

[72] Inventor **Carl H. Cooper**
3104 E. County Road, Odessa, Tex. 79760
[21] Appl. No. **793,645**
[22] Filed **Jan. 24, 1969**
[45] Patented **Apr. 20, 1971**

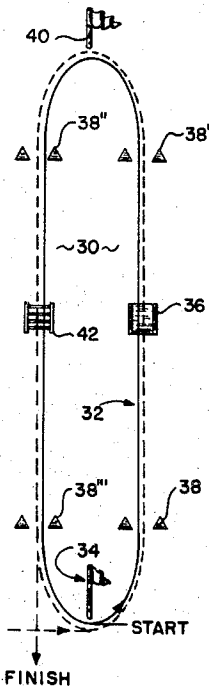
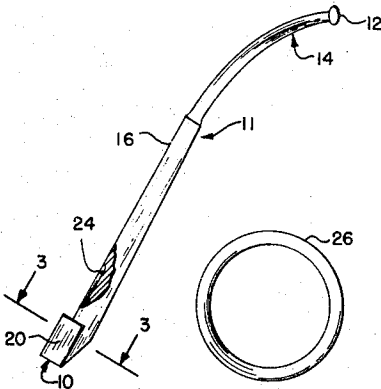
3,135,514 6/1964 Ahrent 273/127X
Primary Examiner—Richard C. Pinkham
Assistant Examiner—Theatrice Brown
Attorney—Marcus L. Bates

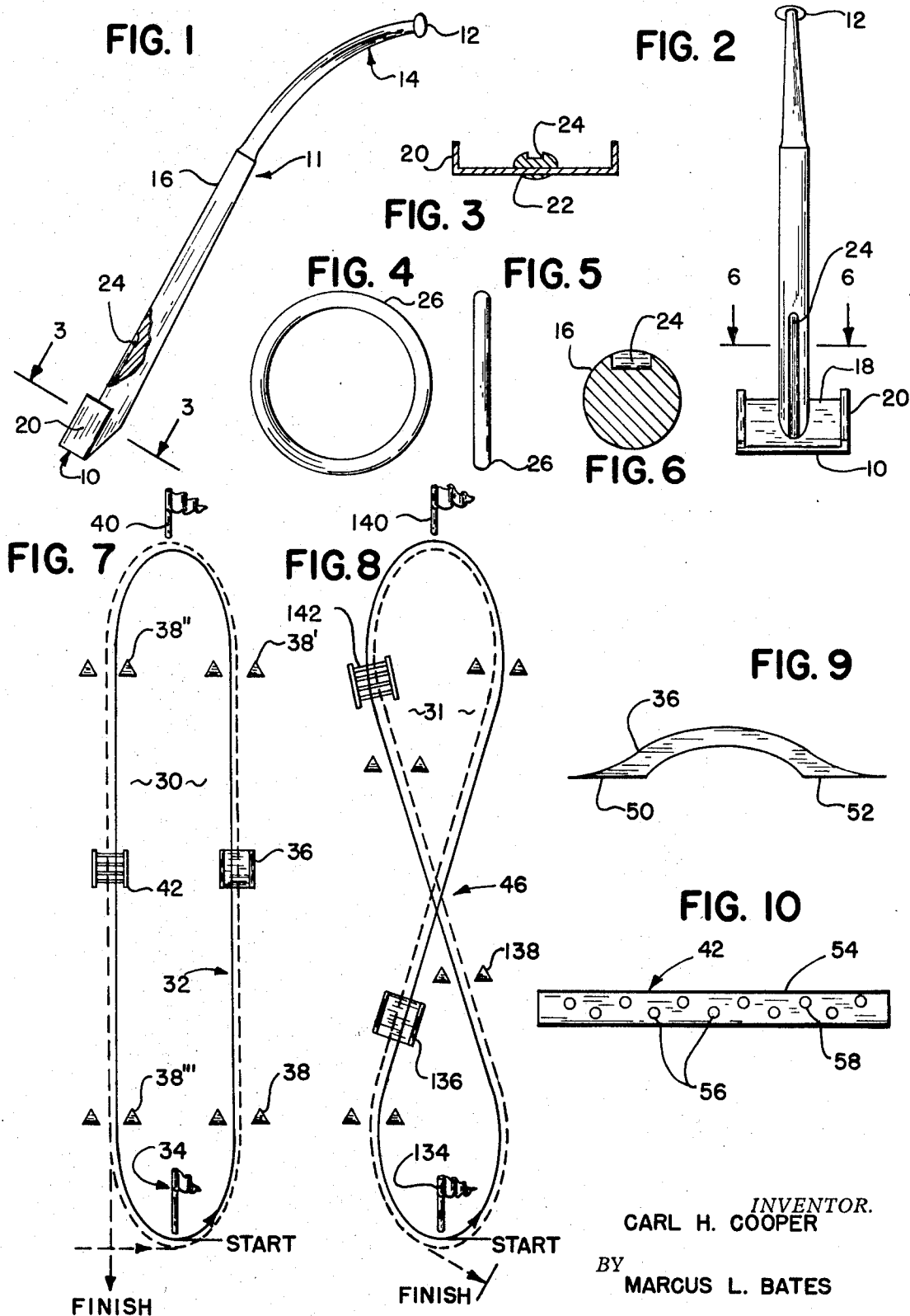
[54] **APPARATUS FOR PLAYING A YARD GAME**
3 Claims, 10 Drawing Figs.

