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3,190,657

INFLATABLE GOLF PRACTICE TARGET

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FIG. 1

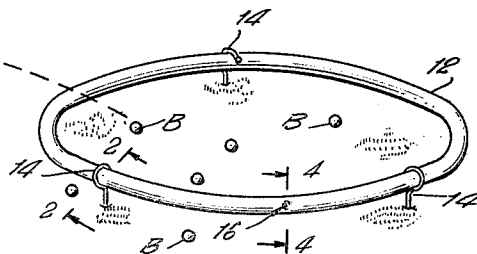


FIG. 2

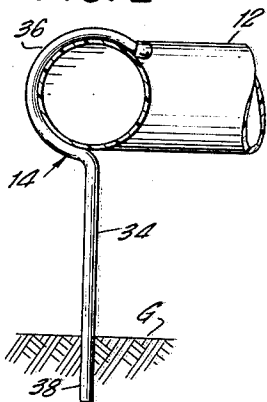
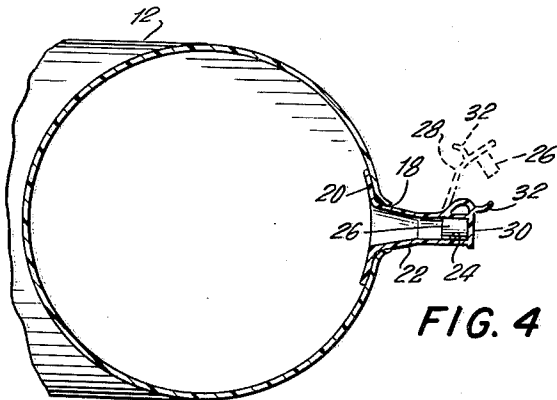


FIG. 4

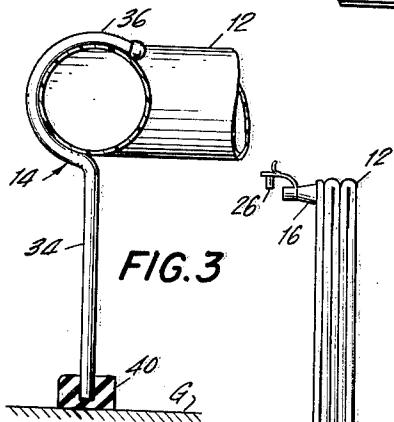


FIG. 3

FIG. 6

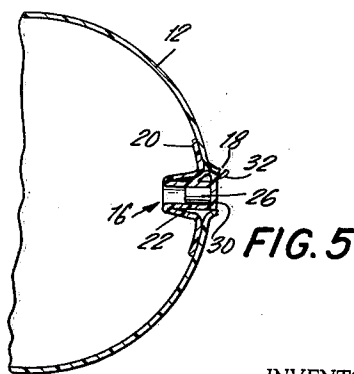


FIG. 5

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INFLATABLE GOLF PRACTICE TARGET

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1 Claim. (Cl. 273-181)

The present invention relates to a golf practice target of the type which is especially useful for home practice of various different types of golf shots.

It is a primary object of the present invention to provide a golf practicing device for the home practice of so called "chip" and "pitch" shots.

It is another object of the present invention to provide a golf target which may be utilized on a golf course by placing the target around the cup so as to provide a visual target for long approach "putts."

It is another object of the present invention to provide a golf target which is extremely useful in the teaching and practice of iron shots on a golf course.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide a golf target which when not in use may be deflated and contained in a relatively small volume so that it is small enough to fit into a golf bag pocket.

It is a still further object of the present invention to provide an inflatable golf target which when not in use as a golf target may be used as a toy for children both on land and in water.

Other and further objects and advantages of the present invention will be readily apparent to one skilled in the art from a consideration of the following specification taken in connection with the drawings which illustrate and describe the best mode presently contemplated for carrying out the invention.

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of a golf target pursuant to the present invention as used during a golf practice session;

FIGURE 2 is a cross-sectional view on an enlarged scale taken on the line 2-2 of FIGURE 1;

FIGURE 3 is a view similar to FIGURE 2 and illustrates another method of mounting the golf target on the ground;

FIGURE 4 is a cross-sectional view on an enlarged scale taken on the line 4-4 of FIGURE 1 and illustrates an air valve utilized in the target prior to the insertion of the valve within the target;

FIGURE 5 is a view similar to FIGURE 4 and illustrates a fragmentary detail showing the air valve incorporated within the target; and

FIGURE 6 illustrates the target in collapsed and folded condition.

Referring now to the drawings in detail, the golf target 10 pursuant to the present invention comprises an endless inflatable member or tube 12 and a plurality of legs or supports 14 for mounting the tubular element 12 in horizontal position on the ground.

The tubular member 12 is formed of a suitable flexible plastic which can be inflated for use as a target and which when deflated is readily foldable into a relatively small volume. As here shown, the endless tubular member 12 is in the form of a torus, however, it will be understood that the member 12 may have a conformation other than toroidal. For example, and not by way of limitation, the endless tubular member 12 may be in the form of a quadrilateral or a regular polygon. In the collapsed condition thereof, as illustrated in FIGURE 6, the tubular member 12 may have an over-all longitudinal dimension of substantially 6 inches, a width-wise dimension of substantially 3 inches and a thickness of less than 1 inch so as to provide a relatively small package which fits into a carrying case of substantially slightly larger dimensions so that when included in the carrying case it may readily fit into the pocket of a golf bag.

