HOCKEY PRACTICE APPARATUS

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ABSTRACT

Apparatus and method related to the game of hockey are disclosed. The apparatus may be adapted for any of the various forms of hockey and the variation which relates to ice hockey includes equipment which allows individual hockey players to demonstrate their proficiency in the skills of skating as well as in passing and shooting the hockey puck. The invention may also be employed as a practice device. Apparatus related to the skating phase of the game includes a marked course set out on the hockey playing surface. The apparatus involved in passing the hockey puck includes a passing cage stationed along the sidelines and having an opening in its lower portion through which the puck may enter the cage. Apparatus related to shooting the puck includes a barricade suitable for attachment to the forward portion of the hockey goal, the barricade having one or more openings through which a puck may pass. The game equipment is easily set up and dismantled and is advantageously employed in conjunction with a standard hockey playing surface.

2 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures
HOCKEY PRACTICE APPARATUS

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to apparatus for the playing of a game. More particularly, the present invention is directed to apparatus for practicing and for demonstrating proficiency in various skills related to the game of hockey.

In practicing the game of hockey, it is often desirable to have a means of simulating the difficulties encountered in an actual game without the necessity of having one or more opposing players present to provide opposition to the player attempting to practice and perfect his game. In addition, it is advantageous to have on hand equipment which allows individual players to demonstrate their proficiency in various skills required in the game of hockey with the object, for example, of determining that player who is best in a particular phase of the game.

By the present invention there is provided apparatus and methods for practicing or for demonstrating competence in various skills required in the game of hockey. The invention may be adapted for any of the various forms of hockey and, as related to ice hockey, includes equipment for practicing or for displaying skill in the categories of skating as well as in passing and shooting the hockey puck. The apparatus of the present invention provides a standard test for measuring player performance and may therefore be advantageously employed in a competitive determination of the relative abilities of several players. The present invention provides apparatus for a game which I choose to call "Skate, Pass and Shoot," in which individual players may demonstrate competitively their proficiency in these skills. The skating phase of the game involves traversing an obstacle course containing strategically located markers while carrying or maneuvering the puck along the ice with the hockey stick. The passing phase of the game involves passing the puck across the playing surface in an attempt to place the puck inside a passing cage located along the sideboards on one side of the playing surface. The shooting phase of the game involves firing the puck toward a hockey goal on the front of which a vertical barricade has been erected. One or more openings are provided in strategic locations on the barricade to allow the puck to enter the net when a well-placed shot is made. Referring to the drawings:

FIG. 1 is a plan view of a hockey playing surface having installed the apparatus of the present invention which allows a hockey player to practice or to demonstrate his abilities with regard to various skills required in the game of hockey;

FIG. 2 is a front elevational view of apparatus employed in the skating phase of the game;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of apparatus employed in the passing phase of the game; and

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of apparatus employed in the shooting phase of the game.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

In the illustrated embodiment of the present invention as shown in FIGS. 1 through 4, apparatus 10 is provided for practicing and for demonstrating proficiency in the skills of skating, passing and shooting with regard to the game of hockey. While the embodiments as disclosed herein pertain to the game of ice hockey, it will be apparent that the present invention may be readily employed in field hockey as well as other games which include within their scope the maneuvering and passing of pucks or similar projectiles and having as a purpose the placing of such projectiles within a goal or target.

The apparatus 10 shown includes a series of markers 11 placed at intervals on the ice with the markers 11 being employed in connection with the skating phase of the game. The markers 11 may be in the form of cones as shown in FIG. 2. Alternatively, poles adapted to be placed vertically on the ice or other suitable shapes may be employed. One particular marker 11 which has been employed with good results is a cone-shaped marker standing 18 inches in height and having a square base 11 inches on a side. A series of three markers 11 is often employed, with one marker 11 located in the center and the other markers 11 located at either end of the rink 12. Thus, for example, the markers may be placed with the center marker 11 located on the center or red line 13 of a standard hockey rink while the end markers 11 are placed on the blue lines 21. In employing three cone-shaped markers 11 in the competitive game previously referred to as "Skate, Pass, and Shoot," the name of the game may be printed on the sides of the cones with one word on each cone so that the first cone will have the word "Skate" printed on the front and back of the cone and so on for the other two cones.

The apparatus 10 to be employed in conjunction with the passing phase of the game includes a passing cage 14 which, as shown in FIG. 3, is a rectangular box-shaped receptacle. The cage 14 includes a pair of longitudinal members 27 and a pair of side members 28 of a sturdy material such as wood joined by means such as nails or bolts. Wooden boards commonly known as 2 × 6 boards have been employed for members 27 and 28 with good results. Four brace members 29 which may also be of wood are secured to the upper surface of the longitudinal members 27 and side members 28 to provide reinforcement between each longitudinal member 27 and the adjacent side members 28 at each end of the cage 14. Such reinforcement is necessary in order to enable the passing cage 14 to withstand the repeated shock of hockey pucks making impact with the cage 14. The brace members 29 may be attached by means such as nails or bolts to their respective longitudinal members 27 and side members 28. The brace members 29 may be positioned across the top of the passing cage 14 at any convenient angle which provides reinforcement for the cage. A horizontal position angle of about 45 degrees of the brace members 29 with the longitudinal members 27 and side members 28 has been employed with good results. The passing cage 14 may be positioned on the ice with its outer edge resting on the sideline 22 on one side of the rink 12.

