United States Patent

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[54] **BATTING FIGURE FOR A SIMULATED BASEBALL GAME**
1 Claim, 7 Drawing Figs.

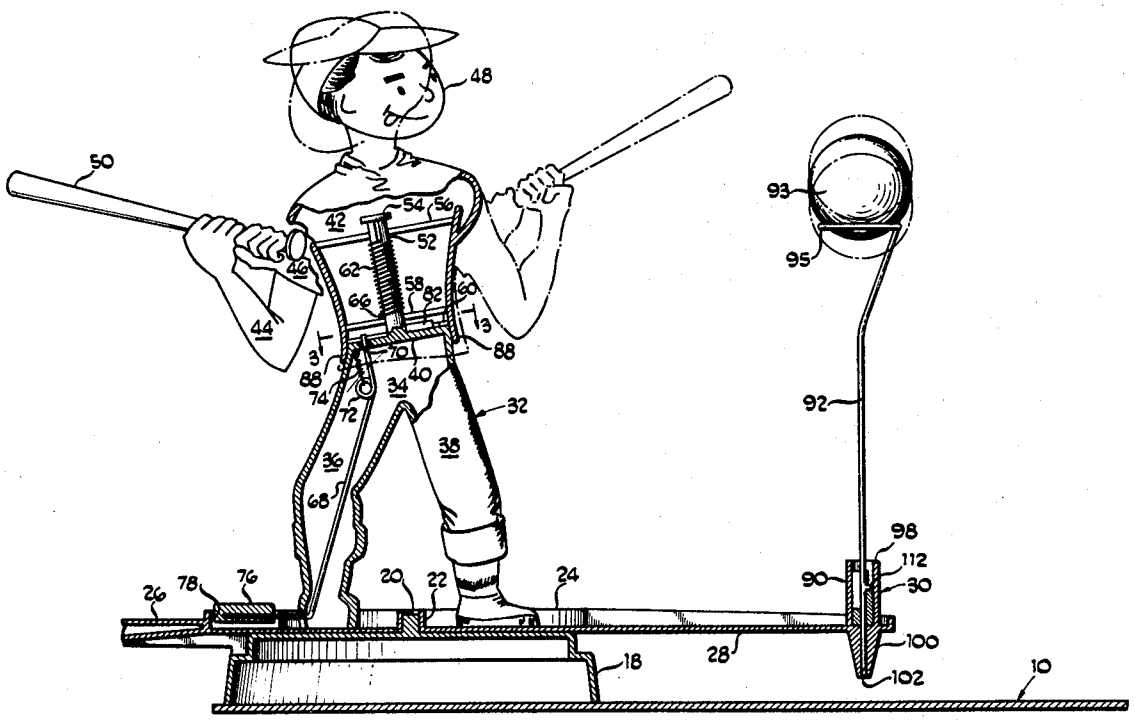
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273/89, 273/26, 248/161
[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63f 7/10,**
F16b 7/10, F16m 11/28
[50] **Field of Search** 273/89, 90,
26; 248/157, 161, 423; 211/14; 124/16

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ABSTRACT: A game apparatus for simulating baseball play including a toy figure of a batter with a rotatable upper torso section carrying a bat; a spring driver for rotating the torso and bat so that the bat strikes a ball held on an adjacent support; a playing board with indicia thereon depicting a baseball diamond; chance means for determining the advancement of the toy figure as a base runner; and playing pieces for marking such advancement. The ball support is vertically adjustable by means of a projection on a vertically movable rod which sits on a selected one of variable height shoulders in a base portion.



