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GOLF TEE HAVING A HINGED, ENCLOSED, GROUND ENGAGING SPIKE

Filed June 27, 1966

Fig. 1.

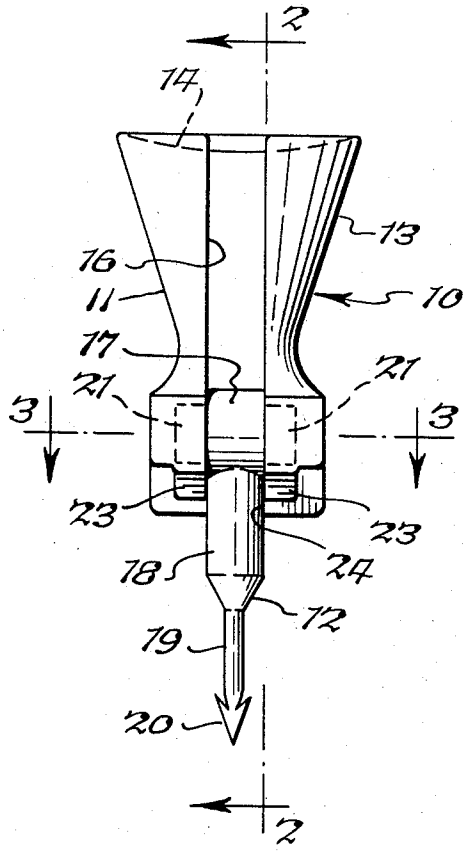
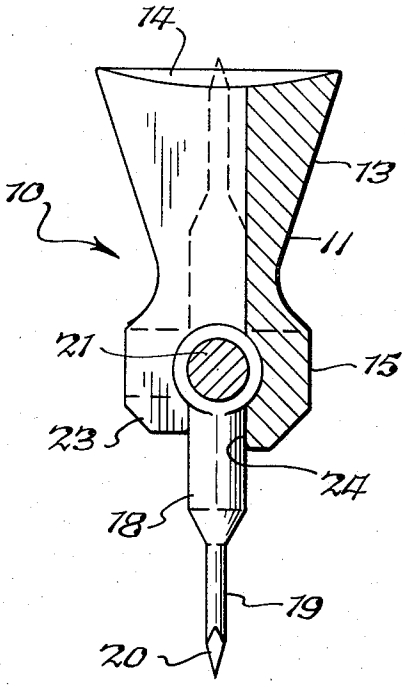


Fig. 2.



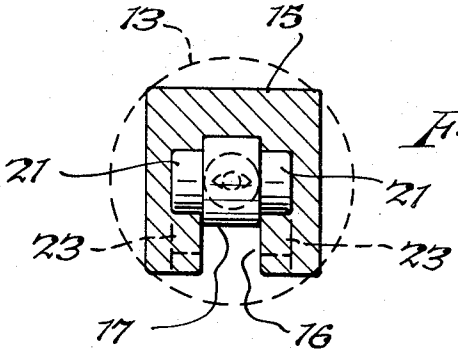


Fig. 3.

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GOLF TEE HAVING A HINGED, ENCLOSED, GROUND ENGAGING SPIKE

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This invention relates to golf tees and more particularly to golf tees which are constructed and arranged to allow the stem portions thereof to be folded to a stored position wherein they are protectively encased.

It is desirable to provide a golf tee with a very sharp, pointed end so that it may be easily pressed into the ground. Conventional golf tees, even though they are not very sharply pointed, constitute a danger to the golfer in ordinary use as their pointed ends are exposed. Normally, a number of tees are carried by the golfer in his trouser pocket or in the pocket of a golf bag. The tees usually lie in the pocket in a random manner with a number of their pointed ends projecting upwardly toward the pocket opening. Puncture wounds, scratches or the like are sometimes caused by reaching into the pocket for a tee. Such injuries may also occur during ordinary handling of the tees.

The present invention provides a golf tee with a stem having a sharpened pointed end which stem is readily encased, when not in use, in a protective portion or chamber provided in the remaining portion of the tee, thus shielding the pointed end. The stem is encased without use of a complementary sheath or other separable part which may be easily mislaid or lost, and in any event is inconvenient and increases the cost of the tee.

Speaking generally, the tee of the present invention comprises two relatively pivoted members, a body member having a golf ball receiving surface at its upper end together with a vertical slot extending the length of the body member and opening laterally through a side thereof, and a stem member having a lower pointed end and pivotally mounted at its upper end in the lower end of the body member for swinging movement between a downwardly extending golf ball teeing position and a stored position within the slot.

The stem is thus stored in a folded position within the casing when not in use and a large number of tees constructed in this manner may be placed in the pocket of a golf bag without danger of injuring the golfer's hand when reaching into the pocket or otherwise injuring the golfer when handling the same. Furthermore, the stem and body member are so dimensioned that the stem has a portion projection slightly beyond the slot to provide a portion which is easily and quickly engaged to pivot the stem from its stored position to its downwardly extending position wherein the tee is adapted for use. When the stem of the tee of the present invention is swung to its downwardly extending position the tee may be inserted into the ground in an entirely conventional manner. The normal pushing motion is applied through a golf ball to the golf ball supporting surface, and, since the body member and stem are then axially aligned, provides direct axial thrust into the ground.

Various other novel features of construction and advantages inherent in the golf tee construction of the present invention are pointed out in detail in conjunction with the following description of a typical embodiment thereof considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawing wherein like numerals represent like parts throughout the various views and wherein:

FIG. 1 is an elevational view of a golf tee constructed in accordance with one form of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a vertical cross sectional view taken about on line 2—2 of FIG. 1; and

FIG. 3 is a horizontal cross sectional view taken about on line 3—3 of FIG. 1.

