United States Patent [19]

Shoptaugh

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[54] **CLUSTER GAME**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/132,** 273/136 C, 273/137 AD, 273/131 BA

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63f 3/00**

[58] **Field of Search** 273/131 B, 132, 133, 134 GM, 273/136 C, 137 AD, 156; 35/22 A

[56] **References Cited**

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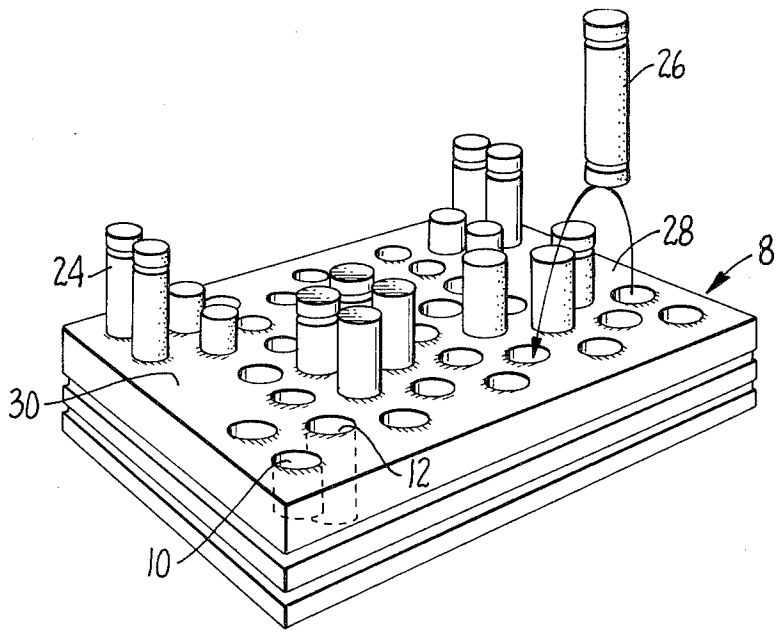
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A board game is provided wherein the board has holes for the reception of pegs or playing pieces, the holes being of different depths and the pegs being of different lengths whereby the players in a series of moves attempt to get their pieces in a tight cluster with the pieces extending the same height above the board. In its simplest form, holes of two different depths and pegs of two different lengths are provided so that it is necessary for the player to have all of his long pegs in the deep holes and all of his short pegs in the shallow holes, forming a tight cluster to win.

4 Claims, 7 Drawing Figures



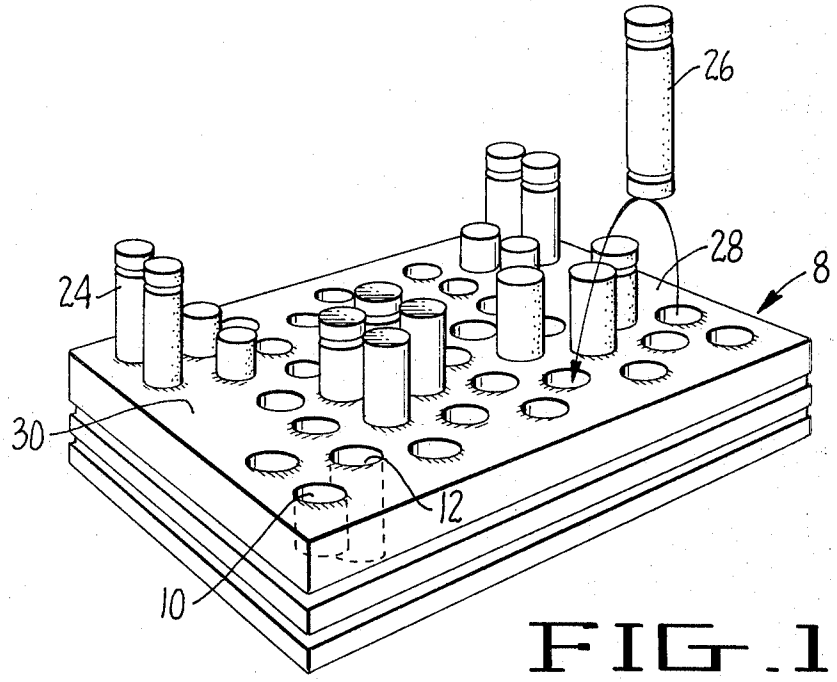


FIG. 1.

