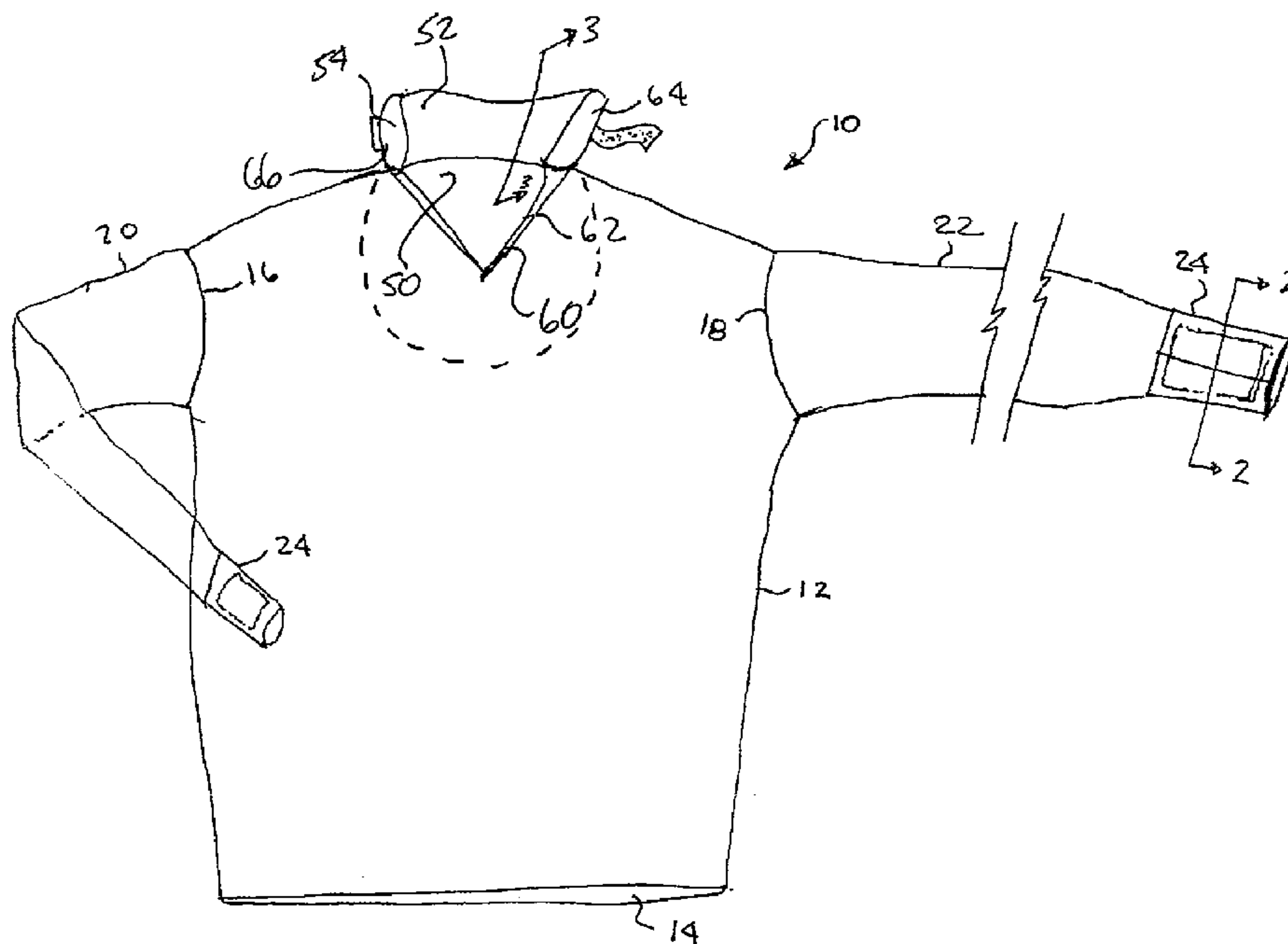




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(54) **CHANDAIL DE HOCKEY**
(54) **A HOCKEY SHIRT**



(57) Chandail de hockey ouvert dans le bas et au cou, et protège-cou associé à l'encolure. Le protège-cou comprend une bande de tissu entourant le cou et un dispositif de fixation détachable permettant de modifier le diamètre du protège-cou en fonction des besoins de l'utilisateur. Dans une application, le chandail comprend des manches et des poignets. Les poignets sont dotés de pochettes logeant des protège-poignets, ainsi que de dispositifs élastiques qui, dans l'application préférée, constituent les poignets du vêtement.

