

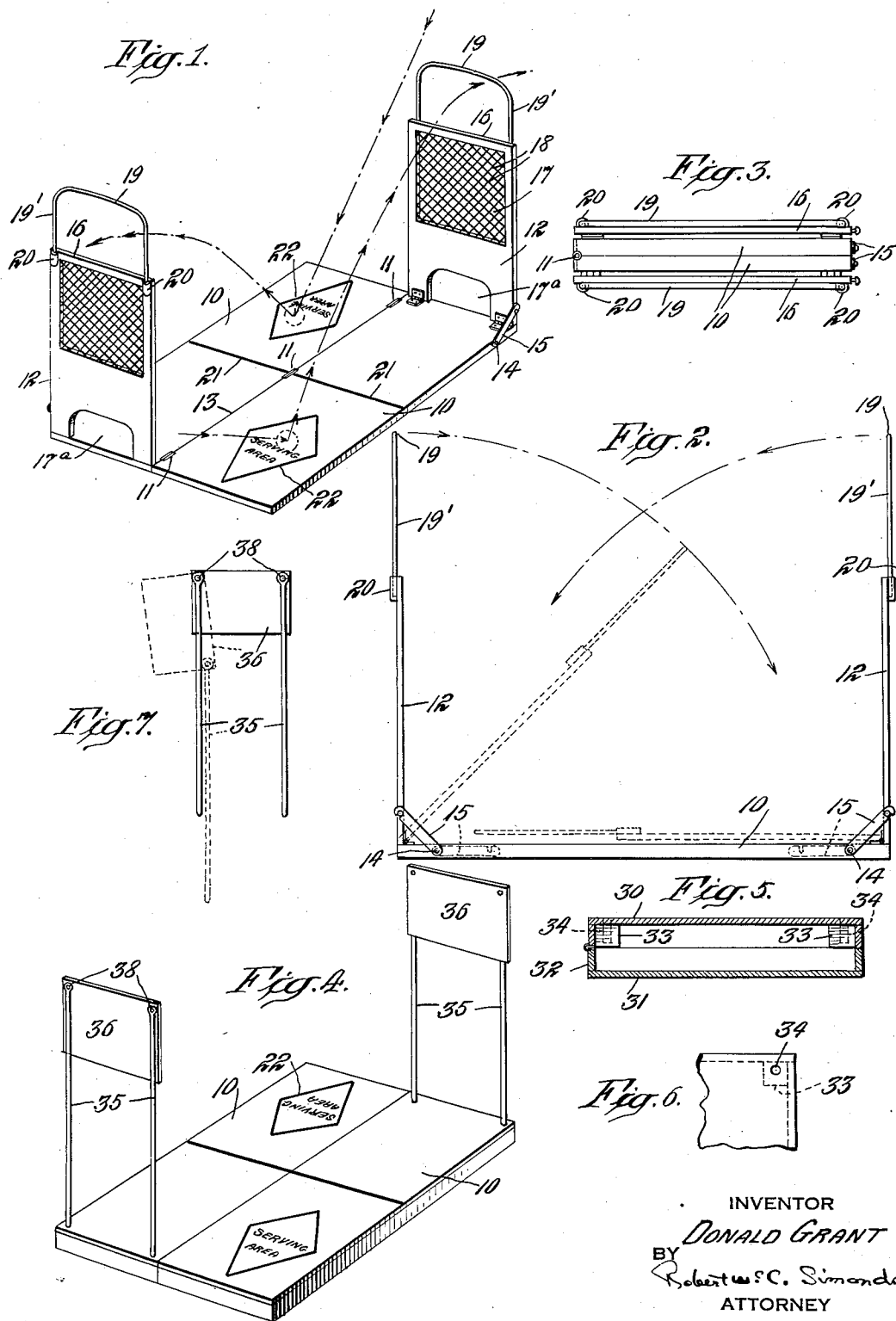
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GAME CONSTRUCTION

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GAME CONSTRUCTION

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This invention relates to a novel game device, and more particularly, to an improved game of skill and amusement played with balls.