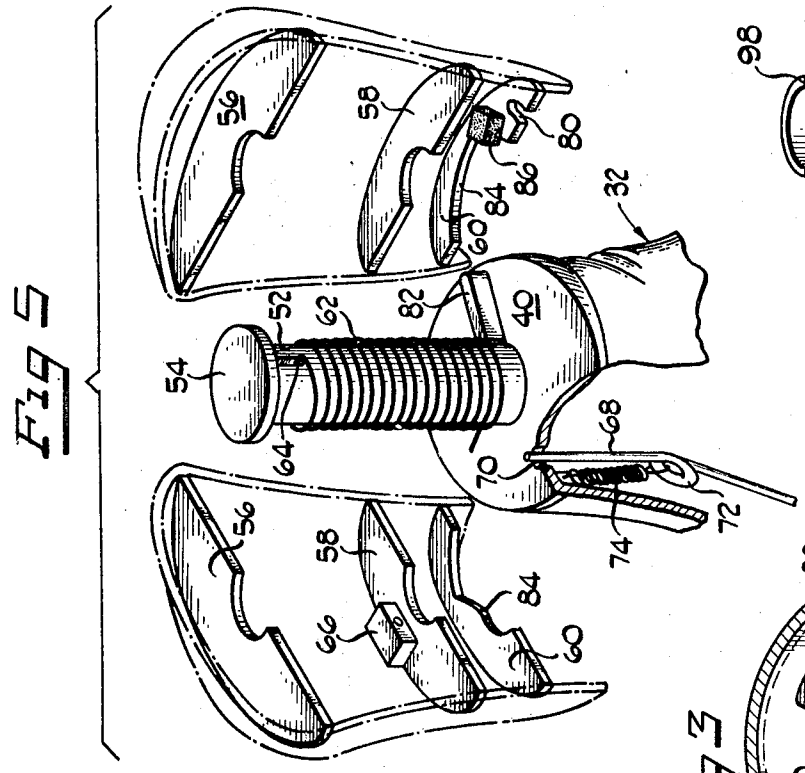


Fig 5

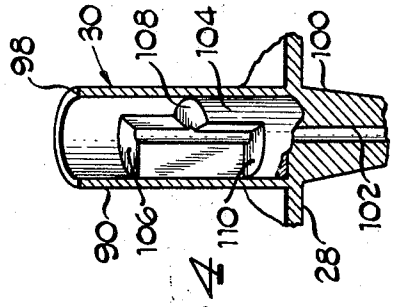


Fig 4

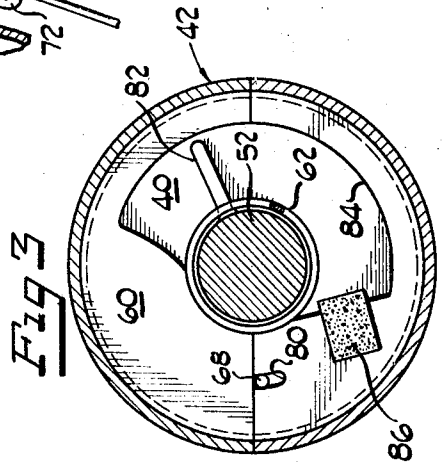


