US 20070060422A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication** (10) **Pub. No.: US 2007/0060422 A1**

**Green** (43) **Pub. Date: Mar. 15, 2007**

(54) **TABLE TENNIS MOUNT ASSEMBLY**

(76) Inventor: **Jerome Green**, Chicago, IL (US)

Correspondence Address:
**Gregory B. Gulliver**
**The Eclipse Group**
**10605 Balboa Blvd., Suite 300**
**Granada Hills, CA 91344 (US)**

(21) Appl. No.: **10/557,777**

(22) PCT Filed: **May 14, 2004**

(86) PCT No.: **PCT/US04/15336**

§ 371(c)(1),
(2), (4) Date: **Nov. 18, 2005**

**Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 60/472,532, filed on May 22, 2003.

**Publication Classification**

(51) **Int. Cl.**
*A63B 69/00* (2006.01)
*A63C 19/06* (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** ..... **473/459**; 473/490

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Disclosed is a table tennis mounting assembly adapted to connect and disconnect from the table apron/frame.

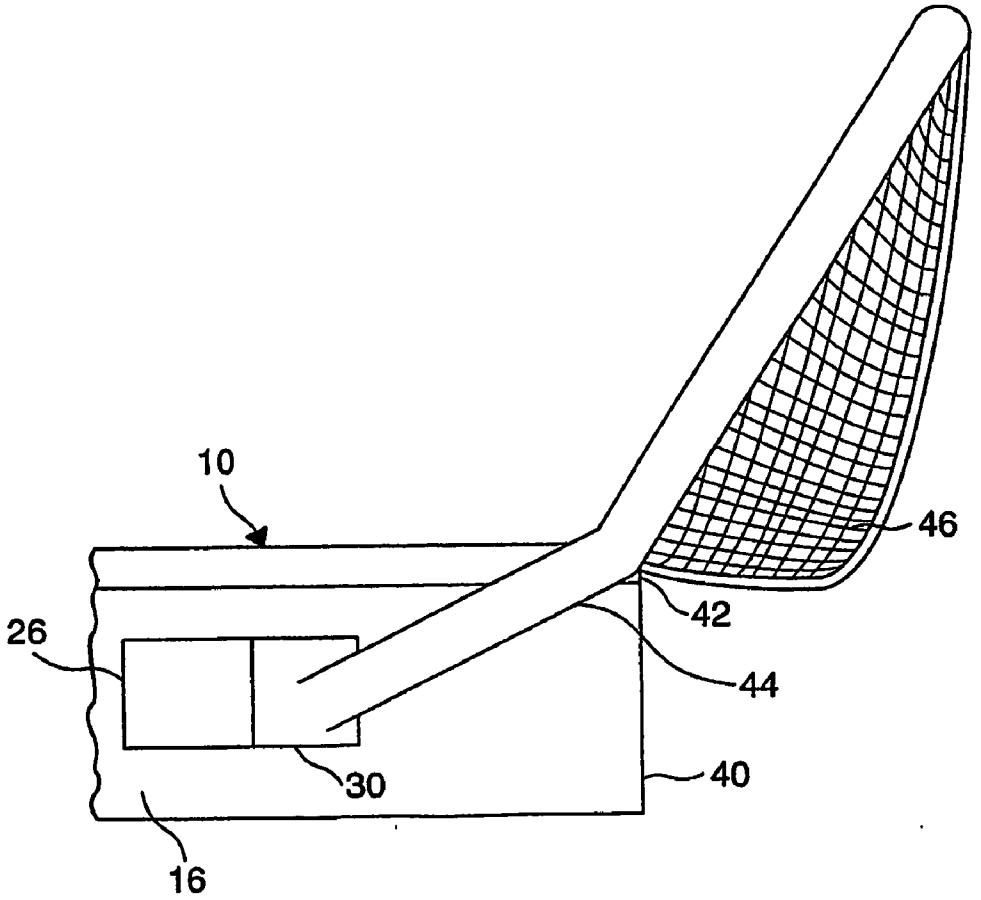


FIG. 1 - Prior Art

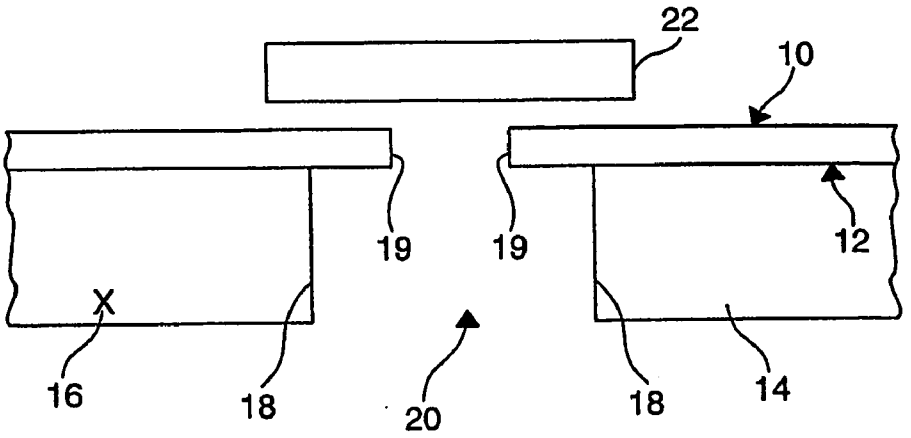



FIG.2

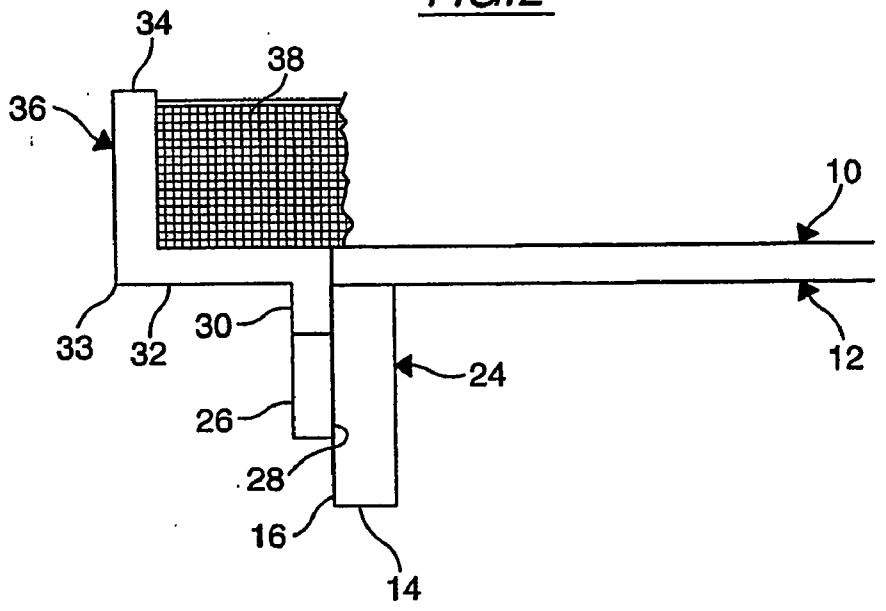


FIG. 3

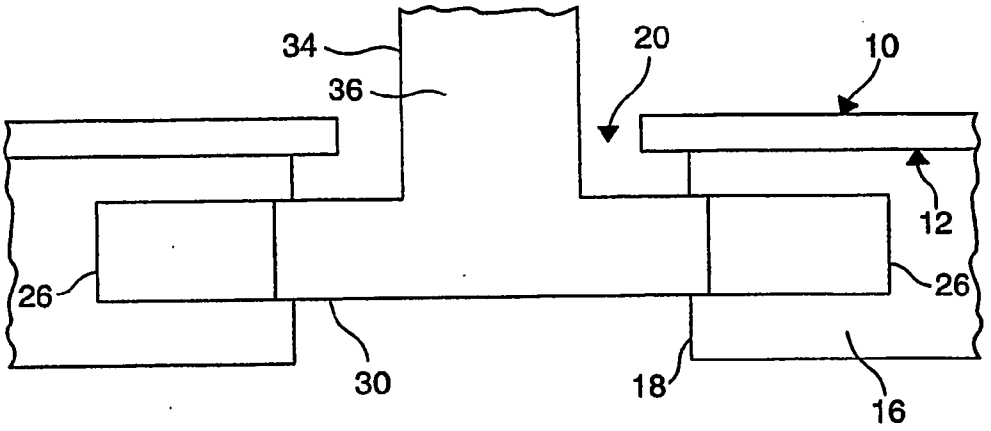



FIG. 4

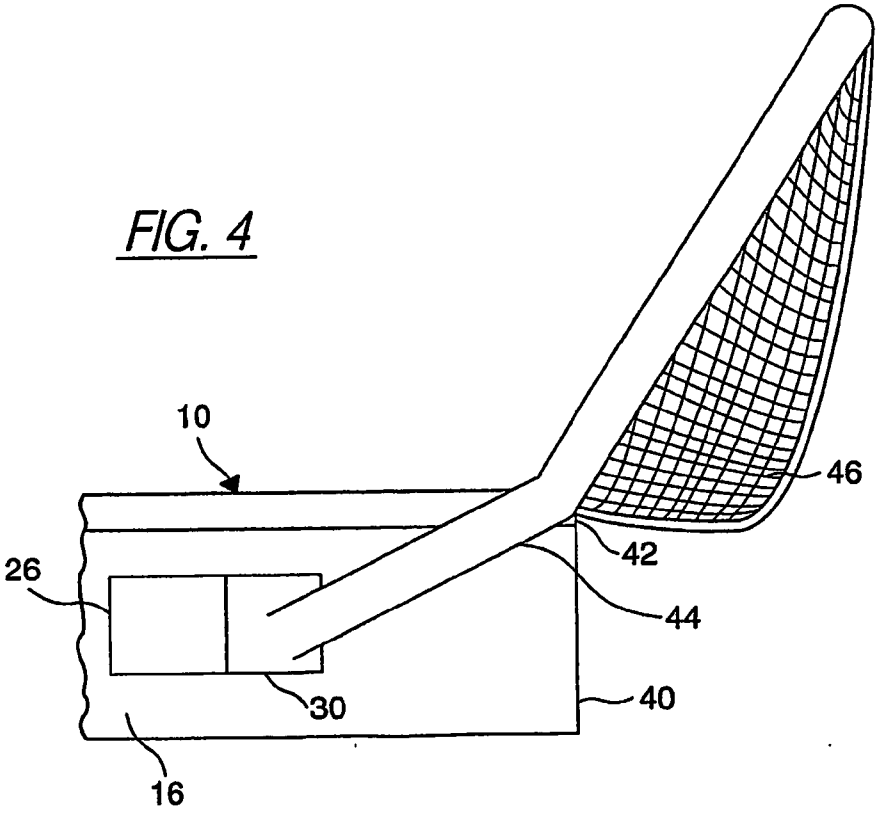


FIG. 5

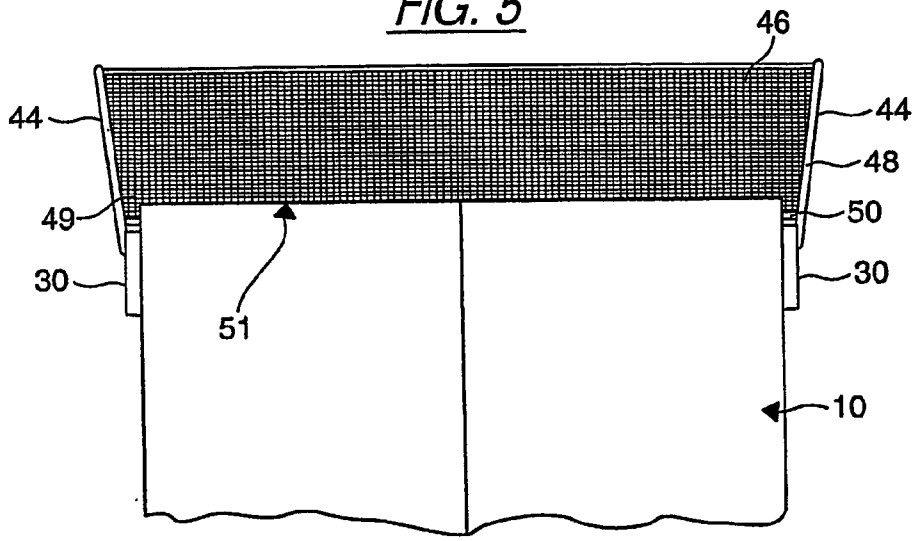



FIG. 6

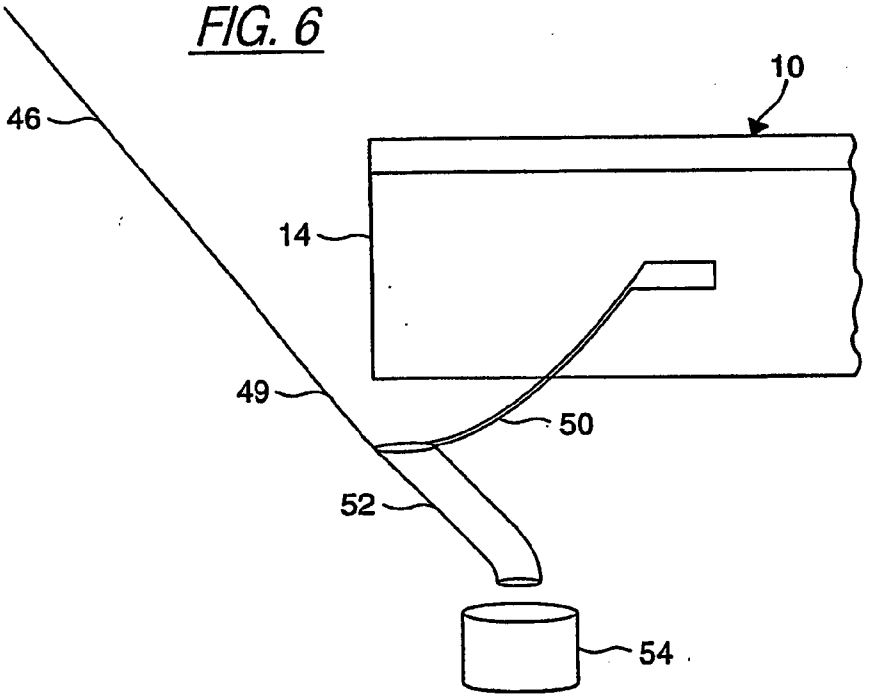


FIG. 7

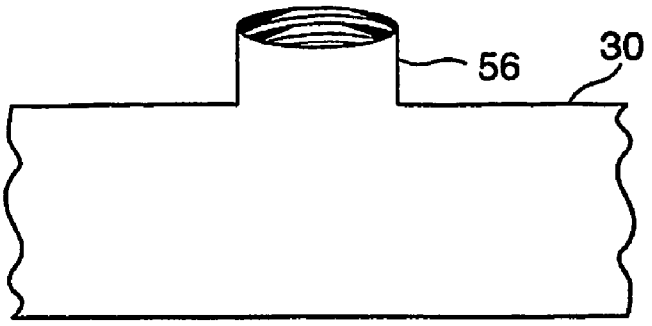



FIG. 8

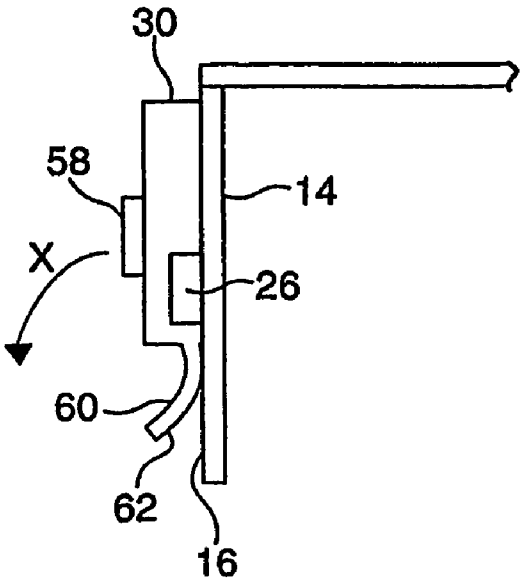


FIG. 9

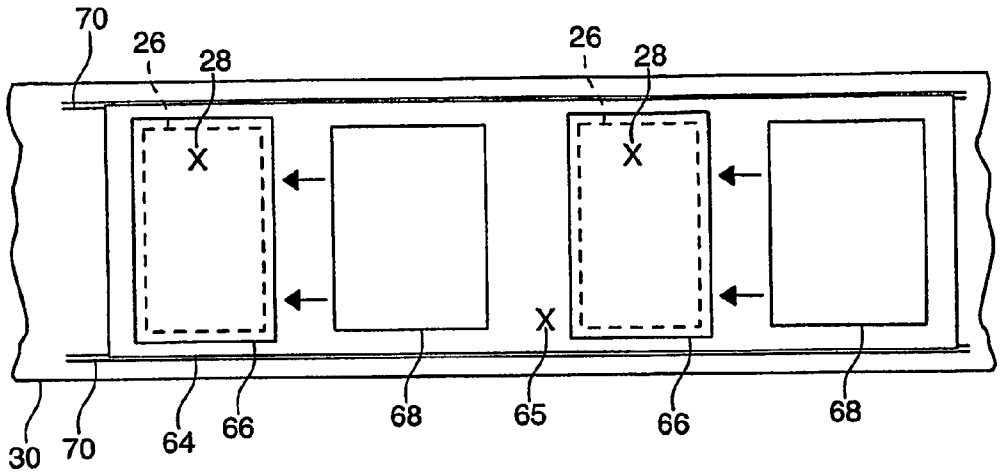


FIG. 10

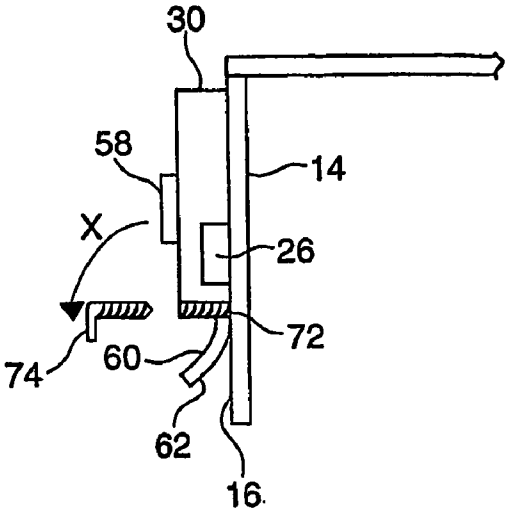
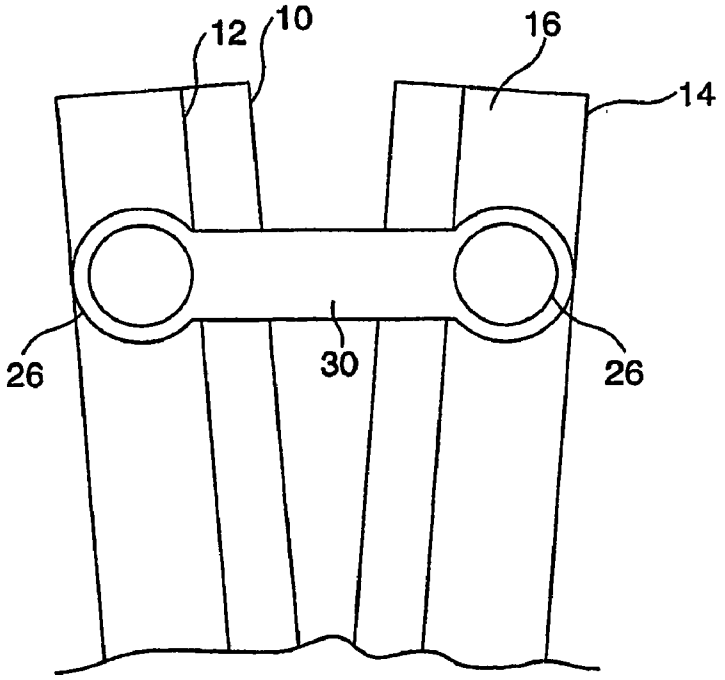