Referring now to the drawing there is shown a golf tee, generally designated **10**, comprising a body member **11** and a stem **12**. Body member **11** includes an upper conical portion **13** of the usual form having a concave or dished surface **14** at its upper end providing a golf ball supporting surface and an enlarged square base **15** at its lower end. A vertical slot **16** extends the height of body member **11** and opens laterally or radially through a side thereof to provide a recess for receiving stem **12** when folded to a stored position as illustrated by the dotted lines of FIG. 2.

Stem **12** includes a hub **17** at its upper end, an intermediate shaft portion **18**, and a lower reduced shaft portion **19** terminating in a pointed barbed end **20**. Stem **12** is pivotally mounted in the lower end of the slot **16** in base **15** for swinging movement between a downwardly extending position for use when teeing a golf ball and a folded stored position within slot **16**. To this end, a pair of diametrically reduced, laterally projecting trunnions **21** are provided on opposite sides of hub **17** and are received for rotation in complementary recesses in opposite sides of slot **16** in base **15**.

Body member **11** has a pair of depending projections **23** on opposite sides of the slot which engage about a portion of the underside of trunnions **21**, retaining the latter in tight frictional engagement in the complementary recesses in base **15**. The sides of hub **17** also frictionally engage opposite sides of slot **16**. To preclude overcenter pivotal movement of stem **12**, a portion of base **15**, on the side thereof opposite slot **16**, depends to provide an abutment **24** for engaging against intermediate shaft portion **18** when the stem is extended in axial alinement with body member **11** in golf ball teeing position.

In the preferred form, body member **11** may be molded of a plastic material and stem **12** formed of metal to provide greater strength when pressing the tee into particularly hard ground. The tee may be assembled by pressing the trunnions **21** upwardly between abutment **24** and projections **23**, the latter being sufficiently flexible to allow trunnions **21** to pass and engage in their respective complementary recesses in base **15**. Stem **12** has a length from the pivotal axis thereof to the tip of the pointed barbed end **20** slightly in excess of the length of the body member from such axis to the ball supporting surface so that the pointed end projects slightly beyond surface **14** when stem **12** is folded into slot **16** as shown in the dotted lines of FIG. 2.

It is believed that the manner of use of the tee of the present invention is obvious from the foregoing. The user grasps body member **11** and guides the stem from the folded position to the golf ball teeing position by engaging a finger behind projecting end **20** and swinging the stem from the dotted line position to the full line position shown in FIG. 2. The stem is fully extended for use when intermediate portion **18** engages abutment **24**.

The frictional engagement of both the central hub **17** against the sides of the slots and trunnions **21** in base **15** maintains stem **12** in depending axially aligned position with body member **11**. The user then grasps the ball and tee in the usual manner with the ball engaging against surface **14** and presses the pointed barbed end of stem **12** into the ground. In positioning the tee in this manner it is important for the user to position the tee with slot **16** pointing in the direction of the shot to be made. The barbed end provides a greater holding tendency and, when the slot is properly aligned in the general direction of the golf shot as described above, body member **12** is

free to pivot forwardly and downwardly upon impact of a golf club head against the ball or the ball and tee, thus further ensuring that tee **10** will remain in the ground and will not break as a result of such impact. The user may then pick the tee from the ground in the usual manner and encase the stem within body member **12** by pivoting the stem into the slot, thus providing a golf tee having substantially no sharp protuberances in the folded position.

Having thus described and illustrated a preferred embodiment of my invention, it will be understood that such description and illustration is by way of example only and that such modifications and changes as may suggest themselves to those skilled in the art are intended to fall within the scope of the present invention, which is limited only by the scope of the appended claims.

I claim:

1. In a golf tee, a vertically elongated body member having a golf ball supporting surface at its upper end and a vertical slot extending the length of the member and opening onto said upper end, said slot also opening laterally through a side of said body member, a stem having a pointed lower end for insertion into the ground and an upper end pivotally mounted in the lower end of said body member and in said slot for pivotal movement in the plane of said slot, outer end portion of said stem projecting slightly outwardly of the upper end of said slot, said stem being mounted for swinging movement between a downwardly extending position for teeing a golf ball up from the ground on said supporting surface and a folded encased position within said slot.

2. A golf tee according to claim **1** including means maintaining said stem in said downwardly extending position comprising a stop on the lower end of said body member engaging said stem when the latter is in said downwardly extending position.

3. A golf tee according to claim **1** wherein said pointed lower end of said stem includes a barb projecting therefrom.

4. A golf tee according to claim **1** including means maintaining said stem in said downwardly extending position comprising a stop on the lower end of said body member engaging said stem when the latter is in said downwardly extending position.

5. A golf tee according to claim **1** including means maintaining said stem in said downwardly extending position comprising a friction fit between the upper end of said stem and the lower end of said body member at said pivotal mounting.

6. A golf tee according to claim **1** wherein said upper end of said body member tapers downwardly and inwardly to said lower end thereof, and wherein said lower end is enlarged to provide a pair of recesses opening into said slot on opposite sides thereof, said upper end of said stem having a pair of laterally extending trunnions engaging in said recesses for rotation therein to provide said pivotal movement.

7. A golf tee according to claim **1** including means maintaining said stem in said downwardly extending position comprising a stop on the lower end of said body member engaging said stem when the latter is in said downwardly extending position and a friction fit between the upper end of said stem and the lower end of said body member at said pivotal mounting.

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