Sept. 6, 1960 J. R. NEILER 2,951,704

PUTTING PRACTICE GAME

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FIG. 1

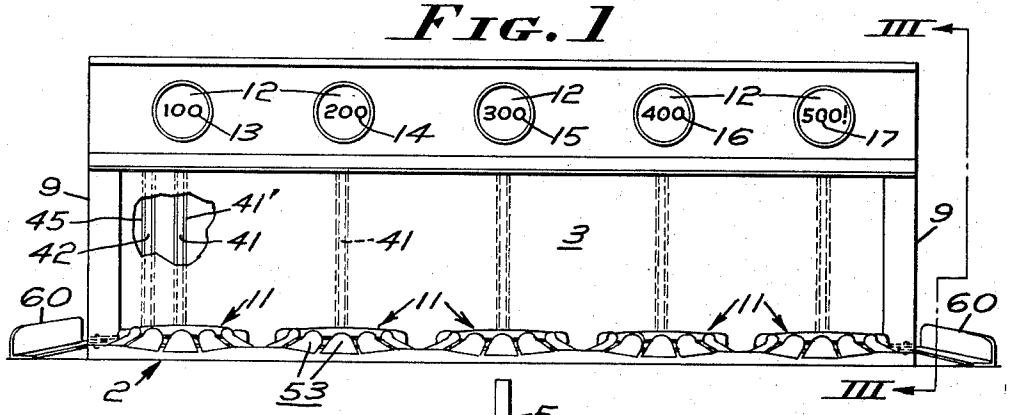


FIG. 2

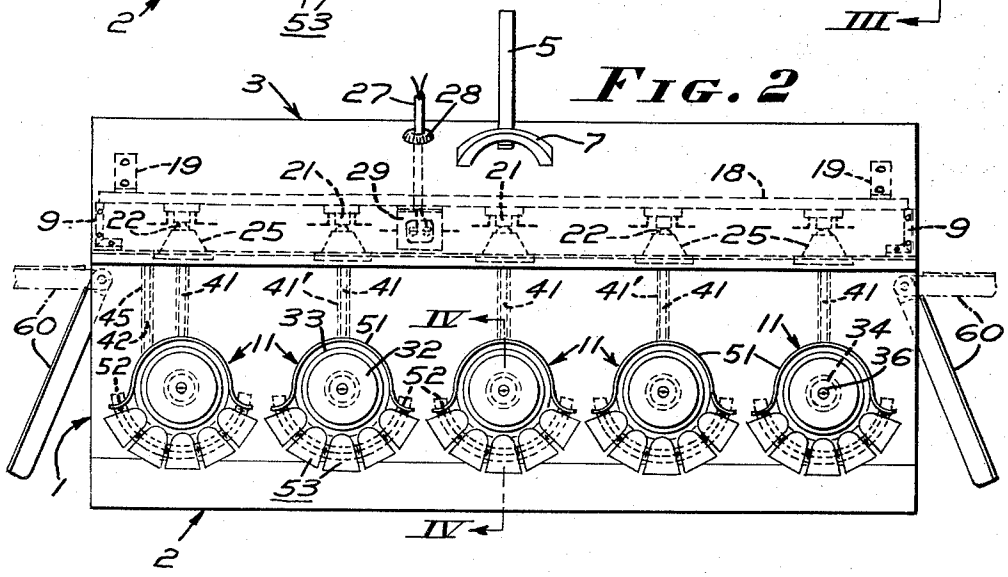
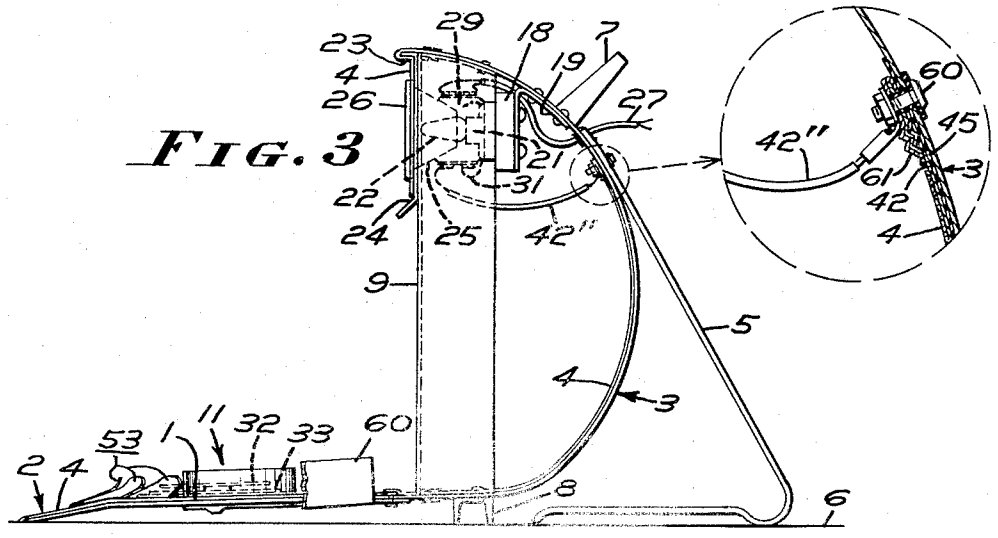