An opening 15 is provided in one of the longitudinal members 27 at the level of the ice on the side of the cage 14 which faces onto the playing area. The opening 15 may be provided with a flap-type door member 16 of plywood or other lightweight material such as vulcanized rubber. The door member 16 is attached to the passing cage 14 by means such as hinges 21 extending from a rod 31 which in turn is attached at each end to the longitudinal member 27 on each side of the opening.
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15. The hinges 21 allow the door member 16 to be deflected inwardly by a puck which strikes the outside of the door member 16, the puck having been passed across the rink 12 by, for example, a player attempting to demonstrate his ability to pass the puck accurately. Deflection of the door member 16 inwardly allows the puck to enter the passing cage 14.

The width of the opening 15 in the passing cage 14 may vary, depending on the degree of difficulty which is desired to be imposed upon the players, with a width of about 12 to about 25 inches often being employed. A sliding member 22 may be attached by conventional means to the inside of the passing cage 14 immediately adjacent the opening 15 in a position to be moved manually across the opening 15 and thus to provide a means of adjusting the width of the opening 15 as desired. Spikes or cleats 32 of metal or similar material are provided in each corner of the lower edge of the passing cage 14 and these cleats 32 are driven into the ice at the time the cage 14 is placed on the rink 12 to hold the cage in position for the passing phase of the game. The shape of the passing cage 14 may be varied, so long as a receptacle is provided which has an opening of a size sufficient to serve as a target at which the hockey player may take aim and through which the puck may pass as an indication of the passing accuracy of the player. A passing cage 14 which has been employed with good results in the present invention has side members 28 of about 2 feet in length and longitudinal members 27 of about 4 feet in length with the height of the cage 14 being about 5 inches and the width of the opening 15 being about 15 inches. The position of the cage 14 on the rink may also be varied, with the location being dependent on such factors as the position from which a player intends to pass the hockey puck and the particular game conditions which he wishes to simulate.

For the shooting phase of the game, a barricade member 18 is provided, as shown in detail in FIG. 4, for attachment to the goal 17 as a means of blocking entry into the net 20. The barricade 18 includes a panel 23 having one or more openings 19 in the panel 23 to allow a hockey puck to pass through the barricade 18 to the interior of the goal 17. The barricade member 18 is provided with attachment means to allow the barricade member 18 to be attached to the goal 17 at the frame 24 which surrounds the opening into the net 20. Such attachment means may include, for example, a series of holes 27 in the top and sides of the panel 23 with rope 28 or other suitable binding threaded through the holes and around the frame 24. Grommets may be placed in the holes 27 to reinforce the panel 23 in proximity to the holes. Other attachment means such as adjustable clamps may be employed but any attachment means which is employed should preferably allow the barricade member 18 to be easily detached from the goal 17 to permit use of the goal 17 for other purposes such as a regulation game of hockey.

The openings 19 in the barricade 18 are each of a size sufficient to allow a puck to pass through the opening 19 into the net 20 and the openings 19 are preferably positioned on the panel 23 of the barricade 18 so as to conform to locations at which a puck could reasonably be expected to enter the net 20 if a goalie were actually protecting the goal. Thus the figure of a goalie 25 may be painted or otherwise produced upon the panel 23 and the openings 19 preferably positioned generally around the periphery of the goalie 25 with, for example, an opening 19 in proximity to each of the upper and lower corners of the panel 23 and an additional opening 19 between the legs of the goalie 25 in the center of the lower edge of the panel 23 and also on either side of the goalie 25 at about the level of the waist. Sliding members 26 similar to that described in conjunction with the passing cage 14 may be attached to the inside of the panel 23 adjacent the openings 19 to allow the width of the openings 19 to be adjusted as desired.

A barricade member 18 which is advantageously employed in the present invention includes a panel 23 constructed of exterior type ¾ inch plywood which is 4 feet high and 6 feet wide and is thus equal in dimensions to the opening in the standard hockey goal. The openings 19 at the bottom of the panel 23 are each 15 inches long and about 5 inches in height. The two openings 19 in the center of the panel 23 are each 18 inches long and 8 inches in height and are positioned with their outer edges approximately 8 inches in from the respective sides of the panel 23. The two openings 19 in the top of the panel 23 are each 24 inches long and 8 inches in height and these openings 19 are positioned with their outer edges approximately 5 inches in from the respective sides of the panel 23. In constructing this barricade 18, a total of eight holes 27 were drilled in the barricade 18 for use in attaching the barricade 18 to the goal 17, with three holes 27 along each side of the panel 23 and two holes 27 along the upper edge. The markers 11 of the present invention may be fabricated from any suitable durable material which retains its shape and provides a marker which will remain in a position of stability on the ice. Where cones are employed, such markers may be of a durable plastic or rubber material. If pole-shaped markers are employed, these may be of metal or wood construction and flags may be attached to the tops of the poles to provide markers which are easily visible. The barricade 18 may be formed with the panel 23 being of plywood, preferably of the exterior type, or other suitable material.