FIG. 11



# TABLE TENNIS MOUNT ASSEMBLY

## TECHNICAL FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention relates to a table tennis mounting assembly to connect various components to a table tennis table.

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Table tennis is a common indoor/outdoor sport that employs the use of a rectangular shaped table whereby two to four players strike a spherical, celluloid ball across and over a net stretched in an upright manner across the center of the table.

[0003] The table tennis table has standard measurements of 108 inches long from one end to other. The table is typically 60 inches wide from one side to the other side. During both play and practice, there is a center net located in the middle of the table that is stretched taut between a net holding device located along each side. That is, the net is stretched from one side of the table to the other side.

[0004] Traditionally, the most popular means of attaching these net mounts to the table involved C-clamps. Such clamps are removably secured to the table by screw clamps or spring clamps or similar mechanism that engages the bottom and upper surface of the table along the side edges. The clamps are mounted in the center of the table where the two halves of the table meet and where there is a break in the table apron.

[0005] A number of deficiencies, however, are associated with these types of net mounting systems. These deficiencies fall into two different categories: (1) improper attachment of the net mounting system to the table, and (2) improper usage of the net mounting device to level the playing surface of the table tennis table.

[0006] With respect to the first problem, in order to utilize the C-clamp net mounting device, the screw clamps must be sufficiently tightened to securely attach the net mount to the table playing surface, and to prevent shifting of the system relative to the table. At the same time, however, the mounting device must not be attached so securely as to cause damage to the playing surface should a sufficient force act upon it thereupon shifting it. (Shifting can occur in a variety of ways; most often this occurs by a player accidentally bumping the rearward or forward edge of the table or a player or a hit ball striking the net mounting devices during the course of play.) Currently, there is no standard quantified measure of force by which a net mounting device is to be secured to the table. Consequently, these net mounting devices are most often either insufficiently or excessively tightened to the table. This problem especially exists for sufferers of arthritis, small children or people who have weaker grips and are consequently unable to properly tighten the C-clamp in its intended manner. In the case of insufficiently tightening the mounting device to the playing surface, lateral shearing forces will cause it to suddenly shift; often gouging the table playing surface as it does so. On the other hand, in the case of excessive tightening of the mounting device to the playing surface, this practice tends to damage both the top and bottom surface of the table, as well. As the damage progressively increases, it becomes difficult to continue to tighten the net mounts. The problem is exacerbated by new regulations governing the construction of table tennis tables that require the use of particle board/composite press board. Once deterioration of this composite material has begun in the net mounting area, it is exponentially hastened by subsequent application of the same compression forces associated with using the C-clamp net mounting assembly.

[0007] As mentioned earlier, the other problem with utilizing these C-clamp members is the inappropriate usage of these mounting devices to "level" the table-playing surface. This practice occurs when the two halves of the table are brought together but the halves are not level with each other. As opposed to adjusting the table at its frame or adjustment collars at the base of the legs, many people use the C-clamp mounting device to screw the two halves of the table together until they have been forcibly made to be level. Thus, the lower half has been made to be higher and the higher half made to be lower. It should be clear, then, that this practice of "leveling" unnecessarily bends the table at or near the point of attachment and hastens the "warping" process that already naturally occurs in the table playing surface by age, humidity, separation of the oriented wood bits, etc. The constant C-clamp pressure also confers undue strain and fatigue on the table, especially at the net mount areas.