Fig 3

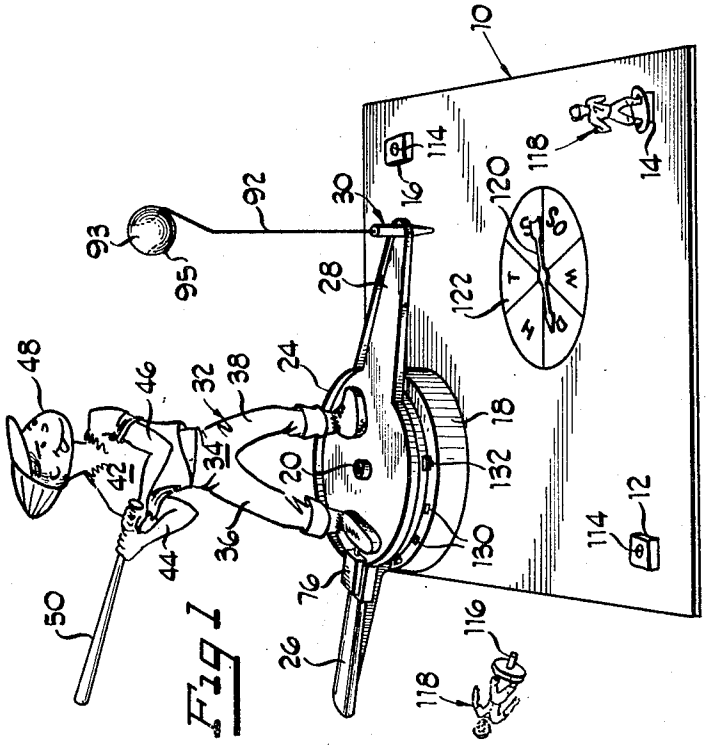


Fig 1

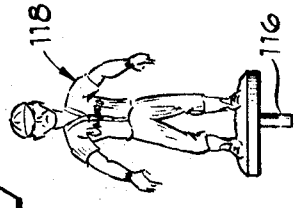
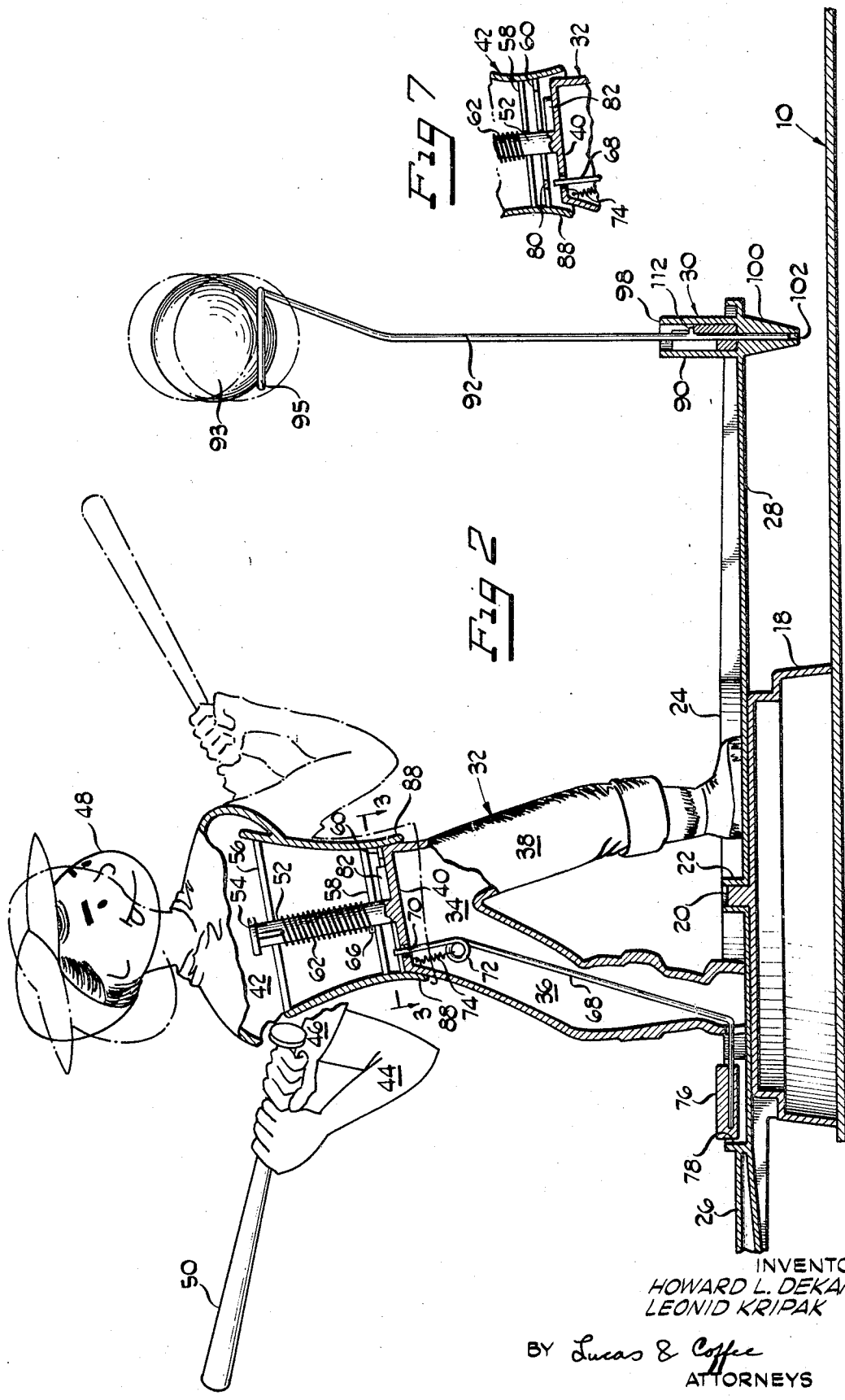