To play the game, the player may select the skill level he wishes to practice first and proceed through the various skills until he reaches the highest level. By allowing the game to flow, passing and shooting. In practicing with respect to skating, the player approaches the row of markers 11 while carrying or maneuvering the puck along the ice with his hockey stick. He then commences to skate a figure-eight pattern by skating on one side of the first marker, then to the opposite side of the next marker and so on, continuing this weaving pattern and carrying the puck on his stick until he reaches the end marker. Upon reaching the end marker, the player skates around this marker 11 and continues the figure-eight pattern while carrying the puck on his stick as he returns to the starting point. As previously stated, three markers 11 may be employed to accompany a standard hockey rink, one marker 11 being positioned at the center of the rink and the other two markers 11 being positioned with one marker on each of the two blue lines, the three markers 11 being aligned on a line parallel to the sidelines of the rink, as shown in FIG. 1. The main object in traversing the marked course, whether in practice or in competition, is to execute the figure-eight pattern while traversing the course as rapidly as possible. Thus a player may be timed from the moment he leaves the first blue line from a standing
start until he returns to the same blue line after skating the prescribed route. His time in this event may then be compared with the time required by other players to traverse the course as a means of determining the most skilled player in the skating phase of the game.

The passing phase of the present invention involves passing the puck across the hockey playing surface in an attempt to put the puck through the opening 15 located in the passing cage 14. A typical passing exercise would commence with the player being stationed at one end of the hockey playing area and the passing cage 14 positioned along the sidelines as shown in FIG. 1. Skating up the opposite sideline from that on which the cage 14 is located while carrying the puck along the ice on his hockey stick, the player passes the puck across the rink 12 and attempts to put the puck through the opening 15 and into the cage 14. When several players are engaged in competition with regard to passing the puck into the cage 14, the distance from which each player will pass the puck as well as the number of attempts to be allowed each player should be determined beforehand.

The shooting phase is carried out by a player attempting to shoot a puck into a goal covered with the barricade member 18 of the present invention. The player will generally approach to within about 15 feet to about 50 feet from the goal, having the barricade member 18 attached, the latter distance being the location of the blue line on a standard hockey rink, from which position the player shoots the puck toward the goal. If his aim is good, the puck will pass through one of the openings 19 in the barricade 18 and on into the net 20. In holding a competition between several players with regard to shooting the puck, a point scale may be set up with the number of points scored being dependent on which of the openings 19 the puck passes through as it enters the goal. For example, in the embodiment as shown in FIG. 4, seven openings are shown dispersed over the face of the barricade 18 with three openings 19 at the bottom, two openings in the middle and two openings at the top of the barricade 18. The scoring may be set up with, for example, one point being assigned to each opening at the bottom, two points for each opening in the middle and three points for each opening at the top of the barricade 18. The exact distance from which the puck will be shot should also be agreed upon prior to beginning the competition as well as the number of shots to be allowed each player.

From the foregoing description, it is apparent that the subject apparatus may be employed to allow competition between hockey players as well as to provide a means of practicing and perfecting various skills required in the game of hockey. The present invention is ideally suited to provide a competitive game for youths as well as adults and, particularly where youths are involved, it would be advantageous to group the competitors according to age. By the present invention, particular emphasis is placed on the skill of skating while carrying or maneuvering the puck along the ice with the hockey stick, as well as the skills of passing and shooting the puck, since proficiency in these skills is fundamental to a mastery of the game of hockey.

It is thought that the invention and many of its attendant advantages will be understood from the foregoing description, and it will be apparent that various changes may be made in the form, construction and arrangement of the parts without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention or sacrificing all of its material advantages, the forms hereinbefore described being merely preferred embodiments thereof.

It is claimed:

1. Game apparatus for practicing skills or for demonstrating competence in the game of hockey comprising:

   a. a game playing surface in the form of an ice hockey rink,

   b. a plurality of markers located in the center portion of the playing surface, said markers having equal spacing between successive markers and being aligned on a line which is parallel to the sidelines of the playing surface,

   c. a box-shaped receptacle positioned adjacent one sideline of the playing surface, said receptacle being provided with cleats for maintaining contact with the surface of the ice and having an opening located in its lower portion at the level of and facing onto the playing surface for entry by a hockey puck into the receptacle, and

   d. a hockey goal positioned at at least one end of the playing surface and having attached to its front portion a barricade member which blocks entry into the goal, said barricade member having the figure of a goalie located on the center portion of the barricade member facing onto the rink, and a plurality of openings located in the barricade member and positioned around the periphery of the figure of the goalie, said openings being of a size sufficient to allow a hockey puck to pass through said barricade member.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 further including means for adjusting the width of the openings in the receptacle and in the barricade member.

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