March 1, 1938. H. J. O'HARA 2,109,974

BASEBALL MITT

Filed June 22, 1935

Fig. 1.

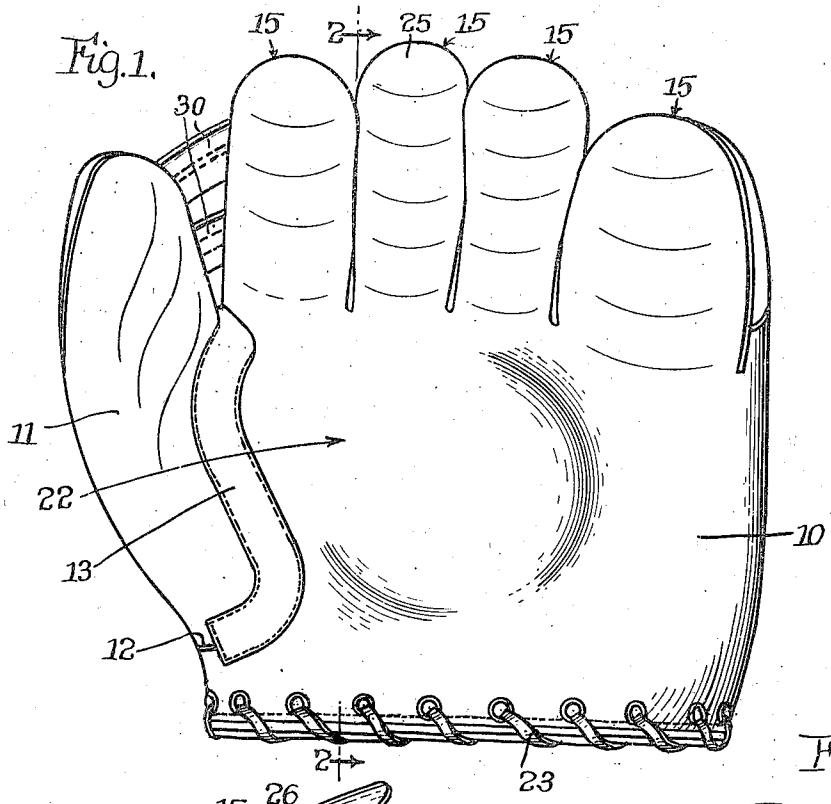


Fig. 2.

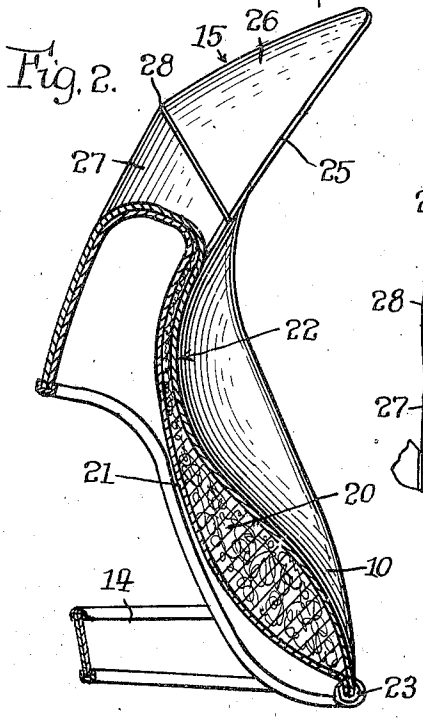


Fig. 3.

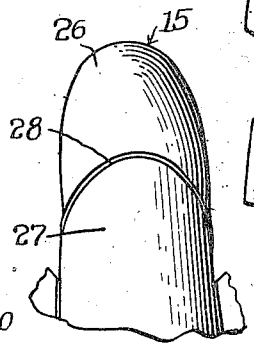
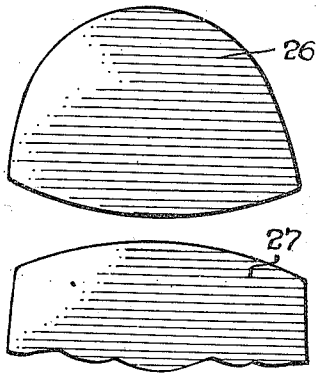


Fig. 4.