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In order to inflate and deflate the endless tubular member 12, the latter is provided with an air valve 16. The valve 16 is also formed of a flexible plastic material and projects through an aperture 18 provided in the tubular member 12. As here shown, the air valve 16 is provided with an enlarged annular collar 20 which is suitably secured to the inner surface of the tubular member 12 at the aperture 18. The air valve is provided also with an elongated neck 22 which projects through the aperture 18 and which terminates in an open mouth 24 through which air may be inserted into the tubular member 12 or through which air may be released from the tubular member 12. Provision is made for a plug or stopper 26 for insertion into the mouth 24, the plug being secured to the neck 22 by a strip of flexible plastic material as at 28. The plug is provided with a finger piece 32 to facilitate the withdrawal thereof from the mouth 24. After the tubular member 12 is inflated to the desired degree of inflation, the valve 16 is urged into the tube 12 so as to assume the position thereof illustrated in FIGURE 5 whereby the outer surface 30 of the plug 26 is substantially flush with the outer surface of the tube 12 as best illustrated in FIGURE 5.

The endless tubular member 12 may be readily inflated by using a pump so as to pump air through the valve 16 or it may be inflated by mouth by blowing air through the air valve 16. When the tubular member 12 has been fully inflated, the plug 26 is then inserted into the valve as shown in FIGURE 4. Thereafter, the valve may be easily pushed into the interior of the tubular member 12 to assume the position thereof shown in FIGURE 5 wherein the outer surface 30 of the plug is substantially flush with the outer surface of the tubular member 12.

In order to mount the tubular member 12 in the horizontal position thereof, as shown in FIGURE 1, the previously mentioned legs 14 are utilized. Each leg or mounting member 14 is provided with a linear portion 34 which terminates at one end thereof in a hooked portion 36. The hooks 36 are dimensioned so as to readily receive therein the tubular member 12, the latter being squeezed slightly for proper insertion into the hooks 36. As here shown, three legs 14 are used to mount the endless member 12, the legs being positioned at equidistant points along the circumference of the tubular member 12. However, it will be understood that a greater number of legs 14 may be used if desired. The linear portions 34 of the legs 14 may be inserted into the ground G by urging the free ends 38 thereof into the ground. In this connection, it will be understood that the legs 14 may be formed of any suitable material preferably aluminum. In lieu of inserting the legs 14 directly into the ground G, the legs may be provided at the ends 38 thereof with suitable tips 40 formed preferably of an elastomeric material so that when provided with the tips 40 the leg may rest on the ground G rather than being inserted therein. When using the tips 40, it will be readily apparent that the tube 12 is placed at a fixed distance above the ground G depending upon the length of the legs 14. However, when it is desired to decrease the distance between the tube 12 and the upper surface of the ground G, the tips 40 may be removed and the legs 14 urged into the ground G to the desired distance at which it is desired to maintain the tubular member 12 above the ground.

When it is desired to discontinue the use of the target 10, the legs 14 may be readily removed from insertion in the ground or from the position thereof resting on the ground and then readily removed from the tube 12. The tube may be readily deflated by removing the plug 32 from the valve 16 utilizing the finger piece 32 for this purpose. In this connection, it will be noted that the

finger piece 32 projects sufficiently from the surface of the tubular member 12 so that it may be utilized to remove the plug from the valve even though the latter is inserted within the tube, as will be readily apparent from FIGURE 5. After the air has been fully removed from the member 12, the latter may be readily folded into the compact condition thereof illustrated in FIGURE 6 and returned to the golf bag pocket or other suitable storage place.

It is well known to those skilled in the art of playing golf that if an approach can come within an imaginary circle of substantially three feet or less around the cup, it is relatively easy to sink the final basic putt in the cup. The target 10 provides a perfect practice device for helping a player P as illustrated in FIGURE 1 to place the golf ball B within the required circle constituted by the inflatable tube 12. The target 10 greatly facilitates the perfection of both chip and putt shots and aids the player in learning how to pinpoint his shots so as to hit the cup with bull's-eye accuracy. When playing a normal golf game, after having practiced with the target device 10, the latter remains as an imaginary visual target in the mind's eye during the play of an actual round of golf.

In addition to its function as a golf target, the tubular member 12 may also be utilized as a toy or plaything for children. For various types of land games, it may be utilized as a hoop or as a rolling device. Since the tubular member 12 is inflated, it will readily float on water so that it may be also utilized for various types of water sports or games.

While I have described the presently preferred embodiment of my invention, it will be understood that various changes and modifications may be made therein without however departing from the basic inventive concept thereof as set forth in the appended claim.

I claim:

A golf practicing target comprising an inflatable annular member formed of a flexible material, said member having a flexible air valve which is insertable therein, said air valve comprising a tubular projection from said annular member and a plug member insertable in said tubular projection, said plug member hinged to said tubular member and said valve being insertable into said annular member when said annular member is inflated, and a plurality of leg mounting members for supporting said annular member in a horizontal spaced relation to the ground in the inflated condition thereof, said leg mounting members comprising a hook portion and a straight portion, said hook portion adapted to fit around said annular member and said straight portion providing the spacing function, said hook portion and straight portion being so arranged that the leg mounting members can be removed from said inflatable annular member, said inflatable annular member deflated and the whole stored in a small volume.

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