(57) A hockey shirt with a lower trunk opening, a neck opening and a neck guard associated with the neck opening. The neck guard includes a neck surrounding band of fabric, and a releasible attachment for changing the diameter of the neck guard to suit the needs of the wearer. In one embodiment the shirt includes sleeves, with cuff assemblies. The cuff assemblies include a slash guard retaining pocket and an elasticizing means, which in the preferred embodiment is the sleeve cuff itself.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A hockey shirt with a lower trunk opening, a neck opening and a neck guard associated with the neck opening. The neck guard includes a neck surrounding band of fabric, and a releasible attachment for changing the diameter of the neck guard to suit the needs of the wearer. In one embodiment the shirt includes sleeves, with cuff assemblies. The cuff assemblies include a slash guard retaining pocket and an elasticizing means, which in the preferred embodiment is the sleeve cuff itself.

Title: **A HOCKEY SHIRT**

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

5 This invention relates generally to the field of sports equipment, and more particularly to hockey equipment of the sort worn by a player to provide comfort and protection during the rough and tumble play of the game of hockey.

10 **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

 Hockey is a sport played on ice. The game is played with a hard rubber puck, and metal or wooden shafted sticks. Physical contact between players from opposing teams and their sticks, and even occasionally between players from the same teams, is an integral part of the game of hockey. Hockey is played by adults, as well as by many children and has variations, including ringette, shinny hockey and the like.

 Because of the physical contact, and, because the game is played on a slippery ice surface, it is not always possible to predict or control how the contact is made. Therefore, hockey equipment is generally designed to prevent injury when such physical contact is made between players, sticks and opponents. This protective equipment includes helmets, shoulder pads, shin pads, elbow pads and the like.

 As the game has evolved, better and additional protective equipment has been developed which facilitates the playing of the game of hockey. The new protective equipment is lighter, stronger and offers more protection. However, it may be more awkward to use.

 For example, more recently, there has been a tendency to use gloves with a shorter cuff on the sleeve. Typically, the cuff of hockey glove is reenforced, to protect the arm of the wearer against inadvertent slashing by an opponent. However, the longer cuff makes movement of the hand more difficult, and thus inhibits smooth stick handling or shooting.

Therefore, a hockey glove with a shorter cuff has become preferred. However, the short cuff leaves a section of the wrist exposed and vulnerable to a slash from an opponent's hockey stick. Consequently, small protective wrist guards have been developed which can be applied to the wrist in a manner similar to elbow pads. To apply the slash guard requires an additional dressing step, and further belts or straps.

Additionally, there have been several instances of extremely grievous injuries caused when an opponent's skate makes contact with the neck of a hockey player. The skates include metal blades which are sharp, and can cause grievous cuts. Therefore, it is now mandatory in many hockey leagues, especially for children, that the players wear neck guards. These neck guards typically consist of rip proof nylon, with associated padding, to prevent a skate blade from cutting into the neck of a wearer. Again, to wear the neck guard requires an additional dressing room step.

Therefore, while providing more protection and thus being better for safety, a problem with these devices is that each needs to be applied in a separate dressing step, or removed in a separate undressing step, which is time consuming, awkward, and less than satisfactory. Additionally, these devices tend to become sweat filled over time, and, are not easily washed. In this way, they can become unhygienic.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

What is desired is a simple and easy method for applying and removing these protective hockey devices during the dressing or undressing step of a hockey player. In addition, what is desired is a way for the hockey player to simply and easily clean these devices to prevent them from becoming unhygienic. Therefore, there is provided according to a first aspect of the present invention a shirt for use by hockey players, the shirt comprising:

- a torso portion with a lower trunk opening;
- a pair of sleeves attached to the torso portion;

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a head opening; and

a sleeve cuff assembly on each of said sleeves distal from said torso portion, said sleeve cuff assembly including an fastening means, wherein said fastening means is sufficiently adjustable to allow a slash guard to be selectively positioned on a wrist of said hockey player during a dressing step and securable to securely retain a slash guard in said sleeve cuff assembly during play.