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BASEBALL MITT

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Application June 22, 1935, Serial No. 27,887

4 Claims. (Cl. 2—19)

The invention relates generally to gloves or the like and more particularly to a baseball mitt.

In the game of baseball, because of the hard character of the ball, mitts are used by the players to protect their hands. Only one such mitt is used by each player, on the left hand in the case of a right-handed player, so that the force of the ball is absorbed chiefly by the mitt to avoid injury and pain to the hand. In catching a ball, the player cups his hand, and consequently the glove, to provide a pocket to receive the ball, which pocket tends to retain the ball therein. The forming of a pocket in this manner is still further enhanced by suitably arranging the padding in the mitt. However, the formation of the pocket is chiefly due to the cupping of the hand by bending the fingers.

Mitts as heretofore manufactured are generally so constructed that the fingers, or finger stalls, tend to remain flat rather than in a bent position suitable to form such a pocket. With such a construction, when a player bends his fingers in forming the pocket, the portion of the finger stalls over the backs of the fingers tends to bind over the fingers and to cause the front portion of the finger stalls to wrinkle or crease. The tendency of the mitt is therefore to eliminate the pocket to the extent that the finger stalls control the formation of such pocket. Moreover, the joints of the fingers of baseball players are often enlarged from breaks or merely from the effect of constantly receiving the force of the ball. Consequently the binding effect of the rear portions of such finger stalls is increased.

The general object of the invention is therefore to provide a baseball mitt constructed so that its normal tendency is to form the desired pocket or cup to receive the ball.

It is also an object to provide a mitt which avoids binding over the backs of the fingers when the player cups his hand to catch a ball.

Other objects and advantages will become apparent from the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawing, in which:

Figure 1 is a view of the front face of a mitt embodying the features of the invention.

Fig. 2 is a sectional view taken on the line 2—2 of Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is a fragmentary rear view of one of the finger stalls.

Fig. 4 is a fragmentary view of the material forming the rear portion of a finger stall.

For purposes of illustration, a baseball mitt of the fielder type is shown, but it is to be understood that the invention may be embodied in a catcher's mitt or a baseman's mitt as well.

As mentioned above, to facilitate catching a baseball, it is desirable that the mitt be cupped to provide a pocket to receive the ball so that the ball may be readily grasped and retained in the mitt. The pocket is partially formed by suitably distributing the padding in the mitt but is chiefly formed by bending the finger and thumb portions forwardly so that the mitt as a whole is cupped. The invention therefore comprises generally a mitt in which the finger portions are so constructed that they tend to remain in a forwardly bent position and thus maintain the cup-shape pocket.

As illustrated in the drawing, the mitt therein shown comprises a palm portion 10 shaped to fit over the palm of the hand and usually made of leather. On one side of the palm portion, depending upon which hand the mitt is made for, is a thumb stall 11 secured to the palm portion by a seam 12 which may be covered with a reinforcing strip 13 if desired. The back of the mitt may be shaped so that the hand is covered only from adjacent the knuckles outwardly (see Fig. 2), and a retaining strap 14 extending across the back of the wrist may be provided to hold the mitt on the hand. The mitt also includes finger stalls, indicated generally at 15, which in the case of a fielder's mitt are separated on the front as well as the back face of the mitt.

Since a baseball is hard and may be moving with considerable speed at the moment it is caught, the mitt is provided with padding 20. While the bulk of the padding underlies the palm portion 10, it may extend into the finger stalls 15 and thumb stall 11. To hold the padding in place, a lining 21 is provided preferably made of a soft leather. The lining extends into the finger stalls as well as across the back of the mitt.

When the ball strikes the mitt, it is grasped by cupping the hand, but to assist in retaining it without letting it bounce out, the mitt is shaped so that a cup-shape pocket may be formed. Such a pocket is located in the part of the palm portion 10 lying adjacent the thumb and first two fingers as indicated at 22. In grasping the ball, the thumb and fingers are bent forwardly, in the act of cupping the hand, to form two sides of the pocket. On the other two sides, the pocket is formed by thickening the padding 20. Thus, thick padding is placed along the heel of the palm, as will be seen in Fig. 2, and along the side opposite the thumb stall. Players differ in their opinions on how much padding should be in a

mitt and just how it should be distributed. For this reason, the padding **20** is rendered accessible by securing the lower edges of the palm portion **10** and lining **21** together by means of a removable lacing **23**. The space between the thumb stall **11** and the stall for the first finger may be spanned by lacings **30** to assist in the formation of the pocket.