FIG. 3



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FIG. 8

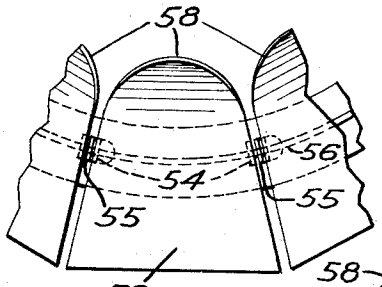


FIG. 4

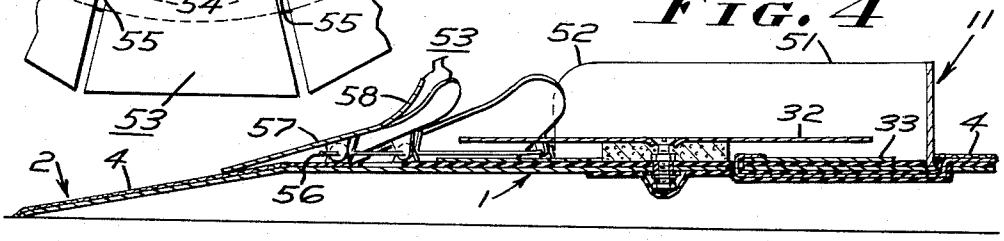


FIG. 5

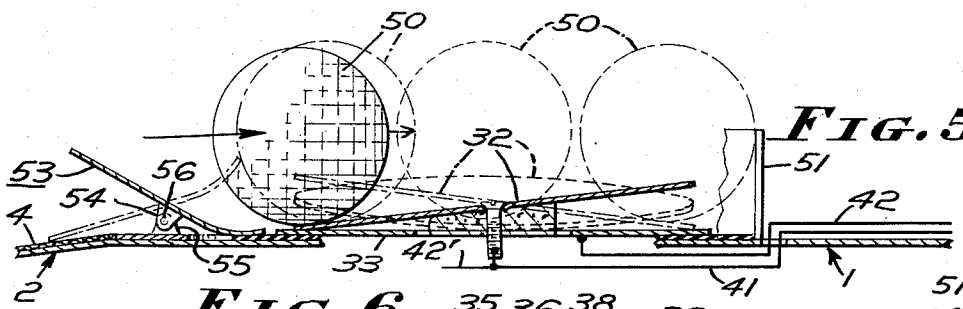


FIG. 6

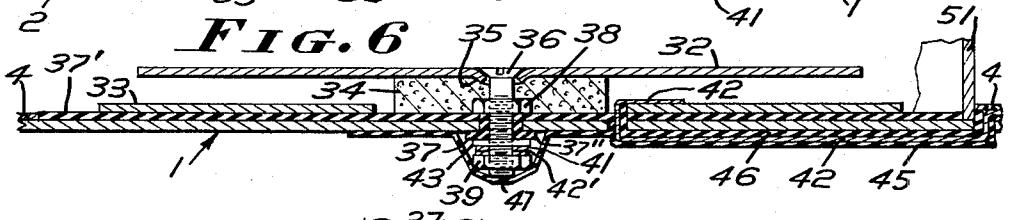
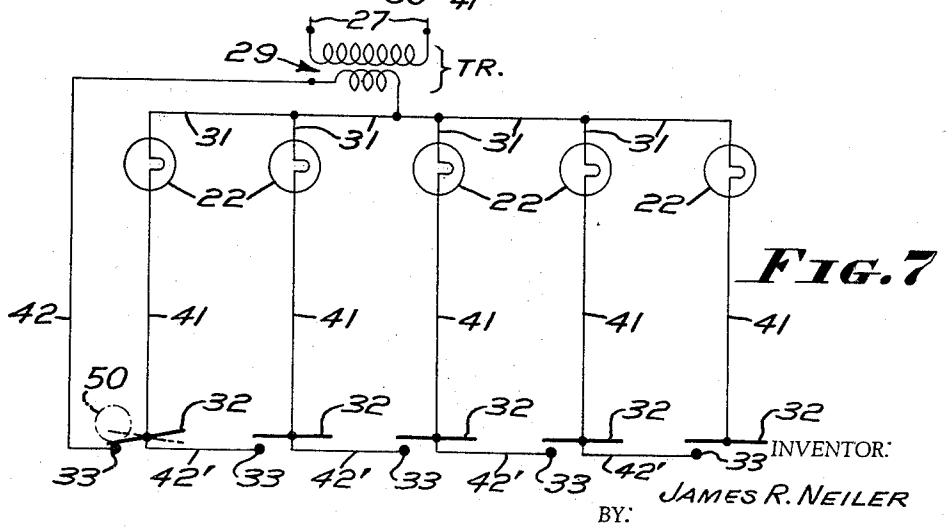


FIG. 7



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PUTTING PRACTICE GAME

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5 Claims. (Cl. 273—180)

This invention relates generally to a new and useful game in the nature of a putting practice device for golfers.

It is an object of my invention to provide a device for improving one's golf, and particularly putting shots, while simultaneously providing entertainment by making a game of it, wherein there is a greater challenge to one's skill than in conventional devices of this general nature.

It is also an object of my invention to provide the foregoing in a device characterized by its relative simplicity, ease of fabrication and assembly, and its ruggedness and durability.

Another object of my invention is to provide the foregoing in a device which is relatively light in weight and adapted to be readily transported and set up and taken down.