According to a further aspect of the present invention, there is provided an undershirt for use by a hockey player, said undershirt comprising:

a torso portion;
openings for arms of said hockey player;
a lower trunk opening;
a head opening; and
a neck cuff assembly including a neck guard attached to said undershirt at said head opening and a means for positioning said neck guard on a neck of said hockey player.

According to a further aspect of the present invention, there is provided an undershirt for use by a hockey player, said undershirt comprising:

a torso portion with a lower trunk opening;
a head opening;
a pair of sleeves attached to said torso portion;
a sleeve cuff assembly on each of said sleeves distal from said torso portion, said sleeve cuff assembly including a fastening means said fastening means being sufficiently adjustable to allow a slash guard to be selectively positioned on a wrist of said hockey player during a dressing step and securable to securely retain a slash guard in said sleeve cuff assembly during play; and

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a neck cuff assembly including a neck guard attached to said undershirt at said head opening and a means for positioning said neck guard on a neck of said hockey player.

5 Most preferably, the neck-protection and wrist-protection aspects of the present invention are combined into a single garment, which reduces three dressing room steps of dressing and undressing to one step.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a back view of a hockey shirt according to the present invention;

10 Figure 2 is a cross-sectional view along line 2-2 of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a cross-sectional view along line 3-3 of Figure 1;

Figure 4 is isometric view of a wrist guard; and

Figure 5 is a view from above of a neck guard on a shirt according to the present invention.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Figure 1 shows a hockey shirt indicated generally at 10, which a torso portion 12. The torso portion 12 has a lower trunk opening 14 and a pair of sleeve openings 16 and 18. In the embodiment of Figure 1, 20 attached to the sleeve opening 16, 18 are two sleeves 20, 22 respectively. In each sleeve 20, 22 is located a sleeve cuff assembly 24.

25 The sleeve cuff assembly 24 is comprised of a folded over portion of fabric 28, which forms a chamber to capture a wrist slash guard 30. Formed in the portion of fabric 28 is a seam 32 which joins the ends of the fabric 28 together, forming a closed chamber to contain the wrist slash guard 30 and securely retain it in the sleeve cuff assembly 24. Alternately, the chamber could be openable, like a pocket, to permit the wrist slash guard 30 to be inserted and removed as needed.

30 The fabric 28 forming the wrist cuff assembly 24 most preferably includes a fastening or elasticizing means which is sufficiently resilient to allow the slash guard 30 to be selectively positioned on the wrist

of a wearer when in said open or closed pocket. It will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the elasticizing means may take any number of forms. The elasticizing means might take the form of the weave of the fabric 28 itself, which permits a certain resiliency to hold the cuff 24 and thus the slash guard 30 tightly around the wrist of a wearer. Alternately, the elasticizing means might comprise elasticized threads which are used in the construction of the fabric of the sleeve itself or the cuff pocket. Additionally, the elasticizing means might comprise any other elasticized device which extends around the wrist guard 30, and which therefore provides a seating force to hold the wrist guard 30 in place on the wrist of a wearer such as internal or external elastic or strap members to secure the wrist guard 30 in place.

While many different types of elasticizing means are contemplated by the present invention, it will be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the important aspect is to include the wrist slash guard 30 into the portion of fabric 28 of the shirt, in a way that the wrist slash guard 30 is kept in its protective position. Thus, the elasticizing means need not even be elastic, provided that it can open to receive the hand, and then close enough to secure the wrist slash guard 30 on the wrist. A Velcro™, loop and pile fastener across the cuff of the sleeve would also suffice.

The present invention also contemplates the portion of fabric 28 of the shirt being made in the form of a pocket, which can releasibly accommodate the wrist slash guard 30. In other words, in this further embodiment it would be possible to remove the wrist slash guard 30 from the portion of fabric 28 without departing from the spirit of the present invention. Thus, the present invention contemplates a cuff assembly having a pocket which will accept a wrist slash guard 30, or, having the wrist slash guard 30 actually in the pocket, either permanently or removably.

Turning to the second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a neck opening 50 for the head of the wearer. Around the neck opening 50 and integrally connected to the shirt 10 at the neck opening 50

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is a band of fabric in the form of a strip of material 52 for at least substantially surrounding the neck of the wearer. Attached to this strip of material 52 is a neck guard 54. The neck guard 54 is of the type having a cut-proof wall portion 56, made, for example, from rip proof nylon, and padding 58. Most preferably the strip of material 52 is of the form of a closed tube and the neck guard 54 is mountable to the strip of material 52 by fitting and being retained therein. The material should be skin compatible and washable. While the neck guard 54 may be removable from the closed tube, it is preferred if it is integrally mounted into the strip 52.