[52] U.S. Cl. 273/126,
46/220
[51] Int. Cl. A63f 3/00
[50] Field of Search 273/126,
129; 46/220

[56] **References Cited**
UNITED STATES PATENTS
2,976,645 3/1961 Hight et al. 46/220

ABSTRACT: Apparatus for playing a yard game wherein a hoop is controllably rolled along a supporting surface, such as the ground, by a staff. The staff includes an elongated shaft having a handle and a guide means thereon with a longitudinally extending groove being placed between the handle and the guide means to enable the hoop to be rolled down the groove in the staff in order to commence playing the game. An obstacle course outlined by various members placed upon the ground defines a predetermined path along which the loop may travel.





INVENTOR.
CARL H. COOPER
BY
MARCUS L. BATES

APPARATUS FOR PLAYING A YARD GAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

There are many exhilarating yard games in which one can indulge, such as lawn tennis, croquet, badminton, horseshoe pitching, or putting. Each of these games require varying degrees of skill of the player in order for one to proficiently participate therein. Some of the games, such as putting, tennis, and croquet require that the playing field be comprised of a substantial amount of open area which is fairly level, which lies in a substantially horizontal plane, and which is completely free of obstructions. However, a large unobstructed level area is not required in order to roll a hoop along the ground with a staff, and it is a fact that a yard having terraces, hills, and various obstructions which must be circumnavigated actually add to the enjoyment and challenge of playing with a hoop.

It is old in the art to roll a hoop along the ground by using a stick to impart motion into the hoop. Prior use of this improvised toy predates Tom Sawyer for such an expedient is certainly mentioned by Mark Twain, and many grownups can recall having bent a length of wire into a particular configuration which no doubt represented an improvement over Tom Sawyer's hoop and stick.

As people mature, they become reluctant to engage in seemingly childish games, such as rolling a hoop along the ground by a staff, although it is considered, by themselves and others, perfectly dignified to engage in "putting" with a golf ball and club, or to propel a wooden ball with a wooden mallet through a hoop, called "croquet." In other words, most people appear to be content in gaining exercise so long as their dignity does not suffer from engaging in the particular game. It is a fact that some yard games are held to be aristocratic in nature, such as tennis, for example.

It is therefore desirable to provide a yard game which is interesting, invigorating, affords motivation for engaging in exercise, protects the dignity of the participant, and which can be adapted to most any size yard. It is further desirable to attain these attributes by the provision of a yard game which includes the use of an improved staff which enables a hoop to be propelled about a yard.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention sets forth an apparatus for playing a yard game wherein a hoop is controllably rolled along a predetermined course laid out on the surface of the ground. The hoop is propelled along the ground by a staff having a handle at one end and an elongated shaft which terminates in a guide means at the other end. The guide means has a planar surface defined by a top and bottom edge portion and spaced-apart end walls formed by depending upwardly directed members. A longitudinally disposed groove is arranged along the top portion of the staff with one end of the groove terminating adjacent the handle and the other end of the groove being open ended and terminating near the planar surface. The groove is wide enough to accommodate the rim or outer portion of the hoop therein whereby the hoop may be placed in the upper extremity of the groove, released, whereupon the hoop will roll down the groove and be imparted with sufficient velocity to continue to roll along the ground for a limited distance. The hoop may then be maintained in motion by controllably pushing it along the ground by the guide means.