[0008] To maintain a suitable playing surface, a metallic steel rim or "apron" is under the table. Steel aprons vary in thickness or width but many are essentially 1 inch wide and connect to the underside of the table edge. The apron generally extends down in distance ranging from 1.5 inches to 2 inches. The apron provides structural integrity to the table by supporting the table edges. By doing so, the apron assists in preventing the table edges from becoming chipped or damaged and it also helps delay the effects of warping of the table playing surface. Because the apron is located along the edge on each table half, it is not continuous along the entire table. Thus, the traditional C-clamp net mount still clamps to the table itself, as opposed to the apron. Consequently, the intent of attaching the steel apron to extend the life of the playing surface is undermined by the traditional practice of attachment of the C-clamp member to the table playing surface.

[0009] Again, as a natural consequence of repetitive use of a play or practice net, the corners of the table end may become deformed by chips, cracks, gouges, indentations, etc. This is especially problematic because every part of the table top surface is fair play in a game. Accordingly, a hit ball striking any part of the table playing surface, including outward edges and corners, is still in-play. The aforementioned ball would bounce erratically, thereby disrupting play, if it struck one of these chipped, gouged, or indented areas.

[0010] Explaining further, a growing body of table tennis apparati other than play net mounts, paddles, and tables have become available to the table tennis player, both for play and practice purposes. Some of these apparati include practice net mounts, paddle holders, ball holders, net gauges, decorative key chains, and personal scorekeepers, among other things. These apparati are typically brought into the facility and relevant area of play by the individual player. In the best case scenario, they are used for their intended purpose and then the player removes them from the playing area, typically, and unnecessarily, being forced to walk away from the

table tennis table to place them into gym bags, storage bins, or other ancillary places of storage. In the worst case scenario, these small items are ignobly placed on the floor within the playing area during play or practice, and while there, are obviously at great risk of being mangled or destroyed from being stepped upon. For larger items, such as practice net mounts and play net mounts, a sizable market has developed to create and supply various storage bins and carrying devices into which these articles can be can be placed. Continued reliance on these antiquated modes of storing table tennis apparati will only serve to frustrate the goal of advancing the popular appeal of the game.

[0011] In view of the aforementioned problems, it would be advantageous to devise a way of detachably attaching a net mounting device to a table tennis table in a manner less likely to damage or warp the table tennis playing surface when attached to the table. The same net mounting device would also provide a greater resistance to movement when it is inadvertently shifted in a rearward or forward fashion by a force moving parallel with the side apron on the table. Ideally, such a device would also provide for easy installation and removal of the net assembly from the table. Finally, such a device would also provide for a way to store it at the table itself without either jeopardizing the structural integrity of the table playing surface or obscuring the playing surface during play or practice.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0012] The foregoing problems are solved and a technical advance is achieved by the present invention. Disclosed is an apron mounting device that is: (1) attuned to the necessity of strong and simple attachment to the table; (2) applies consistent holding force; and, (3) allows for easy removal from the table. Similarly disclosed is a mounting apparatus that is attuned to be modified for storage of other ancillary table tennis apparati at the table without jeopardizing the structural integrity of the table.

[0013] As opposed to attaching the mounting assembly to the weakest portion of the table, i.e., the wood composite table top, the present invention entails detachably attaching the mounting device at its most secure and stable point that is nearest to the table playing surface, i.e., the metallic table apron and/or any other metallic portion of the table or table accessories. By attaching the mounting device to the metallic table apron, the problem of gouging and crushing the table playing surface when attaching the assembly is alleviated. Moreover, unlike the standard C-clamp, which when inevitably improperly attached can lead to premature warping to the table, the current invention does not make significant contact with the wood portion of the table and, therefore, does not contribute substantially to the warping of the table.

[0014] Significantly, the current invention also better addresses the problem of how the mounting device can secure the table when it is jostled or shifted during play. Because current mounting systems attach to the playing surface and underside of the table, they easily shift or "slide" when a force travels across them. The current innovation allows for connection of, for example, the center net mount on the apron in such a way that shearing forces or jostling the table during play or accidentally striking the apparatus can transfer these forces to the strongest part of the table; the apron. Because the mounting device is attached to a vertical surface (the steel apron) as opposed to a horizontal surface (the upper and lower faces of the table playing surface), the force can be more evenly spread across the entire weight of the table.

[0015] In addition, another problem related to storage is solved. Players would utilize various table tennis apparati and could remain in the playing area and would not have to place them on the floor during play or practice after using them. Additionally, individual table tennis clubs could elect to have larger items such as practice net mounts or play net mounts stored on individual tables, and thereby, have them immediately available to their players. Similarly, the same aforementioned clubs could have these apparati stored on metallic mounting racks so as to avoid misplacing the same apparati or tangling the netting material; problems that normally occur if stored in bins or buckets.

[0016] When the standard C-clamp is engaged, the clamp exerts compression force against the table for as long as it is attached. As such, it behooves a table owner to remove the clamp immediately after use to avoid prolonged exposure to these compression forces. By attaching apparati to the apron/frame, the table owner may choose to remove the apparati, but need not do so to raise the table. Alternatively, players could store smaller apparati immediately under the table playing surface by attaching them to the inner face of the table apron/frame by use of magnetic devices. Larger apparati could be stored by similar ways, but perhaps in different places under the same table playing surface.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] FIG. **1** is a view of the prior art.

[0018] FIGS. **2** to **11** demonstrate various embodiments of the invention.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0019] FIG. **1** shows an example of the prior art device. As described above, the table includes a table top surface **10**, a table bottom surface **12**, and an apron **14**. The apron **14** has an apron exterior surface **16** and an apron center edge **18**. Each half of the table has a table center edge **19**. Where the two halves of the table come together, there is center gap **20** formed. That is, the two table center edges **19** come together close enough to form a small gap. In practice, this gap between the apron vertical edges is approximately (3.5 inches to 4 inches) wide. To this end, because the two halves of the table need to be connected, the traditional means for connecting the table halves is with a C-clamp. Shown in FIG. **1** is the top portion **22** of a typical C-clamp. The top portion **22** sandwiches the table between the lower portion (not shown). Accordingly, the traditional clamping mechanisms never involve the apron **14**.