The formation of the pocket **22** is chiefly by cupping the hand, which involves bending the fingers forwardly. However, as mitts are usually manufactured, the front portions of the finger stalls **15** are of substantially the same length as the rear portions. Thus, when the fingers are bent forwardly, the rear portions of the stalls tend to bind over the finger joints while the front portions tend to wrinkle or crease. There is therefore a constant tendency for the mitt to flatten out instead of to retain its cupped position.

The present construction eliminates this tendency by so shaping the finger stalls as to eliminate binding over the backs of the fingers. Thus, the mitt has an inherent tendency to remain with the finger stalls bent forwardly to maintain the pocket. To this end, each finger stall is constructed so that more material is in the rear part of the stall than in the front. Preferably the four finger stalls are constructed in this manner but it is to be understood that one or more of the stalls and the thumb stall may be so constructed.

As shown herein, each finger stall comprises a front piece **25** which preferably is an integral part of the piece of leather forming the palm portion **10**. The front piece **25** is preferably shaped so that it is not greatly curved transversely of the finger, but the rear part of the stall is so curved to provide the tubular shape to fit around the finger. The rear part of the finger stall is made of two pieces seamed together transversely of the stall with at least one of the pieces shaped to provide extra material longitudinally of the rear part. Thus, the rear part of the stall comprises an outer piece **26** and an inner or lower piece **27** seamed together transversely as at **28** in end-to-end relation. To provide the extra length, one or both of the pieces **26** or **27** has its seamed end cut on a convex curve. In the present instance, both of the pieces **26** and **27** have their adjoining edges cut on such a convex curve. This mode of cutting the two pieces is shown in Fig. 4 which illustrates the two pieces flattened out before being seamed together and to the front piece **25**. The same result may be obtained by merely cutting darts in the side edges of a single piece, thus having the pieces **26** and **27** integral.

The two rear pieces when seamed together have substantially the same length at their side edges as the front piece **25** but the curvature of the edge of the piece **27** entering into the seam **28** provides extra length which is greatest at the longitudinal center line of the rear pieces. This shape causes the finger stall to have a natural bend forward so that the mitt inherently tends to maintain the pocket formation. Moreover, this shape provides ample room for the finger so that there is no binding over the backs of the finger joints when the stall is bent forwardly. Thus, a mitt constructed in this manner not only provides the desired cushioning effect to protect the hand but also facilitates retaining the ball in the mitt by its inherent tendency to form a suitable pocket.

I claim as my invention:

1. A baseball mitt comprising a palm portion provided with finger stalls, one or more of the stalls having a transverse seam across the rear portion thereof with the seamed edges of the material shaped to provide a substantial excess in length over the front portion of the stall, the seamed edges having a relatively narrow overlap, thereby tending to cause the finger portion of the mitt to bend forwardly.

2. A baseball mitt comprising a palm portion provided with finger stalls, one or more of the stalls having the portion extending over the back of the finger formed of material transversely cut and seamed with a uniform overlap of the edges, the material being shaped by the transverse cut to provide greater length along the longitudinal center line of said portion than at its sides, said sides having substantially the same length as the front portion of the stall, whereby the finger portion of the mitt tends to bend forwardly.

3. A baseball mitt comprising a palm portion provided with finger stalls, at least one of the stalls comprising a pair of rear pieces in end-to-end relation and a front piece seamed to the rear pieces along the side edges thereof, said rear pieces being joined by a transverse seam with one of said rear pieces cut on a convex curve at said transverse seam whereby the total length of the two rear pieces is greater than the front piece thereby giving the stall a tendency to bend forward.

4. A baseball mitt comprising a palm portion provided with finger stalls, one or more of the stalls comprising a pair of rear pieces seamed together in end-to-end relation and a front piece seamed to the rear pieces along the side edges thereof, the length of the material of the rear pieces at the center line being longitudinally greater than the side edges whereby said stall tends to bend forwardly.

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