A track laid out on the ground and identified by various members provides a predetermined course over which the hoop must be guided.

It is therefore a primary object of the present invention to provide an improved staff for causing a hoop to roll along the ground.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a staff having a guide means thereon for propelling a hoop along the ground.

Still a further object of the present invention is the provision of an improved staff having a shaft and guide means thereon wherein a longitudinally extending groove placed in the shaft enables the hoop to be rolled down the inclined groove.

A further object of the present invention is the provision of apparatus for playing a yard game which includes a hoop, a staff for rolling the hoop along the ground, and a course defined by various members placed on the ground.

The above objects are attained in accordance with the present invention by the provision of a yard game which includes a staff having a coextensive groove in the shaft thereof, and a guide means for propelling a hoop along a course defined by various members laid out upon the ground.

Other objects will become apparent as the essence of the specification and claims are digested.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a side elevational view, with some parts cut away and shown in cross section, which discloses a staff made in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a top plan view of the staff seen in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 3-3 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a side view of a hoop which may be used in conjunction with the staff of FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 is a top view of the hoop seen in FIG. 4;

FIG. 6 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken approximately along line 6-6 of FIG. 2;

FIGS. 7 and 8 each set forth a schematical representation of a course which can be laid out on the ground in order to play a yard game in conjunction with the apparatus disclosed in FIGS. 1 and 4;

FIG. 9 is an enlarged side view of element 36 which forms part of the apparatus seen in FIGS. 7; and

FIG. 10 is an enlarged side view of element 42 which forms one of the members disclosed in FIGS. 7.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

As seen in FIGS. 1 through 6, a staff generally indicated by the arrow at numeral 11 has an upper terminal end 12 comprised of a curved handle 14 and a main elongated body portion 16, hereinafter called a shaft. The free end of the shaft is comprised of a guide means 10 having a planar surface 18 defined by top and bottom edge portions and vertically spaced-apart walls 20. A longitudinally extending groove 24, which is coextensive with the shaft, terminates adjacent the handle and is open ended as it terminates at the guide means. The groove has a width which will freely accommodate the hoop 26 therein.

FIGS. 7 and 8 illustrate two ideal ways that the course may be laid out along the ground to provide a yard game which can be used in conjunction with the apparatus disclosed in the foregoing FIGS. As particularly seen in FIG. 7, an oval track 30 has an outline 32 defined by various members. The members include a flag 34 to indicate the "start." A bridge 36, which is more fully described in conjunction with FIG. 9, is arranged along the course. Spaced-apart stakes 38, 38', 38'', and 38''' define another portion of the course. A flag 40 indicates the halfway point along the course. An obstacle rack, more fully disclosed in FIG. 10 is placed along the track between the various sets of stakes. As indicated in FIG. 7, the starting flag 34 is also the "finish line" of the game.

In FIG. 8 the course is seen to be laid out in the form of a figure eight rather than being in an oval as illustrated in FIG. 7. The various members which define the course, such as member 136 relates to the bridge 36 of FIG. 7, and therefore the various members need not be discussed in further detail.

The details of FIG. 9 illustrate a bridge 36 comprised of spaced apart sidewall members and spaced-apart flat supporting surfaces 50 and 52 which rest upon the ground.

The details of FIG. 10 more fully illustrate the obstacle rack 42 of FIGS. 7 and 8. The rack is comprised of spaced-apart wall members 54 having laterally arranged rungs 56, 58 therein, with alternate rungs being vertically offset from each other in the illustrated manner.

