Gate members 30 preferably stop considerably short of table 11, for a purpose to be later made apparent. The number of gate members in a given trap may vary, but there are preferably enough to spread over such an angular extent that they will admit any ball to compartment 29 that would pass into the cup of a usual golf hole were the same putting stroke to be made, while such balls as would "rim" the cup of a usual golf hole will strike the stationary pendants adjacent the gate members in a manner to be deflected from the trap, thus producing an effect equivalent to "rimming the cup."

Any of the pendants which are adapted to swing inwardly may be considered as movable closures for gateways opening to compartment 29. For instance, gate members 30 may be considered as closures for gateway G which is defined by the immediately adjacent pendants 28′. It will be seen these gate members are movable to and from gateway-closing position when the trap, proper, is in ball-confining position.

A release or operating member, preferably in the form of a cord 38, is secured to the center of the spider portion 39 of plate 25. For instance, the cord may be passed through an aperture 40 in the spider and be knotted at 41 therebeneath. The cord passes upwardy through aperture 42 in arm 23 and thence through aperture 43 in the rear flange 12^a of the base. The free end of the cord may be wrapped about bobbin 44 for convenience in handling and storage.

In operation, the table is laid flat on the carpet and the operator takes his place at the right of the table, as viewed in the several figures, the ball being placed on the carpet or table at any desired distance from the trap. The putting stroke is then made and if the ball strikes gate members 30 they will swing inwardly to admit the ball to compartment 29. If the balls are driven with such force that they would "over-run" an ordinary golf course hole, they will strike standard 20 (which may be considered a "back-stop") or one of the rearward pendants 28 and rebound against the gate members with sufficient force to swing plate 25 and its associated parts upwardly about its hinge connection 24, thus lifting gate members 30 sufficiently to release the ball from the trap. In other words, the ball is automatically released from the trap by virtue of pressure of predetermined strength directed outwardly by a ball within the cup.

The angular movement of the trap is so limited by arm 23 that gate members 30 must be considerably shorter than pendants 28 in order to allow the ball to pass outwardly, and, of course, the shorter the gate members are, the more easily does the trap release when the ball rebounds. They may be varied in length to suit individual needs. However, it will be understood my invention is not limited to an embodiment wherein the gate members are shorter than the pendants, for such need not be the case where the trap is capable of sufficient angular or tilting movement to release the ball.

Assuming that the ball has been entrapped, the player pulls on cord 38, which pull first swings the trap upwardly about hinge 24 to "release position" against arm 23, and then tilts the entire device upwardly and forwardly about edge 13, gripping means 14 engaging the supporting surface to insure that the device tilts rather than slides towards the player. The inclination of the table causes the ball to roll from the trap beneath gate members 30 and towards the player into a position for re-play.

Cord 38 may thus be considered as remote control means both for moving the gate or trap to release position and for tilting the base to return the ball.

If the ball is not trapped but remains on the playing table, it is similarly returned to the player by inclining the table through operation of cord 38.

Thus it will be seen that I have provided a device having all the advantages of a flat playing table and yet so arranged that the ball may be returned to the player without change of "stance" or position, and in addition have provided an elevated type of trap which will eject such balls as would "overrun" or "rim" an ordinary hole cup, results which so far as I am aware, have not been obtained heretofore.

It will be understood the drawings and description are to be considered merely as illustrative of and not retrictive on the broader claims appended hereto, for various changes in design, structure and arrangement may be made without departing from the spirit and scope of said claims.

I claim:

1. A ball trap embodying a support, a bodily movable enclosure on the support, a gate for said enclosure, said gate being normally in ball confining position and being movable with respect to the enclosure to admit balls thereto and the enclosure being movable bodily to move the gate to ball-releasing position by virtue of pressure of predetermined strength directed outwardly by a ball within the enclosure.

2. In game apparatus, a base member, a ball trap tiltably supported on the base and movable tiltably to and from ball-confining position, said trap normally being in ball-confining position and having an entrance gateway, and gate member movable to and from a position closing said gateway when the trap is in ball-confining position.

3. In game apparatus, a base member, a ball trap tiltably supported on the base and movable tiltably to and from ball-confining position, said trap normally being in ball-confining position, an entrance gate for the trap, and means for tilting the trap out of ball-confining position.