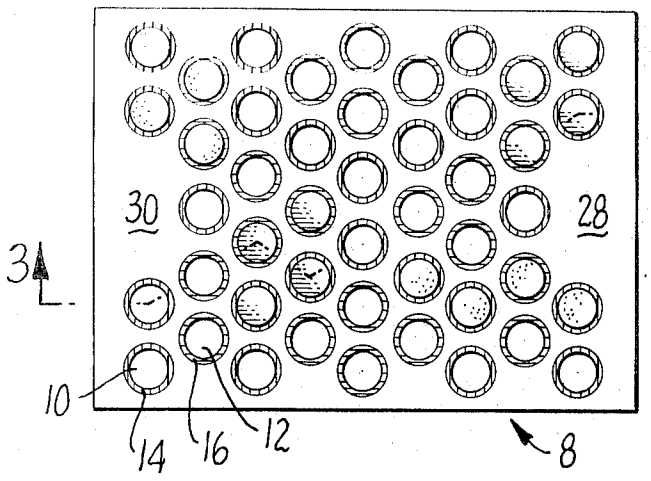


FIG. 2.

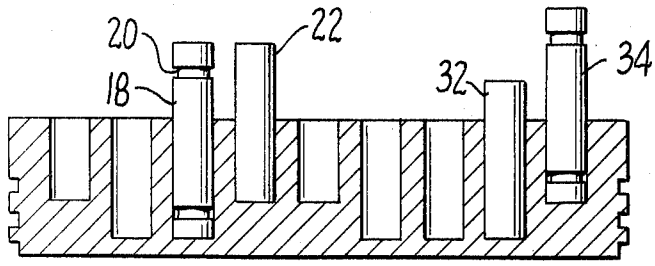


FIG. 3.

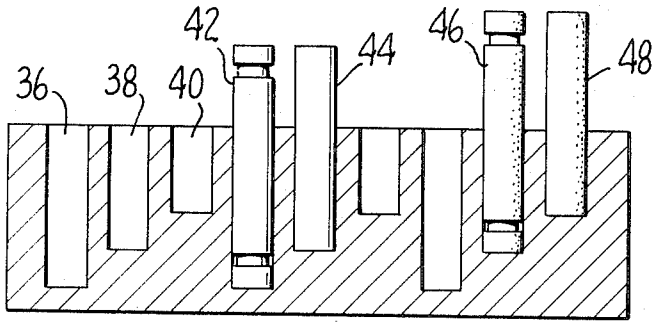


FIG. 4.

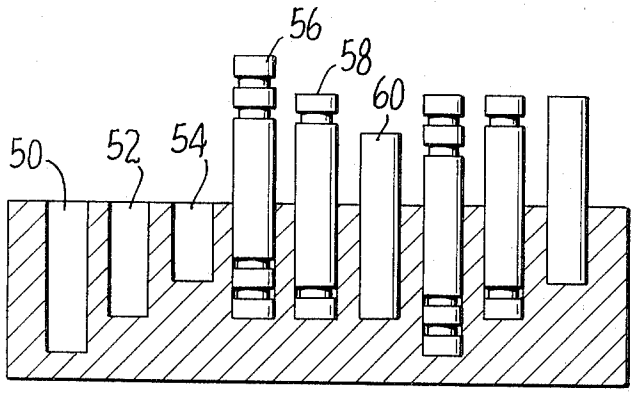


FIG. 5.

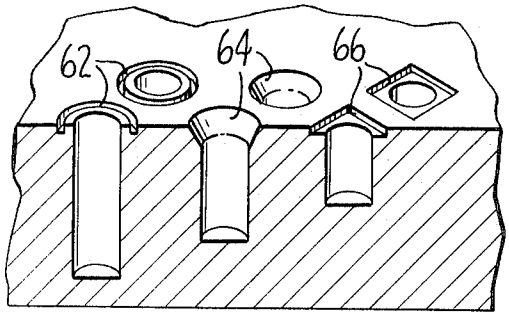


FIG. 6.