10 To permit the neck opening 50 to accommodate heads of different sizes, a slit, is formed in the preferred embodiment as shown at 60. Most preferably this slit 60 is V-shaped, with an appropriate finished edge 62. In the most preferred embodiment, a hook and loop pile fastener, of the Velcro™ type is used to connect the two ends 64, 66 of the band of fabric.

15 This provides an adjustable closure to permit the wearer to snug the neck guard 54 up around the neck, while allowing the neck opening 50 to be large enough to have the head pass there through.

Of course, many alternate fastening devices could be used, apart from Velcro™. Snap fasteners, buttons, and elasticized bands could

20 also be used to provide a snug fit for the neck. However, Velcro™ is preferred, because of its ease of use and the secure attachment that is made. It will appreciated that around the neck of a wearer it is important to have a snug fit, and yet one which does not exert any constricting force around the neck. Therefore, any elasticized bands that are used must be

25 provided with sufficient slack to prevent the neck band from being cinched around the neck of the user and cutting off blood or air circulation. Even slight pressure can be uncomfortable.

An example of an alternate form of the present invention, could be to make the material 52 stretch, analogous to an ordinary shirt, to permit

30 the neck guard 54 to be stretched out of position over the head, and then closed in again around the neck of the wearer when the head has passed

through the neck opening 50, without the use of a V-shaped slit 60. However, for ease of construction and use the V-shaped slit 60 is preferred. Also, for safety, it is preferred to provide some positive means to secure the neck guard 54 to a specific neck accommodating diameter, without relying
5 upon the inherent resiliency of the shirt material.

Another alternate form of this present invention is to extend the rip-proof nylon down over the front of the chest in a manner similar to a bib. This extends the protection over a larger area and protects not only the throat, but the upper chest area as well. The bib portion could be made of
10 various sizes, depending upon how much protection was desired.

It can now be appreciated that the present invention provides a single garment, a shirt, that includes essentially built-in protection. In this way, three dressing room steps are reduced to a single one, all that is needed is to pull the shirt on over the head and arms and to attach the strap
15 of the neck guard 54. When removing the shirt it is just as easy. Further, the whole shirt can be easily put into the wash, meaning that the sweat accumulated in either the wrist slash guard 30 or neck guard 54 can be easily washed away. In this way this equipment can be kept clean and fragrant.

20 Various modifications and alterations are possible to the form of the invention, without departing from the scope of the broad claims as attached hereto. In particular, while reference has been made to Velcro™, and elasticizing means, various other attachment arrangements are possible, without departing from the broad scope of the present invention.

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**THE EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION IN WHICH AN EXCLUSIVE
PROPERTY OR PRIVILEGE IS CLAIMED ARE DEFINED AS FOLLOWS:**

1. An undershirt for use by a hockey player, the undershirt
5 comprising:
 - a torso portion with a lower trunk opening;
 - a pair of sleeves attached to the torso portion;
 - a head opening; and
 - a sleeve cuff assembly on each of said sleeves distal from
 - 10 said torso portion, said sleeve cuff assembly including an fastening means,
wherein said fastening means is sufficiently adjustable to allow a slash
guard to be selectively positioned on a wrist of said hockey player during a
dressing step and securable to securely retain a slash guard in said sleeve
cuff assembly during play.
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2. An undershirt as claimed in claim 1 wherein said undershirt
further includes an integral slash guard in each sleeve cuff assembly.
3. An undershirt as claimed in claim 1 wherein said sleeve cuff
20 assembly includes a pocket to retain said slash guards in place.
4. An undershirt as claimed in claim 3 wherein said pocket is an
openable pocket.
- 25 5. An undershirt as claimed in claim 3 wherein said pocket is a
closed pocket.
6. An undershirt for use by a hockey player, said undershirt
comprising:
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 - a torso portion;
 - openings for arms of said hockey player;

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a lower trunk opening;

a head opening; and

a neck cuff assembly including a neck guard attached to said undershirt at said head opening and a means for positioning said neck guard on a neck of said hockey player.