[0020] FIG. **2** is an embodiment of the invention. Shown is the apron internal surface **24**, which for all intents and purposes is under the table bottom surface **12** and faces the interior portion of the table. Thus, it is largely hidden from normal view. Attached on the apron is an apron attachment **26** that also has an apron attachment inner surface **28** that is adjacent to the apron exterior surface **16**. As used herein, the term "apron attachment" shall be construed to include any

attachment that is adapted to magnetically attach to any metallic portion of the table, including the frame, the legs, the center net, etc. As such, although denominated as an "apron" attachment, the term "apron attachment" also includes attachments to the metal legs or the metal frames too.

[0021] In one embodiment, the apron attachment **26** may include one or more magnets so that the attachment **26** magnetically attaches to the apron **14**. The apron attachment **26** may also include an attachment housing **30**, which may be a separately manufactured piece that is operably connected to the attachment **26** or may be integrally formed with the attachment **26**.

[0022] In an embodiment of the invention, the apron attachment **26** may be adapted to serve as a center net mount. The simplest embodiment for center net mounts would include a net mount operably connected to the apron attachment **26** and/or attachment housing **30**. In this regard, the center net mount would generally extend vertically upwards to the table top surface **10** and include a net connected thereto. Obviously, the opposite side of the table would include a similar arrangement such that the net would be strung across the table at the center. In addition, it is likely that the center net would be positioned above the center gap **20**. This arrangement of having a vertical net mount that extends parallel to the apron exterior surface **16**.

[0023] Returning to FIG. **2**, shown is a net mount assembly, the apron attachment **26** and the attachment housing **30**. Operably connected or integrally formed with the attachment housing **30** and/or apron attachment **26** is an attachment housing horizontal portion **32**. The horizontal portion **32** extends perpendicular to the apron exterior surface **16**. In one embodiment, the horizontal portion extends horizontally for at least 6 inches from the table playing surface. Extending from the horizontal portion end **33** is an attachment housing vertical portion **34**, which generally extends parallel to the apron exterior surface **16**. The vertical portion **34** may extend vertically for at least 5 inches. The vertical portion **34** includes a vertical portion exterior surface **36**. Partially shown is a net **38** that would essentially run along the center of the table. Net **38** may be directly connected to the vertical portion **34** or may be indirectly connected.

[0024] FIG. **3** demonstrates another view of the invention. Shown are the apron center edges being brought together to form a center gap **20**. The apron attachments **26** are shown within the attachment housing **30**. The attachment housing **30** also includes an attachment housing vertical portion **34**. The vertical portion external surface **36** is also shown. On this external surface, various indicia may be included, such as product names, trade names, or designs.

[0025] Accordingly, one embodiment of the invention may reside in an apron attachment assembly that is adapted to connect to the apron portions at the center. This attachment assembly may include a center net **38** attached thereto. The attachment assembly may include simply a vertical portion upon which the net is attached such that the vertical portion is substantially in the same plane as the apron exterior surface. Or the attachment assembly may include a horizontal portion that extends out from the table and then extends vertically as shown in FIG. **2**.

[0026] Depending upon the intended use of the apparatus, a variety of materials and holding configurations exist which could comprise the apron attachments **26**. These magnetic materials could be constructed of steel, ceramic, alnico (both cast and sintered), samarium cobalt, and neodymium-iron-boron (also known as "rare earth"), among others. Additionally, numerous factors need to be taken into account to determine the necessary strength of the magnetic device that will be utilized for attaching each table tennis apparatus. Some of these factors include the size, shape and surface condition of the surface adhered to, motion, vibration, friction, holding angle, and various machining forces. As such, one embodiment of the apron attachments **26** is neodymium-iron-boron material. NdFeB magnets have some excellent advantages over utilizing other magnetic alloys. NdFeB magnets are cost-effective because the main elements Nd and Fe are highly abundant. Additionally, when constructed, they are mechanically stronger (less brittle) than comparable magnetic alloys with similar magnetic fields. Finally, NdFeB magnets are particularly lightweight.

[0027] In addition, the types or number of apron attachments may vary. First, one or more magnets may be used. Various quantities and types of magnets may be used. Also, magnets may be used in combinations with other non-magnet apron attachments. For example, an apron attachment **26** may include a clamp too. Furthermore, an apron housing may include a magnet and a clamp. As such, it is intended that the apron attachment **26** may or may not include magnets or other apron attachments.

[0028] FIG. **4** demonstrates another embodiment of the invention. Shown are the apron attachment **26** and the attachment housing **30**. As with any embodiment described herein, the apron attachment **26** may be located within a recess in the attachment housing **30** or may be a separate piece connected to the housing **30**. In this embodiment, the invention may be located at the table end **42**, as opposed to the table center. In this regard, a practice net mount **44** is shown operably connected to the attachment housing **30**. The practice net mount **44** can extend for some distance and may also include a practice net **46** attached thereto.

[0029] FIG. **5** shows another embodiment of the invention. In this embodiment, the apron attachment assembly may be used as a practice net system so that a player on one end of the table can hit balls into the opposite end and have the net capture the balls. Accordingly, shown are two sets of apron attachment housing **30** on either side of the table. Extending from each housing **30** is a practice net mount **44** with a net **46** attached. The angle of the practice net mount can be routinely adjusted so that the net **46** area is made smaller or larger. Extending the angle of the practice net mount also may make the net tauter. The net **46** may be attached to the practice net mount directly or via a sleeve **48** slid over the mount **44**. Because the balls striking the net **46** will be captured by the net but be drawn to the lower portion **49** of the net **46**, the lower portion **49** of the net may be connected to the underside or side of the table so that few balls to no balls escape from the net. In one embodiment, an underside strand **50** may be part of the net lower portion that either hugs up against the underside of the table or may include apron attachments **26** to connect to the apron. For example, underside strand **50** may include one or more magnets that can attach to the apron. In this regard, balls striking the net will collect in the net.