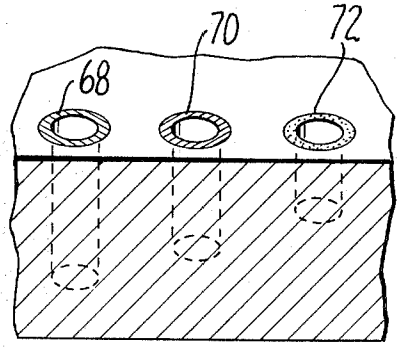


FIG. 7.

CLUSTER GAME

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a board game wherein the board has a plurality of holes of different depths and each player is provided with playing pices of different lengths. The holes can be arranged in various patterns and could be arranged in the manner of an ordinary checkerboard. The players make alternating moves wherein they can jump over other pieces or move without jumping into an empty hole and the object of the game is for a player to get all of his pieces into a tight cluster and have all of the pieces extend to the same height above the board. In other words, the player must not only have all of his pieces adjacent to each other, but they must be properly inserted so that long pieces are in deep holes and short pieces are in shallow holes so that the height of all the player's pieces is the same.

In a more advanced embodiment of the game, holes of more than two depths can be used with playing pegs of complimentary lengths.

Another variation of the game provides pegs of only two lengths while the board has holes of three different depths so that a player can win on either of two different levels.

Preferably the holes have indicia to indicate the depth of the hole as will be later explained in detail.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of a game board and playing pieces embodying the present invention.

FIG. **2** is a plan view of the game board shown in FIG. **1.**

FIG. **3** is a section on the line **3—3** of FIG. **2.**

FIG. **4** is a section of an alternate form of game board having holes of three different depths with playing pieces of two different lengths.

FIG. **5** is another embodiment of the invention wherein the playing pieces in the holes are of three different depths and the game is played with pegs having three different complimentary lengths.

FIG. **6** is a perspective view of a portion of a game board showing how the depth of the hole might be indicated to the players by various cuts in the board.

FIG. **7** is a perspective view of a section of a board showing how the depth of the holes might be indicated by color rings around the holes.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The game includes a playing board generally designated **8** having a number of holes of two different depths, typically shallow holes as at **10** and deep holes as at **12.** As can best be seen in FIG. **2,** the shallow and deep holes are distinguished by vertical lines **14** to indicate a shallow hole and horizontal lines **16** to indicate a deep hole. Of course, these could be of various colors or the like as is later explained in detail. The holes are arranged in any desired configuration and could be in the form of a checkerboard or preferably, in a diagonal formation as is shown in FIGS. **1** and **2.** There is no set number of holes but obviously the number of holes should be substantially greater than the number of playing pieces to allow places for various moves; approximately an equal number of deep and shallow holes.

In this embodiment of the game two lengths of playing pieces are employed and these should be marked with some indicia so that the player can see at a glance whether a long or a short piece is involved. For instance, long pieces, such as is typified by piece **18,** might have a groove **20** near each end while short pieces, as at **22,** might be plain. Also, each player's pieces should have some marking to distinguish the pieces of each of the players. This could be done by painting the ends of the pieces, placing distinctive marks on the edges or, in a preferred embodiment of the invention, accomplished by making the pieces of different colors so that one player's pieces might be of a light color as is shown in **24,** while the other player's pieces were of a dark color such as at **26.** Preferably, some of the holes are missing at each edge of the board, i.e., in the areas designated **28** and **30** so that a player cannot merely rearrange his pieces in the home position, but must move them outwardly toward the center of the board to confront the pieces of the other player.

At the srart of the game half of each player's pieces would be placed at opposite ends of the board and the play begins by the players alternately moving their pieces forward towards the center of the board. The object of the game is for a player to get all of his pieces into a cluster with no intervening holes and with the tops of all of the pieces lined up to a uniform height. In other words, the player must not only get his pieces together, but he must also have the long playing pieces in the deep holes and the short pieces in the shallow holes so that the heights of all of the player's pieces are uniform. Normally the player can move his pieces in any straight line and jump any number of other pieces. The taller pieces may jump shorter pieces on the diagonals and the short pieces may jump the tall pieces laterally (sideways). Any piece may jump another piece its own height. Any piece may jump into an adjoining vacant hole. But no piece may jump over a vacant hole. It will thus be seen that the game has some of the aspects of checkers or chess insofar as the moves are concerned except that jumped pieces are not removed from the board. It is an interesting game since the pieces must not only be moved into the cluster formation, but also moved into holes of the proper depth so that the tops of all of a player's pieces will be level. As is shown in FIG. **3,** when the pieces **20** and **22** are placed in complimentary holes their top surfaces are level. On the other hand, should a short piece as at **32** be placed in a deep hole, while a long piece at **34** be placed in a shallow hole, the top surfaces will not be level.