A feature of the invention lies in the provision of an improved game and device for playing the game, said game being played by two or more persons standing at opposite ends of a small court, a person at one end bouncing a number of balls in succession over a barrier at one side of the court and adjacent the opposite end thereof, and a person at said opposite end catching them and returning them in succession, by bouncing them over a barrier at the other side of the court and adjacent the first-mentioned end thereof.

A more specific feature of the invention resides in the provision of a device for this purpose which includes a pair of serving areas on opposite sides of the center line of the court, one side of the court having a generally upright barrier at the receiving end and being preferably unobstructed at the service end, and the other side of the court being similar but just the reverse.

Another feature resides in the provision of a game and game device of this character, which can be played without racquets, the device being simple and inexpensive to manufacture, taking up but little space, and being easy to carry from place to place.

Other features, objects and advantages of the present invention will become apparent or be pointed out in connection with the following detailed description of certain forms of device illustrating the nature of the invention, reference being had to the accompanying drawing, wherein:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of one form of device on which the game is played;

Fig. 2 is a side elevation, on enlarged scale, of the construction shown in Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is an end elevation, also on enlarged scale, of the device shown in Figs. 1 and 2, but folded up;

Fig. 4 is a perspective view of another form of device also in accordance with the invention;

Fig. 5 is a vertical, transverse section on enlarged scale, taken through one end of the construction shown in Fig. 4 when folded up;

Fig. 6 is a detailed plan view of one corner of the construction shown in Fig. 4; and

Fig. 7 is a detailed view illustrating a manner of folding the end members of the construction of Fig. 4.

With reference first to Figs. 1, 2 and 3, the game device advantageously includes a pair of flat playing surfaces arranged side by side, preferably adjoining each other and forming a court.

Each of these surfaces may to good effect be in the order of three feet long by one foot wide. They may be formed on a member or members 10 made of any suitable material such as plywood or metal, which should be reasonably thick and rigid, and should not warp. In order to permit the device to be folded up so that it can be handily carried from place to place, the members 10 may be formed separately and connected by suitable hinges 11 countersunk into the sides of the members, so that when the board is open, there will not be a crack along the center line 13 between the two playing surfaces.

Mounted adjacent opposite ends of the device there are provided a pair of barriers or hurdles 12, one of these being at one end of one of the playing surfaces and the other being at the opposite end of the other playing surface. Each of these barriers 12 preferably extends substantially the full width of the member 10 at the receiving end of which it is mounted. The service ends of the members 10, on the opposite sides of the court from the respective barriers are advantageously open or relatively unobstructed. When the service end of each side of the court is open this facilitates serving, but the invention, at least in its broader aspects, is not limited to having this service end quite unobstructed. The opposite ends of the court should be alike and symmetrically arranged. Thus, the court consists of two equal and opposite sections on either side of the center line 13.

The barriers 12 preferably extend vertically adjacent the ends of the members 10 and may be mounted thereon in any suitable or convenient manner. Advantageously, they are removably attached or pivoted to the members 10, as by hinges 14, so that they may be laid flat when the game is not in use. Suitable latching arms 15 may be provided for securely holding the barriers in upright position. Each of the barriers 12 may be formed of any desired material, such as wood, metal, or the like, and may be solid or not, according to preference, although their upper edges 16 are desirably rigid and generally horizontal the full width of the barriers. These edges 16 advantageously lie in the order of 20 inches above the surface 10, so that the device may rest on the floor or ground and so that the players may stand at either end and catch balls bounced over the edges 16 from the opposite end, as indicated by the arrows in Fig. 1. That is to say, the height of the barriers should be such that the balls which pass over them will necessarily rise to a height such that the players do not have to stoop

too much. On the other hand, the height of the barriers is preferably not so great as to exclude from the play much of the area in which a player can quickly reach balls which have passed over a barrier. While twenty inches has been suggested, this is merely by way of example, and in general, a good height is one about knee-high, or a bit greater.