Fig 6

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Fig 7
Fig 2
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BATTING FIGURE FOR A SIMULATED BASEBALL GAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to a game apparatus for simulating baseball. Games involving baseball have long been known and enjoyed in various forms. The present invention is concerned with a novel spring-driven toy batter which is activated by one of the players of the game, and a "live" ball which is actually hit by the bat held by the toy batter and may be caught or fielded by one of the players of the game on defense.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Game apparatus for simulating baseball play including a toy figure of a batter mounted on a platform, said figure having a torso with an upper section and a separate lower section, the upper section being rotatable with respect to the lower section, which is fixed; a spring-driver for rotating said upper section; latch means for locking said upper section against rotation; means for releasing said latch; a simulated baseball bat secured to and extending from the upper section of said torso; and means for holding a ball adjacent the upper section of said torso in the path of said bat as said upper section is rotated.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the toy figure of the batter, the rotatable platform on which he is mounted, the ball and its support, and the base depicting the baseball diamond, with the spinner and spinner disc thereon;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged vertical section of the toy figure simulating the batter; and also showing the platform, the ball support, and the base;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged cross-section along the line 3—3 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged vertical section of the base member of the ball holder;

FIG. 5 is an exploded perspective view, partly in section, of the lower and upper sections of the torso, with the upper section shown in opened halves for purposes of clarity;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of a playing piece or marker for indicating the position of a base runner on the playing board; and

FIG. 7 is a cross section of portions of the upper and lower torso, showing the upper torso in raised position.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The game apparatus comprises a base **10** which may be placed upon a table, floor or any other suitable flat surface. The base includes a playing board area which, as best seen in FIG. **1**, includes markings of a baseball diamond with the bases indicated at **12**, **14** and **16**. In the area which would normally be occupied by home plate, the base has an elevated raised section **18** which is circular in horizontal cross section. At the center of the cover or top of the raised section **18** is a spindle or post **20**. By means of collar **22**, platform **24** is rotatably mounted on spindle **20**. The main section of the platform is circular as shown in FIG. **1**.

A handle **26** extends horizontally from the platform **24**, which handle may be grasped by the player designated as "batter" for easy rotation or oscillation of the platform. The purpose of the rotation or oscillation of the platform will be later stated in connection with the description of the play of the game. Opposite said handle **26**, an arm-like section of the platform extends horizontally as indicated at **28** (FIGS. **1** and **2**). Mounted on this extension **28** is a ball-support indicated generally at **30**, to be hereafter described.

Mounted on the main circular section of the platform **24** is a toy figure of a baseball batter indicated generally at **32**. The lower torso **34** has attached hollow legs **36** and **38** and cover plate **40**. The upper torso **42** is a separate piece and has appended thereto arms **44** and **46**, and head **48**. A toy bat **50** is held by the arms in extended position, approximating the normal stance of a batter.

As will be more fully explained later, the upper torso section **42** is designed to be rotated clockwise as viewed in FIG. **1** to place the batter and bat in the ready or "cocked" position. When the upper torso is released, it rotates counter-clockwise, as shown in FIG. **1**, under spring-drive to cause the bat to strike the ball resting on the ball support; the rotation brings the arms and bat into the position shown in dotted lines in FIG. **2**.

The mounting for the upper torso and the means for rotating that torso will next be described. Fixed in the cover plate **40** of the lower torso is the upwardly extending post **52** formed with a cap or button **54** at the top thereof. The upper torso is rotatably mounted on post **52** by means of three substantially horizontal plates **56**, **58** and **60** fixed within the upper torso. Plate **56** is mounted in the upper rib cage portion of the figure and plates **58** and **60** in the lower rib cage as shown in FIG. **2**. Each of the plates has a circular opening at the center thereof which is adapted to fit around the post so that the upper torso is rotatably supported by the post and the cover plate **40** of the lower torso. As shown in FIG. **5**, each of the three plates **56**, **58** and **60** are made in two half sections and joined together around the post to constitute a single plate. The coils of springs **62** surround the post **52**. The upper end **64** of spring **62** is inserted in an opening in the upper section of post **52** to anchor this end of the spring in the post. The lower end of spring **62** is inserted in an opening in block **66** mounted on plate **58** (see FIG. **5**) to anchor the lower end of the spring in the upper torso. When the upper torso is rotated clockwise as shown in FIG. **5**, the spring **62** is wound around post **52** and placed under tension.