4. In game apparatus, a tiltable base member, a ball trap supported on the base, said trap having members which are movable inwardly only to admit the ball thereto, said trap being mounted on the base for bodily movement in a manner to release the ball therefrom, and common manually operated means for bodily moving the trap to release the ball and to tilt the base member so the ball will roll therefrom.

5. In game apparatus, a substantially rectangular base having a forward edge adapted to contact with a floor or the like, a ball trap on the base at a point spaced from the forward edge thereof, floor gripping prongs on the base near said forward edge, and means applied to said base at a point removed from said forward edge whereby the base is adapted to be tilted upwardly and forwardly about said gripping means.

6. In game apparatus, a base, an upright supporting member on the base, an elevated plate hingedly connected to said support, means adapted normally to hold said plate substantially horizontal, and means depending from said plate and adapted to define a ball trapping chamber therebeneath, said depending means having inwardly opening entrance gates whereby the ball is admitted to said compartment, the plate being hingedly movable to raise said depending means and thereby allow the ball to be released from the compartment.

7. In game apparatus, a base, an upright supporting member on the base, an elevated plate hingedly connected to said support, means adapted normally to hold said plate substantially horizontal, means depending from said plate and adapted to define a ball trapping chamber therebeneath, said depending means having inwardly opening entrance gates whereby the ball is admitted to said compartment, the plate being hingedly movable to raise said depending means and thereby allow the ball to be released from the compartment; and manually operated means for hingedly moving said plate.

8. In game apparatus, a base, an upright supporting member on the base, an elevated plate hingedly connected to said support, means adapted normally to hold said plate substantially horizontal, means depending from said plate and adapted to define a ball

trapping chamber therebeneath, said depending means having inwardly opening entrance gates whereby the ball is admitted to said compartment, the plate being hingedly movable to raise said depending means and thereby allow the ball to be released from the compartment; an arm overlying and spaced from the plate, and an operating member applied to said plate and extending through said arm whereby a pull exerted on said operating member hingedly moves said plate upwardly and into contact with said arm.

9. In game apparatus, a tiltable base, an upright supporting member on the base, an elevated plate hingedly connected to said support, means adapted normally to hold said plate substantially horizontal, means depending from said plate and adapted to define a ball trapping chamber therebeneath, said depending means having inwardly opening entrance gates whereby the ball is admitted to said compartment, the plate being hingedly movable to raise said depending means and thereby allow the ball to be released from the compartment; an arm overlying and spaced from the plate, said arm being rigidly supported by the base, and an operating member applied to said plate, extending through said arm and applied to the base in a manner whereby a pull exerted on said operating member hingedly moves said plate upwardly and into contact with said arm and a continued pull tilts the base.

10. In game apparatus, a base, an upright supporting member on the base, an elevated plate hingedly connected to said support, means adapted normally to hold said plate substantially horizontal, means depending from said plate and adapted to define a ball trapping chamber therebeneath, said depending means having inwardly opening entrance gates whereby the ball is admitted to said compartment, the plate being hingedly movable to raise said depending means and thereby allow the ball to be released from the compartment; an arm overlying and spaced from the plate, and an operating member applied to said plate and extending through said arm whereby a pull exerted on said operating member hingedly moves said plate upwardly and into contact with said arm.

11. In game apparatus, a tiltable base, an upright supporting member on the base, an elevated plate hingedly connected to said support, means adapted normally to hold said plate substantially horizontal, means depending from said plate and adapted to define a ball trapping chamber therebeneath, said depending means having inwardly opening entrance gates whereby the ball is admitted to said compartment, the plate being hingedly movable to raise said depending means and thereby allow the ball to be released from the compartment; an arm overlying and spaced from the plate, said arm being rigidly supported by the base, and an operating member applied to said plate, extending through said arm and applied to the base in a manner whereby a pull exerted on said operating member hingedly moves said plate upwardly and into contact with said arm and a continued pull tilts the base.

12. In a game apparatus, a base member, a support member on the base, a plate normally maintained in elevated and substantially horizontal position on the support member, and a plurality of pendants on the plate and adapted to define a ball entrapping compartment, certain of said pendants at the front of the compartment being free to swing inwardly, only, to admit a ball to said compartment, and the remaining pendants in the front being rigidly fixed to the plate.