The structural details of the barriers 12 may vary considerably provided they serve to segregate good balls which pass over them from those which do not. For instance, they may be formed with openings such as 17 and 17a below their upper edges, and even a narrow horizontal bar or net may serve. However, it is preferable to construct the barriers so that they prevent the balls which are not good from passing into the zone where the receiver is catching the good ones, since the balls come very rapidly once several balls are in play, and excessive confusion is thus avoided. Accordingly, where the barriers are not of solid construction, net or other material 18 may be fastened over the openings or the upper part of them. The game may be made even more difficult, if desired, by attaching suitable wickets 19 to the barriers or hurdles, so that the balls will not only have to bounce over the edges 16 but also pass through the wickets. These wickets 19 may extend to any desired height above the edges 16, for instance, about one or two feet, and they may be made removable, for instance, by mounting them in sockets 20 secured to the backs of the hazards 12. The cross-bars of the wickets might be omitted, their side posts thus acting to restrict the width of the receiving area for good balls.

While it may be left to the player to serve in such fashion as to bounce the balls over the edges 16, it is preferable to mark off the surfaces 10 by lines which indicate the proper place where the balls are to be bounced, as shown by the arrows in Fig. 1. For instance, the court is preferably marked off by cross lines 21 which may both be midway between the ends of the court. On the other hand, each of these service lines 21 may be somewhat nearer either end of the court. It is preferred to place both service lines in the middle of the court so that the entire court is divided into halves by a single service line. It is also advantageous to mark off a more restricted service area in each half of the court, for instance, as indicated by the diamonds 22. Naturally, the size and shape of this serving area may be varied. By restricting the service area the tendency is to call for greater skill and accuracy on the part of the server, and, on the other hand, to make it easier for the receiver, since the balls are more apt to pass directly over the upper edges 16 of the barriers rather than at either side thereof.

The game may be played with any suitable number of balls, two, three or four being especially good for two players. The players stand at opposite ends of the game board and the player at the far end of the board then bounces a ball so that it strikes the board in the left service court (Fig. 1), on the near side of the service line 21 or in the limited service area, and so that the ball bounces over the upper edge 16 of the barrier at the opposite end of the court, the player at the near end of the court catching the ball and serving it in the same fashion but in the court on the right (Fig. 1). The idea of the game is to keep a number of balls in play as long as possible, the first player to put a ball out of play

by failing to bounce it over the barrier, or by bouncing it in the wrong area, or by failing to catch a ball, losing a point. It is ordinarily preferable to have the barriers mounted on the receiver's left, so that a player may catch a ball with his left hand, quickly transfer it to his right hand for returning to the other end via the right side of the court, and be ready to catch the next ball as it bounces toward him. The balls may be of any suitable color and in fact the difficulty of the game is increased where the balls are of several different colors. The game thus calls for some skill in juggling the balls, as well as affording a great deal of amusement when confusion results from three or four balls arriving quickly on top of each other.

In order that the game may be carried from place to place, and not be too cumbersome, it may be folded as indicated in Figs. 2 and 3, by first releasing the catches 15 and then folding the barriers 12 down onto the members 10, after which the latter may be folded back to back as shown in Fig. 3, any suitable catch, strap, or the like (not shown), being provided for holding the board in closed position. An advantage of using mesh or cloth material as at 18 is that the balls may be carried between it and the board when the device is folded up.

While different sorts and sizes of balls may be used, the game is especially good when played with tennis balls, or rubber balls of about the same size. It is advantageous to employ balls of sponge rubber about two inches in diameter, which are somewhat less lively than tennis balls and are easier to catch. Preferably four such balls are included in a complete set, as marketed.

If desired, the game may be played by four persons, two standing at each end of the board, one doing the serving and the other doing the receiving and passing the balls to the server. Similarly, the game may be played by a larger number of persons receiving and serving in rotation, if two or more boards are placed side by side, or if the construction is enlarged to include one or more additional half-court units, each including a surface 10 and a barrier 12.

With reference to Figs. 4 to 7, there is shown a construction which is similar to that of Fig. 1, but in which the board is combined with a box into which the barriers and balls may be inserted. For instance, the members 10 may form part of the top 30 and bottom 31 of a box designated generally as 32. The box may be of any construction so that when it is opened out, it will lie flat on the floor. Suitable supporting blocks 33 may be secured in the interior corners of the box as indicated in Figs. 5 and 6, and convenient recesses 34 may be provided, adapted to receive posts 35 for supporting plates 36, which may be pivoted to the ends of the rods 35 as at 38. By virtue of this pivoted arrangement, as best shown in Fig. 7, the barriers may be readily folded up and placed in the box, along with the balls, when the game is to be carried from place to place. If desired, the rods 35 and plates 36, which form the barriers, may be made separable, through employment of any known fastenings. A lock or latch may be attached to the box for holding it closed.