A putting practice device for golfers constructed in accord with my invention is characterized in one aspect thereof by the provision of a number of target devices into which golf balls or like members are intended to be driven, together with scoring means actuated upon sinking a ball into a target device, wherein the scoring means are actuated to indicate initial and progressive scoring only upon sinking successive golf balls into the target devices in a predetermined order.

The foregoing and other objects, advantages and characterizing features of a putting practice game constructed in accord with my invention will become clearly apparent from the ensuing detailed description thereof, reference being had to the accompanying drawings forming a part hereof wherein like reference numerals denote like parts throughout the various views and wherein:

Fig. 1 is a front elevational view of a putting practice game constructed in accord with my invention, certain parts being broken away to illustrate details;

Fig. 2 is a top plan view thereof;

Fig. 3 is primarily an end view thereof taken about on lines III—III of Fig. 1, a portion thereof being enlarged to show certain details;

Fig. 4 is a sectional view of a target device thereof; being taken about on line IV—IV of Fig. 2;

Fig. 5 is a schematic view generally similar to Fig. 4 illustrating the manner in which a golf ball activates a target device;

Fig. 6 is a fragmentary sectional view enlarged to show details of a target device;

Fig. 7 is a schematic wiring diagram; and

Fig. 8 is a fragmentary plan view of the retainer members comprising part of the target device.