[0030] Although FIG. **5** demonstrates an embodiment in which the attachment housings **30** are on each side apron of

the table, the invention may also be adapted for use along the table end **51** and the side apron. For example, one attachment housing **30** may be attached to the side apron and the other attachment housing **30** attached to the table end apron. This set up would be useful for a player practicing corner shots or severe side-angle shots. Thus, the practice net can capture shots hit toward the side of the table. In this regard, the invention may move along the entire table perimeter as desired.

[**0031**] FIG. **6** demonstrates one embodiment of a ball collection system. Here the lower portion **49** of the net may also include a collection conduit **52** that channels collected balls into a bucket **54**. In this manner, as balls strike the net **46**, the balls are channeled to a common collecting area, into a conduit **52** and into a ball holding device, such as a bucket **54**. Of course, the channeling mechanism may be designed from the net itself, that is, weaving the net in a fashion that it funnels towards the bottom area. Thus, the net may be formed in such a manner as to include a collective low area where the balls will accumulate. In another embodiment (not shown) the conduit **52** may traverse the entire table length to channel balls to the opposite end to bring balls within the general vicinity of the player. In this manner, the ball is struck, hits the net, collects in the conduit, and is shunted back to the opposite end so that the player can grab it and replay the ball. A ball holding device, such as a bucket may be placed near the player. In yet another embodiment, for those who use robotic ball launchers, the conduit may shunt balls back to the robotic ball launcher for subsequent reuse.

[**0032**] FIG. **7** demonstrates another embodiment of the invention. Shown in FIG. **7** is the attachment housing **30**. As mentioned above, the attachment housing **30** attaches to the apron **14**. Accordingly, the housing **30** may be adapted to accommodate any component desired to be attached to the housing **30**. As mentioned above, a center net mount assembly may be attached to the housing **30**. In addition, an end table practice net mount may be attached to the housing **30**. Therefore, it is intended that the housing **30** be adapted to provide for modular replacement of the attached accessories. To this end, other accessories that may be attached include banners (such as advertising banners), ball holders (e.g., a ball sleeve or a bucket), hooks (e.g. from which to hang paddles), etc.

[**0033**] FIG. **7** demonstrates that the attachment housing **30** may be adapted in a male-female receptacle arrangement to provide for easy swapping of the attached accessories. Housing **30** includes a female receptacle **56** adapted to receive a male counterpart. Although shown as housing **30** including the female receptacle, it is understood that the housing **30** may include the male receptacle instead. Accordingly, an embodiment of the invention resides in an attachment housing **30** that is adapted to operably connect to one or more components.

[**0034**] Recall that as mentioned above, the term "apron attachment" covers any attachment adapted to magnetically attach to the any part of the table. Therefore, any embodiment described herein, for example the practice net mount, may also include attachments to the metal legs or the metal frame. In short, attaching to the apron **14** itself is not the sole use of the attachments. The "apron attachment" may magnetically attach to legs or frames too.

[**0035**] FIG. **8** demonstrates another embodiment of the invention. Because the apron housing and/or attachment ought to be designed so as to maintain its place on the apron, the invention may also include a means to assist removing the housing from the apron. The simplest manner to remove the housing from the apron is simply to pull it off. A handle **58** may be formed with (either integrally or separately formed and then attached to) the apron housing or apron attachment.

[**0036**] In yet another embodiment, the means may include a lip **60** designed to roll the housing off the table apron. In this embodiment, the user may grasp the handle **58** and pull the handle in the direction X thereby causing the housing to roll on the lip **60**. In particular, the lip has a lip interior surface **62** that will roll against the apron exterior surface **16**. In this regard, the user need not scrape the apron exterior surface **16** and thereby mar the surface. The handle **58** while shown is optional. As in the embodiment shown in FIG. **2**, the user need only grasp the horizontal portion **32** and/or the vertical portion **34** to act as the handle **58** would.

[**0037**] FIG. **9** shows another embodiment, the means for assisting the removal of the apron housing may include a dampening unit. In the case where the magnets are used as the apron attachment, the dampening unit may be a magnetic dampening unit (MDU).

[**0038**] The MDU is a material, way or process that is capable of redirecting the magnetic field lines of the apron attachment magnet. In this regard, the MDU is capable of "blocking" or interfering with the magnetic field and thereby lessen the force of magnetic attraction between the apron attachment magnet and the apron. Materials such as mu-metals, highly magnetic permeable materials, superconductors, or another magnet can be used.

[**0039**] FIG. **9** demonstrates one embodiment of the MDU **64**. In this view, the MDU is seen from its interior surface **65**, that is, the MDU interior surface **65** that would be the surface facing the apron exterior surface (not shown). Shown in the MDU **64** is a window **66**. In this window **66**, one can see the apron attachment **26** and the apron attachment interior surface **28**. The MDU blocker **68** is shown. In this embodiment, there are at least one window **66** and at least one MDU blocker **68**. The MDU **64** slides along one or more guides **70**, such as slots formed in the attachment housing **30**. Accordingly, in the normal operation, the MDU **64** is slid into a position such that the window **66** is in front of the apron attachment **26**. In this manner, the apron attachment **26** can attach to the apron. While its preferable that the attachment **26** be in direct contact with the apron, it is understood that the attachment **26** may not be directly attached to the apron. When the user desires to remove the housing **30**, the user may slide the MDU **64** over such that the MDU blocker **68** travels in front of the attachment **26**, thereby "blocking" or otherwise interfering with the attachment's **26** ability to contact the apron. The housing **30** thereby is easily removed. In this regard, the window **66** shifts to a position that is in front of a generic part of the housing **30**.

[**0040**] In yet another embodiment, it is understood that there may be a one for one correspondence to the number of attachments **26** with the number of MDU blockers **68**. But it is also understood that any embodiment may have less MDU blockers **68** than attachments **26**. To this end, it is desirable to have a sufficient number of MDU blockers **68** to assist the user in removing the housing **30**.