OPERATION

In playing the yard game of FIGS. 7 and 8, the staff of FIG. 1 is held by the handle 14 with the guide means resting on the ground and the staff held in approximately the disclosed angular position indicated in FIG. 1. The hoop is placed near the upper extremity of the groove and released, whereupon the hoop is free to roll down the inclined groove, onto the ground, and towards stake 38, thereby starting play of the game. The hoop is maintained rolling along the ground by pushing it with the guide means. Vertical walls 20 prevent the hoop from slipping off the planar surface area 18 as the hoop is pushed or propelled along the ground by the staff.

While the upper terminal end of the groove 24 is illustrated as terminating about halfway up the shaft, it should be understood that it can be extended all the way up to the handle if desired, while still remaining within the scope of the present invention. Furthermore, the groove may be contoured in a manner to complement the outer configuration of the hoop. It is preferred, however, to limit the length of the groove for the reason that this expedient encourages each player to start the game with the hoop being imparted with the same velocity.

Starting at flag 34, the hoop is caused to roll along the ground towards stake 38 in the before-described manner. The hoop must be guided between the stakes 38, towards the bridge; whereupon the hoop must be rolled across the bridge, all the time manipulating the hoop with the illustrated guide means of the staff. After crossing the bridge, the hoop must be propelled through the spaced apart stakes 38' and around the flag 40 which marks the halfway point of the track. With the hoop being maintained in continual motion by the staff it is propelled through the stakes 38'', towards the obstacle rack, across the rack, towards stakes 38''', between the last-named stakes, and then to the "finish line" which is denoted by the same flag 34 that indicated the start of the game.

The bridge and obstacle rack require practice in order to be properly negotiated. When the bridge is approached with the hoop traveling at an inadequate speed, the hoop will often fall over because any attempt to push the slow-traveling hoop up the incline of the bridge will sometime induce a wobble, causing a side load to be imparted by the guide means, whereupon the hoop will be forced down upon the ground to rest on its side. In traversing the obstacle rack with inadequate speed, the same before described problem will be incurred; yet excessive speed across the obstacle rack will cause the alternately arranged rungs to "bounce" the hoop into the air and cause the player to loose control over it.

The stakes may be placed in the illustrated spaced-apart

manner with the distance between adjacent stakes being adjusted closer together as the players gain proficiency in playing the game.

When deemed desirable the track may be laid out in the form of a figure eight as seen in FIG. 8, and the hoop negotiated about the track in the same before described manner. This arrangement causes a delightful confusion when several people are playing for they invariably crash at the intersection.

Where deemed desirable, a score may be kept wherein the person who finds it necessary to restart the hoop the minimum number of times wins the game.

I claim:

1. A game playable on a supporting surface which forms a field of play comprising:
 - a track defined by spaced-apart members which include a bridge means, an obstacle rack, and several stakes;
 - a hoop, a staff; said hoop adapted to be controllably rolled along said track by said staff;
 - said staff having an elongated shaft which terminates in a handle to form an upper terminal end; said shaft having a depending lower end portion, and a guide means affixed to the marginal lower end portion;
 - said guide means having a planer surface defined by a top and bottom edge portion and spaced-apart end walls depending upwardly from said planar surface;
 - means forming a longitudinally disposed groove coextensive with said staff with one end of said groove terminating adjacent said handle, and with said groove being open ended adjacent said planar surface, said groove lying in the same general plane as said end walls and having a width substantially larger than the width of the hoop;
 - said obstacle rack includes spaced-apart longitudinally arranged side members having transversely arranged rungs therebetween, with alternate rungs being disposed at different elevations with respect to each other; whereby:
 - the hoop can be placed within the groove, released, whereupon the hoop will roll down the groove and be imparted with sufficient momentum to enable it to travel along the supporting surface while the guide means can be used to cause the hoop to continue to travel along the track defined by the spaced-apart members.
2. The improvement of claim 1 wherein said bridge includes spaced-apart supporting members and a crescent-shaped member, said crescent-shaped member having spaced-apart sidewalls which terminate at said spaced-apart supporting members.
3. The improvement of claim 1 wherein the stakes are arranged in pairs so as to enable the hoop to be rolled therebetween, said stakes, bridge, and obstacle rack being alternately arranged with respect to one another to describe the before-mentioned track.