The embodiment of my invention shown in the accompanying drawings comprises a generally horizontal base 1 terminating at its forward end in an inclined lip or ramp portion 2 and at its rearward end in an upwardly and forwardly curving upstanding back wall portion 3, all of which can comprise a single, unitary member of for example sheet metal or the like. The base portion 1, lip 2 and back wall 3 all are covered with felt or like material 4, and a generally vertical, reinforcing brace 5 is

secured to back wall 3 adjacent the upper end thereof, being adapted to bear upon a supporting surface 6 to assist in supporting the back wall portion 3 in its normal, upright position. One or more of such braces can be provided. In addition, I provide a convenient handle 7 for carrying the game from place to place.

A horizontal inverted channel member 8 is secured to base 1 adjacent back wall 3 to space the base portion thereat above the supporting surface 6, preferably causing base 1 to incline slightly upwardly and rearwardly toward back wall 3. Also, to better support the top portion of back wall 3, vertical angle members 9 are secured thereto and to base 1 on opposite sides of the device.

Base 1 comprises a playing field or area on which a number of cup simulating target devices, generally designated 11, are provided for having golf balls or like members driven therein in the manner of sinking a putt. While five target devices 11 are illustrated in the accompanying drawings, obviously the number thereof can be either increased or decreased, as desired.

Scoring means are provided for indicating when the target devices have been hit, comprising in the illustrated embodiment a scoreboard positioned along the upper portion of back wall 3, and having a series of indicia bearing members 12 carrying appropriate scoring indicia thereon as indicated at 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17. The indicia bearing scoring members are equal in number to the target devices 11, and are arranged to be illuminated upon actuating the target devices associated therewith in a particular manner, as set forth hereafter.

More specifically, the scoring means include a member 18 in the form of a bus bar secured to the underside of back wall 3 adjacent the upper portion thereof, as by laterally spaced brackets 19, to extend transversely thereof. Member 18 mounts in laterally spaced relation thereon a number of sockets 21 which can be of any conventional form and which are adapted to receive appropriate sources of illumination in the form of individual light bulbs 22, also of conventional form.

At its forward upper edge, back wall member 3 is turned under as indicated at 23 to form an inwardly directed channel which receives one flange of a generally channel shaped member 24. Member 24 is formed with appropriate openings to accommodate therethrough generally frusto-conical or funnel shaped reflector elements 25 each of which have a flanged outer rim 26 bearing against the member 24. A piece of felt material 4 extends across channel member 24 to provide a finished appearance, and the individual reflector elements 25 preferably slip fit into the openings in the channel member to be held therein by frictional engagement therewith. Obviously, screw threaded engagement or other conventional means for releasably holding the reflector in place can be utilized, if desired. The indicia bearing members 12 are held within rim portions 26, in a manner known in the art, the entire arrangement being such that the indicia bearing members and reflector elements can be individually removed to provide convenient access to bulbs 22 for replacement thereof.

A power line 27, adapted for connection to a suitable source of electric power, not illustrated, passes through an insulating fitting 28 in rear wall 3 and is connected across the primary terminals of a transformer generally designated 29. Transformer 29 is designed to step down the power supply, which usually will be the conventional 110 volt household power supply, to a more workable potential such as for example 6 volts, and one contact of each of light sockets 21 is connected to one of the secondary terminals of transformer 29 through appropriate current conducting leads 31. The other terminal of each

socket 21 is adapted to be connected to the other secondary terminal of transformer 29 through target devices 11.