13. In a game apparatus, a base member, a support member on the base, a plate normally maintained in elevated and substantially horizontal position on the support member, and a plurality of pendants on the plate and adapted to define a ball entrapping compartment, certain of said pendants at the front of the compartment being free to swing inwardly, only, to admit a ball to said compartment, and the remaining pendants in the front being rigidly fixed to the plate; said swinging pendants being arranged substantially diametrically opposite the support member.

14. In a ball trap, a base member, a plate normally supported in elevated and normally horizontal position above the base member, means depending from the plate and adapted to define a ball entrapping compartment, gate members depending from the plate and adapted to move inwardly, to admit a ball to said compartment, and a back-stop within said compartment and arranged substantially diametrically opposite the gate members and adapted positively to prevent balls rolling therepast, said gate members being also movable to ball-releasing position by virtue of balls rebounding thereagainst from the back stop.

15. In game apparatus, a base plate adapted normally to lie horizontally on a floor or the like, upstanding flanges on only certain edges of the plate, a ball trap on the base at a point spaced from an unflanged edge of the plate, and remote control means applied to the base plate at a point removed from said unflanged edge and adapted to be manually operated to tilt the plate on the floor about said unflanged edge.

16. In game apparatus, a base adapted normally to lie substantially flatly on the floor, a ball trap on the base at a point spaced from one of its edges, said base being

freely tiltable upwardly and forwardly about said edge, and remote control means applied to the base for so tilting it.

17. In game apparatus, a tiltable base member, a ball trapping enclosure on the base member, a gate for said enclosure, said gate being movable with respect to the base both to admit balls to the enclosure and then to ball-releasing position, and common manually operated means for moving the gate to ball-releasing position and for tilting the base member so the released ball is adapted to roll therefrom.

18. In game apparatus, a supporting member, a ball trapping enclosure on the supporting member, a gate for said enclosure, said gate being movable both to admit balls to the enclosure and then to ball-releasing position, and remote control means for moving the gate to ball-releasing position.

19. A ball trap embodying a support, a bodily movable enclosure on the support, a gate for said enclosure, said gate being movable with respect to the enclosure to admit balls thereto and then being movable to ball-confining position; the enclosure being movable bodily to move the gate to ball-releasing position by virtue of pressure of predetermined strength directed outwardly by a ball within the enclosure.

20. A ball trap embodying an enclosure, a gate for the enclosure and movable to admit a ball thereto and then being movable to a ball-confining position; and a back stop arranged substantially in line with the gate whereby it lies in the path of the entering ball to cause rebound of the ball towards said gate, said gate being movable to ball-releasing position by virtue of pressure of predetermined strength directed outwardly by the rebounding ball.

21. In game apparatus, an upright supporting member, a plate hingedly connected to said support and normally held substantially at a given elevation, and means depending from said plate and adapted to define a ball trapping chamber therebeneath, said depending means having inwardly opening entrance gates whereby the ball is admitted to said compartment, the plate being hingedly movable to raise said depending means thereby allow the ball to be released from the compartment.

22. In game apparatus, an upright supporting member, a plate hingedly connected to said support and normally held substantially at a given elevation, means depending from said plate and adapted to define a ball trapping chamber therebeneath, said depending means having inwardly opening entrance gates whereby the ball is admitted to said compartment, the plate being hingedly movable to raise said depending means and thereby allow the ball to be released from the compartment; and manually operated means for hingedly moving said plate.

23. In game apparatus, a tiltable base, an upright supporting member on the base, an elevated plate hingedly connected to said support and normally held substantially at a given elevation, means depending from said plate and adapted to define a ball trapping chamber therebeneath, said depending means having inwardly opening entrance gates whereby the ball is admitted to said compartment, the plate being hingedly movable to raise said depending means and thereby allow the ball to be released from the compartment; an arm overlying and spaced from the plate, said arm being rigidly supported by the base, and an operating member applied to said plate, extending through said arm and applied to the base in a manner whereby a pull exerted on said operating member hingedly moves said plate upwardly and into contact with said arm and a continued pull tilts the base.

In witness that I claim the foregoing I have hereunto subscribed my name this 24th day of Sept., 1925.

CHARLES A. ROLFE.