Various modifications can be made in the basic idea to provide even more complex games. Thus, in FIG. **4** an embodiment is shown wherein the holes have three different depths and the playing pieces have two different lengths. Thus, there is provided a plurality of deep holes as at **36,** intermediate depth holes as at **38** and shallow holes **40.** Long playing pieces **42** are provided as well as intermediate length pieces **44.** This game can be won at two different levels. Thus, with all of the player's long pieces as at **42** in deep holes and all of the short pieces **44** in intermediate holes, the tops of the pieces are level. Similarly a player could put his long pieces as at **46** in intermediate holes and his short pieces as at **48** in shallow holes and also have his pieces

level. Thus, further interest is added to the game since either player can win by having his pieces at a low level or at a high level, the only requirement being that the tops of all the pieces be at the same level.

Another variation is shown in FIG. 5 wherein deep holes **50,** intermediate holes **52** and shallow holes **54** are provided in the board and the playing pieces are of three complimentary lengths, namely, long pieces **56,** intermediate pieces **58** and short pieces **60.** As is shown at the right hand side of FIG. **5,** the top surfaces of all of the pieces will be level if the pieces are placed in the proper holes.

Normally some means is provided for indicating the depths of the holes since the game would be largely a matter of luck rather than skill if the player did not know the depths of the various holes. Various schemes can be used to indicate the depths of the various holes. For instance, some of the holes might have a concentric depression as at **62,** while others might have a tappered top opening as at **64,** while still others might have a rectangular cut out as at **66.** It will be understood, of course, that these are merely illustrative of various geometric forms which might be used. Of course, one depth could always be left plain while indicia are used around the other depth or depths.

Colors can also be used to indicate the depth as is shown in FIG. **7.** For instance, the deep holes might be indicated by a ring of green, **68,** intermediate depth holes by a ring of brown **70,** and shallow holes by a ring of white or silver **72.** Here again if only two depths were used, one of the depths might be left plain and the other colored or if three depths of holes are provided, again one might be left plain and the other two colored.

It will be obvious that the lengths of the pieces relative to each other must be coordinated with the relative depths of the holes. Thus, in the game shown in FIGS. **1** through **3,** one set of holes will be deeper than the other by the difference in lengths between the two lengths of playing pieces. The same relationship would, of course, be observed in those embodiments where three depths of holes are used. Thus, in FIG. **4** the short pieces differ in length by the difference between the holes of two adjacent depths and again the three depths are arranged so the difference in depth is the same between the shallow and the intermediate and the deep holes. In the embodiment shown in FIG. **5,** obviously the three lengths of playing pieces must be complimentary to the three depths of holes.

It is believed apparent of the foregoing that I have provided a novel type of game which offers many playing possibilities and permits the development of skill in winning the game.

I claim:

1. A board game of the type wherein pegs are placed in holes in a board and moved from position to position and each of said pegs can fit into each of said holes, wherein the improvement comprises providing holes in the playing board of at least two different depths together with playing pieces having lengths complimentary to said depths, each of said holes have indicia thereon to indicate the depth of said hole, there being at least two sets of differently marked pegs and each of said pegs in each set have first indicia thereon to indicate the player to which the peg belongs, all of the playing pieces of a player movable to positions adjacent one another with all of the top surfaces of the player's pieces at the same height above the board, and there being a greater number of holes than pegs so that the pegs can be arranged in more than one possible position on the board with their tops level.

2. The game of claim **1** having holes of two different depths and playing pieces of two different complementary lengths.

3. The game of claim **1** wherein holes of three different depths are provided with playing pieces of two different lengths whereby the playing pieces can be moved to positions wherein all of the top surfaces are at the same height at either of two different levels.

4. The game of claim **1** having a board with holes of three different depths and playing pieces of three different complementary lengths.

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