Target devices 11 are identical in construction, whereby only one thereof will be described in detail. Each target device 11 comprises a generally circular first contact plate 32 hinged for substantially universal tilting to engage a generally annular second contact plate 33 positioned therebeneath. To this end, target plate 32 is mounted upon resilient supporting seat 34 of cushioning insulating material, such as for example sponge rubber, positioned generally centrally thereof. Plate 32 is centrally apertured and countersunk, as indicated at 35, to receive therein the beveled flat head of a mounting bolt 36 and thereby provide a normally substantially smooth top surface completely across plate 32. Bolt 36 extends through an aperture in base plate 1, being surrounded by a sleeve 37 of insulating material having a top flange 37' which extends across the surface of base plate 1 beneath plate 33 to insulate one from the other. Bolt 36 is clamped in generally upright position as by a first nut 38 bearing against the top flange 37' of insulating material and a second nut 39 clamping a pair of terminals 41 and 42' and a washer element 43 against a bottom insulating sleeve flange 37'', as clearly illustrated in Fig. 6, and the lower part of this assembly is enclosed by insulating material 47. In this way, cushion seat 34 supports plate 32 for universal tilting about bolt 36, as illustrated in Fig. 5, and returns the same to a substantially horizontal position of rest.

A first current conducting lead 42, connected to the other secondary terminal of transformer 29, extends along back wall 3 beneath felt 4, being separated from back wall 3 by appropriate insulation 45, to the annular plate 33 of the extreme left hand target device 11. At its lower end, lead 42 and insulation 45 pass through base 1 and beneath plate 33 to its center, lead 42 then being bent up and over plate 33 in contact therewith as clearly illustrated in Fig. 6. Lead 42 is further insulated from base 1 by material 46. Leads 41 extend from each contact plate mounting post 36 to the other side of sockets 21, passing between felt 4 and insulating material 41' and leads 42' extend from each post 36 to the adjacent plate 33 in a manner similar to lead 42.

Thus, upon tilting the extreme left hand contact plate 32 into engagement with its associated plate 33, an energizing circuit is completed through transformer 29, lead 42, plates 33 and 32, post 36 and leads 41 and 31 for the extreme left hand light bulb 22, which then illuminates the score indicia 13. Simultaneously, the adjacent contact plate 33 is connected to the secondary of transformer 29 through lead 42', whereby upon tilting its associated contact plate 32 into engagement therewith a similar energizing circuit will be completed for the next light source 22 and score indicia 14 will be illuminated. This action continues, with actuation of each target device setting up, through a lead 42', an energizing circuit to be closed upon actuation of the next succeeding target device 11.

However, it is a particular feature of my invention that, unless the contact plates 32 are tilted into successive contact engagement with their associated contact plates 33, beginning at the left, then the next light source 22 will not be illuminated even though its target device is actuated. For example, if contact plate 32 on the extreme left hand side in Fig. 7 is not first tilted and held against its associated ring 33, then no matter which of the other pairs of associated contact plates 32 and 33 are engaged their associated lights 22 will not be illuminated. This is true all the way through, because if the first target device is actuated but the adjacent one is not, then no matter which of the other target devices is actuated, its associated light 22 will not be illuminated, and so forth.

Therefore, target devices 11 must be actuated in predetermined sequential relation. While they are illustrated in the drawing as requiring successive actuation from left to right, obviously any other sequence can be arranged, as desired, by wiring them accordingly. Thus, the center target device 11 could be the one requiring actuation first, with successive target devices 11 on alternate sides thereof then requiring actuation. In any event, it is necessary not only to actuate each target device, but also to actuate them in a predetermined sequential relation, thereby presenting a greater challenge and requiring a much greater degree of skill than usual in putting practice games.

Leads 41, 42 and 42' preferably comprise flat strips of electric current conducting material. While they can be connected to the transformer and light socket terminals in any desired manner known in the art, in Fig. 3 I show lead 42 connected to transformer 29 by a lead 42'' at an insulated mounting post 60, being connected thereto as by a clip 61.