It will thus be appreciated that the barriers need not be permanently affixed to the boards which form the serving areas, but may be separable therefrom so that when the game is played outdoors, they may be set into the ground instead of into the board itself. Moreover, it will be understood that the portions of the members 10

which lie between the serving areas and the barriers do not have to be made solid. In fact, in its broader aspects, the device involves the possibility of a great many variations in the actual construction and arrangement of its parts.

It will thus be appreciated that there is provided a simple game device which can be readily manufactured at low cost. Moreover, it can be easily folded and carried from place to place so that the game can be played on a beach, lawn or deck, or indoors. No expensive equipment, such as racquets, is required and by simply using additional boards any number of people can play. In fact, the game can even be played with one more person at one end than at the other. In addition, the game does not require a great deal of space and hence can be played even in small rooms. It affords considerable amusement and helps to develop the players' skill in handling a number of items quickly and accurately.

The terms and expressions which have been employed are used as terms of description and not of limitation, and there is no intention, in the use of such terms and expressions, of excluding any equivalents of the features shown and described, or portions thereof, but it is recognized that various modifications are possible within the scope of the invention claimed.

What I claim is:

1. In a game device of the character described, a pair of serving areas forming a flat court and lying at opposite sides thereof and substantially on a level with the player's feet, and a pair of upright barriers over which balls must bounce after striking said serving areas, one of said barriers being mounted in fixed position adjacent one end of the court and extending from one side to the center thereof, and the other barrier being symmetrically mounted in fixed position adjacent the opposite end and other side of the court from the first named barrier.

2. A game device of the character described adapted to be played by players standing at opposite ends of the device, comprising a hard, horizontal playing surface having serving areas on opposite sides thereof, said surface lying substantially below the level of the knees of the players, and a pair of upright barriers over which balls must bounce after striking said serving areas, one of said barriers being mounted in fixed position adjacent one end of the surface and extending from one side to the center thereof, and the other barrier being symmetrically mounted in fixed position adjacent the opposite end on the other side of the surface from the first named barrier,

said barriers extending upwardly to a height about at the level of the knees of the players, and the ends of the surface opposite said barriers being substantially unobstructed, whereby to enable the players to bounce balls onto their respective serving areas while standing at a distance from the end of the surface.

3. The construction as claimed in claim 1 wherein said members and barriers form a court having relative dimensions in the order of three feet in length, two feet in width and twenty inches in height.

4. As an article of manufacture, a game device of the character described, comprising a pair of horizontal members adapted to form serving areas, said members being foldably connected to form a court when spread out flat, means on each of said members designating a serving area, a pair of barriers extending in upright relation to said members, one of said barriers being mounted at each end of the court, and each of said barriers extending substantially half way from one side of the court to the center line thereof, and being on opposite sides of the court, a plurality of balls for bouncing from said service area over the upper edges of said barriers, and means to enable the members and barriers to be assembled as a unit, said court being in the order of three feet long by two feet wide and the upper edges of said barriers lying about knee-high above said members.

5. The device as claimed in claim 4, wherein the ends of the members opposite the barriers are substantially open.

6. A game device of the character described adapted to be played by players standing at opposite ends of the device, comprising a hard, horizontal playing surface adapted to rest on the ground or floor and having a pair of symmetrically arranged serving areas indicated thereon at opposite sides thereof, and a pair of upright, symmetrically arranged barriers on opposite sides and at opposite ends of said surface, each of said barriers extending from one side of said surface to the center thereof and being mounted in fixed position with their upper edges approximately at the level of the knees of the players, and the ends of the surface at the sides of the said barriers being unobstructed to enable the players to bounce balls onto said serving areas and thence over the respective barriers at the opposite ends of the surface, while standing beyond the ends of the surface.

DONALD GRANT. 55