Latch means are provided for locking the upper torso in place, when it has been turned clockwise a given distance as shown in FIG. **5**. When the latch is released the spring **62** will cause the upper torso to revolve rapidly in a counter-clockwise direction (FIG. **5**) to bring the bat around to meet the ball in the ball holder. The latch means comprises the wire or rod **68** which extends upwardly through the opening **70** in the cover plate **40** of the lower torso. The rod **68** is looped at **72** for attachment of coil spring **74** extending from the loop to the cover plate **40** to which it is affixed. This spring **74** biases the rod **68** upwardly so that its upper end extends a short distance above cover plate **40**. The lower end of rod **68** extends downwardly within leg **36** of the toy figure **32** and terminates in button **76** positioned in a well **78** located in the handle **26**. Downward movement of the button **76** in the well causes the rod **68** to be lowered against the tension of spring **74**, so that the top end of rod **68** is thereby moved below the upper surface of cover plate **40**.

The lowest horizontal plate **60** within the upper torso **42** has a vertical opening **80** which is elongated and positioned radially of post **52** so that it will readily align with the upper end of rod **68** when the upper torso is moved to its "cocked" position. Thus when rod **68** projects above cover plate **40** it will engage in opening **80** when plate **60** is rotated with upper torso **42** to position opening **80** over rod **68** (FIG. **2**) and the latter thereupon latches or locks plate **60** and the upper torso in that position against the tension of spring **62**. When button **76** is depressed and rod **68** lowered so that its upper end is below the surface of cover plate **40**, plate **60** and the upper torso **42** will be free to move and will rapidly rotate counter-clockwise under the tension of spring **62**.

The extent of counter-clockwise rotation of plate **60** is limited by stop **82** mounted on cover plate **40** and anchored in post **52**, as shown in FIGS. **3** and **5**. Plate **60** has a cut-out section indicated at **84** through which stop **82** projects when plate **60** rests upon cover plate **40**. This cut-out portion **84** and the stop **82** limit the rotational movement of plate **60** about post **52**. A block **86** is mounted on the upper surface of plate **60** on the edge of cut-out portion **84**, and this block abuts against stop **82** when the plate **60** has completed its rapid counter-clockwise motion upon release of latch-rod **68**. The face of the

block **86** which opposes stop **82** projects beyond the cut-out edge of plate **60**, so that block **86** contacts the stop **82** to halt the rotary movement of the plate **60** and the upper torso. The block **86** is preferably of rubber or other yieldable material.

When release button **76** is depressed to lower rod **68** out of opening **70**, plate **60** rotates rapidly as described, and a release of pressure on button **76** allows the end of rod **68** to move upwardly into engagement with the bottom of plate **60**. Consequently, as the upper torso **42** is then turned clockwise to place the batter in position to again strike the ball **93**, the lower surface of plate **60** rides over the end of rod **68** until opening **70** is again overlying rod **68** and the latter moves upwardly to latch the torso **42** in its "cocked" or ready position.

In order to provide for greater tension on spring **62**, and thereby provide a greater striking force for the bat **50**, the illustrated structure is designed so that the upper torso **42** may be raised and one or more additional turns given to spring **62**. In so doing, the plate **60** is raised above stop **82** while the spring is being tightened, and the plate **60** is then lowered to its operating position with stop **82** in the path of rotation of block **86**. Spring **62** is initially provided with sufficient clearance about post **52** to accommodate the described adjustment of the spring tension. Further, there is sufficient clearance between cap **54** on post **52** and plate **56** when the upper torso is in its lowered position to allow the upper torso to be raised for rotational clearance. A skirt **88** hangs from the lower portion of upper torso **42** to cover the gap between the two torso sections when the upper torso is raised (See FIG. **7**).

The ball support indicated generally at **30** will next be described. This support consists of a base member **90** mounted on extension **28** of platform **24**, and a rod **92** extending vertically from the base to hold the ball **93**. The ball **93** may be made of any suitable material; it has been found that a ping-pong ball is suitable and minimizes injury to a player.