In the illustrated embodiment the respective target devices are adapted to be actuated by regular golf balls 50 (Fig. 5) although any corresponding member could be used. While various arrangements could be provided for receiving and retaining the members 50 in the respective target devices 11, I preferably provide an upstanding rear wall 51 of generally semicircular form enclosing the rear half of each target device and having outwardly curving ends 52 positioned slightly forward of the center of each target device 11. The forward half of each target device is enclosed by semicircular series of retainer members 53 which are provided with laterally spaced, depending ears 54 pivoted as by a wire 56 on upstanding ears 55 carried by base 1 for rotation about axis generally perpendicular to a radius from post 36 and generally parallel to tangents of the circular plate 32. Thus, the members 53 are positioned to insure passage of members 50 and to target devices 11, if the target is approached in a manner such that in actual play the ball would fall into the cup. Members 53 comprise normally upwardly and rearwardly inclined ramp portions 57 terminating in upturned end tab portions 58, whereby the members 50 will roll up along any of the members 53 and, upon reaching tab portion 58 thereof, will overbalance the same and cause it to pivot to the full line position illustrated in Fig. 5, thereby permitting the member 50 to roll onto plate 32 from its full line position shown in Fig. 5 to any of the broken line positions thereof as illustrated therein, thereby tilting plate 32 into contact with the associated plate 33. As member 50 rolls off member 53 the latter returns to its normal position shown in broken lines in Fig. 5, whereby the end tab 58 thereof effectively confines the member 50 in the target device to hold the plate 32 in contact with plate 33. The members 50 are left in the target devices 11 until the game is completed either by actuating all of the target devices or by failing to actuate them in the predetermined sequence.

While contact plates 32 are illustrated as being centrally pivoted, I also contemplate an off center hinging arrangement therefor, as for example by hinging them adjacent their rear edge whereby the members 50 will always depress the forward portion thereof.

To hold back those balls which miss the mark and pass on opposite sides of the device, I provide pivoted wings 60 which can be extended as to the broken line position thereof shown in Fig. 2 or collapsed against the device for storage purposes.

Accordingly, it is seen that my invention fully accomplishes the aforesaid objects. While only one illustrative embodiment thereof has been disclosed and described in detail, I do not intend that my invention be limited to the details thereof. I realize that many changes and modifications can be made by those skilled in the art without departing from the spirit of my invention, and I

intend that all such modifications and changes be included within the scope of the appended claims.

Having fully disclosed and completely described my invention, together with its mode of operation, what I claim as new is:

1. A putting practice and scoring device comprising a base, multiple target devices carried by said base, multiple electrically actuated score indicating devices carried by said base, there being a score indicating device associated with each of said target devices, each of said target devices being intended to reecive and retain a golf ball and including a first contact member and a second contact member normally spaced from said first contact member and operatively engaged therewith whenever a golf ball is in the associated target device, and a network comprising individual energizing circuits for said score indicating devices connected in parallel relation, each of said energizing circuits including the first and second contact members of the associated target device with the contact members of each target device connected in series with the contact members of all the other target devices, whereby preceding circuits must be closed before succeeding circuits can be completed.

2. A putting practice and scoring device comprising multiple target devices each adapted to retain a ball member and including a first contact member and a second contact member normally spaced from said first contact member and operatively engaged therewith whenever a ball member is retained by the associated target device, multiple electrically actuated score indicating devices, there being a score indicating device associated with each of said target devices, and a network comprising individual energizing circuits for said score indicating devices connected in parallel relation, each of said energizing circuits including the first and second contact members of the associated target device with the contact members of each target device being connected in series with the contact members of all the other target devices, whereby preceding circuits must be closed and the contact members thereof maintained operatively engaged before succeeding circuits can be completed.

3. A putting practice and scoring device as set forth in claim 2, wherein said second contact members comprise plates mounted for movement toward said first contact members under the weight of a ball member, each of said target devices including means confining a ball member retained by said target member to the associated second contact member.

4. A putting practice and scoring device as set forth in claim 2, wherein said score indicating devices include multiple illuminating means.

5. A putting practice and scoring device as set forth in claim 4, together with scoring indicia bearing means of light transmitting material associated with said illuminating means for through illumination thereby.

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