7. The undershirt of claim 6 wherein said neck cuff assembly further includes a band of fabric for at least substantially surrounding the neck of said hockey player, said band of fabric being attached to said undershirt at said head opening, said neck guard being attached to said band of fabric.

8. The undershirt of claim 6 or 7, wherein said head opening includes a V-shaped slit to permit said undershirt to be placed over a head of said hockey player.

9. The undershirt of claim 8 wherein said means for positioning includes a releasable fastener.

10. The undershirt of claim 9 wherein said releasable fastener is a hook and loop pile fastener.

11. The undershirt of claim 8, 9 or 10 wherein said V-shaped slit includes a finished edge.

12. The undershirt of claim 6 or 7 wherein said neck guard is removably mountable to said undershirt.

13. The undershirt of claim 6 or 7 wherein said neck guard includes a layer of rip proof nylon.

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14. The undershirt of claim 6 or 12 wherein said means for positioning comprises a portion of stretch material attached to said neck guard to permit said neck guard to be pulled over a head of said hockey player and to close in around the neck of said hockey player when said head
5 has passed through said head opening.

15. The undershirt of claim 6 wherein said means for positioning comprises at least one snap fastener on said neck cuff assembly.

10 16. The undershirt of claim 6 wherein said means for positioning comprises at least one button fastener on said neck cuff assembly.

17. The undershirt of claim 6, 12 or 14 wherein said means for positioning is elasticized to permit said neck guard to be pulled over a head
15 of said hockey player and positioned on the neck of said hockey player.

18. An undershirt for use by a hockey player, said undershirt comprising:

20 a torso portion with a lower trunk opening;
a head opening;
a pair of sleeves attached to said torso portion;
a sleeve cuff assembly on each of said sleeves distal from said torso portion, said sleeve cuff assembly including a fastening means said fastening means being sufficiently adjustable to allow a slash guard to be
25 selectively positioned on a wrist of said hockey player during a dressing step and securable to securely retain a slash guard in said sleeve cuff assembly during play; and

a neck cuff assembly including a neck guard attached to said undershirt at said head opening and a means for positioning said neck
30 guard on a neck of said hockey player.

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19. The undershirt of claim 18 wherein said neck cuff assembly further includes a band of fabric for at least substantially surrounding the neck of said hockey player, said band of fabric being attached to said undershirt at said head opening, said neck guard being attached to said
5 band of fabric.

20. The undershirt of claim 18 or 19, wherein said head opening includes a V-shaped slit to permit said undershirt to be placed over a head of said hockey player.
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21. The undershirt of claim 20 wherein said means for positioning includes a releasable fastener.

22. The undershirt of claim 21 wherein said releasable fastener is
15 a hook and loop pile fastener.

23. The undershirt of claim 20, 21 or 22 wherein said V-shaped slit includes a finished edge.

20 24. The undershirt of claim 18 or 19 wherein said neck cuff assembly is removably mountable to said undershirt.

25. The undershirt of claim 18 or 19 wherein said neck guard includes a layer of rip proof nylon.
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26. An undershirt as claimed in claim 18 wherein said undershirt further includes an integral slash guard in each sleeve cuff assembly.

27. An undershirt as claimed in claim 18 wherein said sleeve cuff
30 assembly includes a pocket to retain said slash guards in place.

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28. An undershirt as claimed in claim 27 wherein said pocket is an openable pocket.

29. An undershirt as claimed in claim 27 wherein said pocket is a
5 closed pocket.

30. An undershirt as claimed in claim 18 wherein at least one of said slash guards and said neck guard is removable from said undershirt.

10 31. An undershirt as claimed in claim 18 wherein at least one of said slash guards and said neck guard is integrally attached to said undershirt.

15 32. The undershirt of claim 18 wherein said means for positioning comprises a portion of stretch material attached to said neck guard to permit said neck guard to be pulled over a head of said hockey player and to close in around the neck of said hockey player when said head has passed through said head opening.

20 33. The undershirt of claim 18 wherein said means for positioning comprises at least one snap fastener on said neck cuff assembly.

34. The undershirt of claim 18 wherein said means for positioning comprises at least one button fastener on said neck cuff assembly.

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35. The undershirt of claim 18 wherein said means for positioning is elasticized to permit said neck guard to be pulled over a head of said hockey player and positioned on the neck of said hockey player.

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