The base member **90** consists of an upper tubular element **98** extending above the platform extension **28** and a lower bar section **100** extending below the platform **28**. The bar section **100** has a vertical bore **102** for receiving and supporting rod **92**. Seated in the upper tubular section **98** of the base **90** is a cylindrical core member **104**, best seen in FIG. **4**. This core member has a vertical bore which is aligned with, and is an extension of, bore **102** in the lower section **100** of the base. The core has three shoulders **106**, **108** and **110** at different levels adjacent the bore and exposed so that projection **112** (FIG. **2**) on rod **92** may be placed on any one of the three shoulders. As shown in FIG. **4**, the shoulders are in different sections of the cross-sectional area of the core so that the rod **92** may be rotated and raised or lowered to place the projection **112** on the desired shoulder. Thus, the ball **93** may be readily set by a player at any of the three different heights. The player who is performing as "batter" may place the ball at such selected height that the bat will contact it above, at, or below center, and thus the arc at which the ball is hit can be somewhat controlled.

On the base **10**, as shown in FIG. **1**, there are markings indicating a baseball diamond. In each of the bases **12**, **14** and **16**, is a vertical bore **114** for receiving the peg **116** on the underside of each playing piece **118** (See FIGS. **6** and **1**). These playing pieces, simulating ball players, may be inserted in the appropriate base to indicate base runners.

Also on base **10** is a spinner **120** with a spinner disc **122** thereunder. The spinner disc **122** is aligned with the spinner or pointer **120** and marked in segments with designations indicating the possible results of the batter's fortunes at home plate, e.g., "walk," "strike-out," "single," "homer," etc.

The game may be played indoors as well as outdoors, and any number of players up to about 10 or 12 may participate. The players take turns as "batter." The defensive players take positions in the field. The batter places the ball **93** in the loop **95** and adjusts the height of the rod **92** as he desires. He then cocks the upper torso **42** by rotating it against the tension of spring **62** and latches the upper torso in cocked position when latch rod **68** moves into opening **80** in plate **60**.

The batter spins the pointer **120** and is governed by the instructions in the segment of the spinner disc where the pointer comes to rest. If the pointer indicates a hit, the batter grasps handle **26** and oscillates the platform **24**. At any point he chooses, he depresses button **76** to release the upper torso and permit it to rotate under the drive of spring **62**. The bat **50** is brought around to strike the ball **93** and propel it into the air. If one of the fielders catches the ball before it touches the surface, the batter is out. If a fielder does not catch the ball in the air, the batter advances to the base designated by the pointer. The player at bat then places a playing piece **118** in that base and proceeds with his next turn at bat, or another player takes a turn at bat. The standard rules of baseball may be varied as the players desire.

In order to provide for selectively limiting the arc of movement of platform **24**, for example when relatively few players are fielding the ball, there is a series of openings **130** (FIG. **1**) around the raised circular section **18** for receiving a stop peg **132**. When placed in an opening **130**, peg **132** projects upwardly into the path of platform extension **28** to limit the swinging movement of the batter and platform. Preferably, a peg is thus inserted on opposite sides of extension **28** to define the path of adjustment for the batter's position. In addition, foul lines can be defined on the playing field as in regular baseball.

While the game apparatus has been described in connection with specific structure, it will be apparent that variations might be made without departing from the principles of this invention.

We claim:

1. Game apparatus for simulating baseball play comprising, a base, a platform rotatably mounted on said base, a toy figure, including a torso element mounted on said platform, said torso having an upper section and a lower section, said upper section being rotatable with respect to said lower section, spring means disposed within said figure in position for normally biasing said upper section to rotate them from a cocked position to an uncocked position, latch means including a generally vertically movable rod extending upwardly within a leg of said figure to a position within said upper torso section for locking said upper torso section in position after it has been rotated to a cocked position, said rod having an accessible end at the lower portion of said leg for enabling downward movement of the rod and release of the latch, a simulated baseball bat secured to and extending from the upper section of said torso, and means for holding a ball adjacent the upper section of said torso in the path of said bat as said upper torso section is rotated from the cocked to the uncocked position, and said ball holding means comprises a support rod having an upper end for supporting said ball and having a lower end carrying a projection, and means on said base defining a bore receiving the lower end of said support rod and forming a number of shoulders at different levels adjacent said bore for cooperating with said projection to enable adjustment of the height at which the ball is supported.