[0041] As mentioned earlier, the MDU blocker **66** may comprise a material adapted to interfere or block the magnetic attachment **26**. To this end, one embodiment of the invention may include the blocker **68** comprising a magnet such that one surface of the blocker **68** magnet is opposite to the attachment inner surface **28** so that when the MDU is slid over the attachment **26** magnet, the magnet of the MDU repels the attachment **26** magnet, thereby assisting in removal.

[0042] FIG. **9** demonstrates an embodiment in which the attachment **26** is stationary and the MDU **64** is moveable. It is also understood that the reverse may also occur. For example, the attachment **26** may be on a sliding member such that the attachment **26** slides behind a stationary MDU **64**, thereby achieving the same objective.

[0043] In yet another embodiment, the sliding mechanism of FIG. **9** may be adapted such that the MDU blockers **68** are singularly moved. For example, the guides **70** may be vertical oriented slots in which the blocker **68** is individually inserted. In this regard, the user would insert a blocker **68** for each window **66** present.

[0044] In yet another embodiment, there need not be a MDU blocker **68** at all. When the user desires to remove the housing **30**, the user may slide the MDU **64** over the attachment **26**. The material of the MDU **64** may provide sufficient interruption so that removal is facilitated.

[0045] FIG. **10** shows another embodiment. Shown is the apron attachment housing **30** that has within it a cavity **72** that has threaded walls **72** and a release screw **74**. This release screw **74** is positioned perpendicular to and away from the apron exterior surface **16**. Turning the screw in a clockwise motion drives the release screw **74** through the threaded cavity **72**, thereby driving the attachment housing **30** farther from the exterior surface of the apron **16**. Turning the screw in a counter-clockwise motion drives the attachment housing **30** toward the exterior surface of the steel apron.

[0046] Accordingly, there is disclosed a means for removing or assisting the removal of the housing **30** or the attachment from the apron. The means may include a screw or series of screws, a lever, a handle, a lip, a release mechanism, an MDU, a hole, a tab, a thread or pull cord, the apparatus itself or a combination thereof. Furthermore, the means may include an MDU having a sliding mechanism, an MDU blocker, or a combination thereof. Furthermore, the means may include an MDU blocker adapted to repel the apron attachment **26**. The means may also include a means for sliding the attachment **26**. Accordingly, it is expressly intended that the means for facilitating removal be considered to be any feature recited herein as an assembly or as a component thereof. It is also intended that the means for assisting in removal include the structures, acts, materials, equivalent structures, equivalent acts, and/or equivalent materials, or any combination thereof. It is also intended any feature may be specifically excluded from any embodiment despite any feature being shown as part of any embodiment.

[0047] As mentioned above, the invention has complementary aspects facilitating storing various table tennis apparati on the table tennis table. There is currently an inordinate amount of space wasted when players elect to store these items in or on places other than the table itself. Assuming that there is a standard length table tennis table with a metallic apron extending two inches from the edge of the table to the floor, there is approximately 1,080 cubic inches of storage space on the underside of the combined two halves of the table tennis table. Consequently, there is ample space under the table playing surface upon which the apparati discussed herein could be stored.

[0048] FIG. **11** shows another embodiment of the invention. In this embodiment, shown is a pair of apron attachments **26** connected to an attachment housing **30**. This embodiment is useful to connect the two halves of the table together so that it creates a locking mechanism to hold the halves together. The apron attachment(s) **26** connects to the apron exterior surface **16** as described above.

[0049] This invention also comprises various apparati detachably attaching to the apron. For example, net gauges for ensuring proper net height, paddles/rackets, ball holders, etc. may be attached to the apron. These apparati may include recesses ready to accommodate an apron attachment **26**—thereby permitting removal of the attachment **26** from the apparatus. In addition, the apparati may include the apron attachment **26** being manufactured together with the apparati.

[0050] It should be understood that the foregoing relates only to a limited number of embodiments that have been provided for illustration purposes only. It is intended that the scope of invention is defined by the appended claims and that modifications to the embodiments above may be made that do not depart from the scope of the claims.

**1**. An apparatus, comprising:

a) a table tennis apron attachment, the table tennis apron attachment comprising an apron attachment inner surface; and

b) the table tennis apron attachment further comprising one or more magnets disposed partially or wholly therein, the magnet having a magnetic outer surface adapted to detachably attach to a table tennis apron exterior surface.

**2**. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the apron attachment comprises an attachment housing adapted to hold one or more table tennis accessories.

**3**. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the attachment housing includes a male receptacle adapted to fit with a female receptacle in the table tennis accessory.

**4**. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the attachment housing includes a female receptacle adapted to fit with a male receptacle in the table tennis accessory.

**5**. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the accessory is a net mount.

**6**. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein the net mount is at least one of a center net mount and a practice net mount.

**7**. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein the attachment housing is disposed between 2 or more magnets.

**8**. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein

(c) the attachment housing includes a male receptacle adapted to fit with a female receptacle in the table tennis accessory; and

(d) wherein the attachment housing is disposed between two or more magnets.

**9**. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the accessory is a net assembly.

**10**. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein at least one of the apron attachment and apron housing further comprises a means for removing the magnet from the table tennis apron.

**11**. The apparatus of claim 2, wherein at least one of the apron attachment and apron housing further comprises a means for assisting the removal of the magnet from the table tennis apron.

**12**. A method of preventing premature harm to a table tennis table, comprising:

a) obtaining a magnet; and

b) inserting the magnet into an apron attachment adapted to detachably attach to a table tennis apron.

**13**. The method of claim 12, comprising placing the apron attachment onto a table tennis apron.

**14**. The method of claim 13, comprising attaching a table tennis accessory to the apron attachment.

**15**. The method of claim 14, wherein the table tennis accessory is a storage device.

**16**. The method of claim 14, wherein the table tennis accessory is a net mount.

**17**. A kit, comprising:

a) an apron attachment; and

b) at least one table tennis accessory adapted to connect to the apron attachment.

**18**. The kit of claim 17, wherein the accessory is a net mount.

**19**. The kit of claim 17, wherein the accessory is a storage device.

**20**. The kit of claim 17, wherein the kit further comprises a net mount and a storage device.

* * * * *