A game apparatus and method for playing a table top game simulating the sport of football. The game is played with a game board which resembles a football field, a flat disk which represents a football, and a set of blockers. The game board includes a shooting region, a plurality of scoring regions, and a blocking region positioned between the shooting region and the scoring regions. The defense sets blockers in the blocking region of the game board. The offensive player then rolls a dice to randomly select an actual scoring region from the various shooting regions. The offensive player may score by launching the table football into the actual scoring region.

A field goal is also provided and includes a forward facing panel which faces the game board, a substantially rectangular opening in the forward facing panel, a knock-down surface positioned behind the forward facing panel, and a landing zone between the forward facing panel and the knock-down surface. If the table football passes through the opening in the forward facing panel, the knock-down surface arrests the forward movement of the table football causing it to come to rest in the landing zone.
FIG. 4
TABLE-TOP BOARD GAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention
This invention relates to the field of table top games for competitive play. More specifically, the present invention relates to the field of table top games which represent the sport of football.

2. Description of the Related Art
Board games which represent the sport of football are common in the prior art. These board games come in many varieties, but all seek to use the rules of the sport and to simulate the action of the sport as much as possible. Obviously, there are limits on how effectively a board game can simulate the physical action of a sport. Most prior art board games have been ineffective in mimicking the strategy elements and excitement of football.

3. Description of the Invention
Football is a sport that involves skill, strategy, and luck. These traits have been the most difficult to emulate with a board game. Some prior art board games dispense of the skill element altogether in favor of a random roll of die or a spin of an “outcome wheel.” Other games ignore the element of luck and instead allow the players to take turns carrying out the same repetitive plays.

Many prior art football board games also require players to reach agreement in making scoring and other judgments. The players often see plays from different viewing perspectives around the table which can lead to disagreements when making scoring judgments. For example, in games where players kick a football through a field goal, it is often difficult to judge whether the football passes through the uprights or “misses” the uprights to the side. This feature can take the fun and enjoyment out of the game.

In addition, many of the prior art board games are overly complex. The complexity of many prior art football games slows down the pace of play and makes the game less accessible to young audiences.

Accordingly it would be desirable to have a table top game which captures the strategy elements and excitement of the sport of football. It would also be desirable to provide a game that is not overly complex, so that it may be enjoyed by younger players. It would also be desirable to provide a game in which scoring judgments can be objectively made in order to avoid argument.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT INVENTION
The present invention comprises a game apparatus and method for playing a table top game simulating the sport of football. The game is played with a game board which resembles a football field, a flat disk which represents a football, and a set of blocking pieces or blockers. The game board includes a shooting region, a plurality of scoring regions, and a blocking region positioned between the shooting region and the scoring regions. In the preferred embodiment the game board may be played bi-directionally with each competitor facing each other, alternating offensive and defensive roles.

To start the game, initial offensive and defensive roles are assigned to the players. The player who is on defense on the opening possession sets his or her blocking pieces in the blocking region of the game board. The player may set the pieces at any location he or she desires as long as the pieces are placed in the designated blocking region. The offensive player then rolls a die (or uses some other random selection means) to randomly select an actual scoring region from the various shooting regions. For example, the player may roll a die to select between a left half scoring region, a right half scoring region, a left corner scoring region, a right corner scoring region, or an open scoring region where the offensive player may score by launching the table football so that it comes to rest in any of the scoring regions.

Once the actual scoring region is established, the offensive player may launch a table football a designated number of times across the game board to land in the actual scoring region. If the football lands in the actual scoring region in one of the attempts, the offensive player scores a touchdown. In each possession, an offensive player has four opportunities to score a touchdown. If the player does not score on the first three attempts, the player also has an option of kicking a field goal or attempting a touchdown one more time.

If the player elects to attempt to kick a field goal, the player rolls a die to determine a kicking location. Various kicking locations may be marked on the game board including a close center location, long center location, a right hash mark location, and a left hash mark location. From the selected kicking location the offensive player attempts to launch the table football through the air into a field goal.

The field goal is placed on the opposite end of the game board from the offensive player. The field goal includes a forward facing panel which faces the game board and offensive player, a substantially rectangular opening in the forward facing panel, a knock-down surface positioned behind the forward facing panel, and a landing zone between the forward facing panel and the knock-down surface. If the table football passes through the opening in the forward facing panel, the knock-down surface will arrest the forward movement of the table football causing it to come to rest in the landing zone.

The players then alternate possessions a designated number of times with each player alternating between offense and defense. The player with the most points is designated the winner.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a top view, showing a game board.
FIG. 2 is a top view, showing a game board.
FIG. 3 is a perspective view, showing a goal.
FIG. 4 is a perspective view, showing a goal.
The present invention comprises a game apparatus and method for playing a table top game simulating the sport of football. The game is played with a game board which resembles a football field, a flat disk which represents a football, and a set of blocking pieces or blockers. An example of a game board is illustrated in FIG. 1. The game board includes a shooting region, a plurality of scoring regions, and a blocking region positioned between the shooting region and the scoring regions. In the preferred embodiment the game board may be played bi-directionally with each competitor facing each other, alternating offensive and defensive roles. Accordingly, if game board 12 is divided along the 50-yard line, each half of game board 12 mirrors the other half.

The shooting region is bounded by the end of the game board and scoring line 18 closest to the offensive player. Accordingly, the shooting regions correspond to the sections of game board 12 which represent the end zones of a standard football field. Scoring line 18 lying on the opposite end of game board 12 of the offensive player represents the goal line. The purpose of the goal line will be described in greater detail subsequently. Red zone 68 is positioned between the goal line and the 10-yard line. Its purpose will also be described in greater detail subsequently.

Blocking zone 32 is the region between the 20-yard line and 30-yard line on the goal line side of the field. Blocking zone 32 extends from the left sideline to the right sideline. The defensive player may place their blocking pieces anywhere within blocking zone 32 prior to the random selection of the actual scoring region as will be explained subsequently.

To start the game, offensive and defensive roles are assigned to the players for the opening possession. This may be determined by die roll, coin toss, or any other means of determination (including agreement between the players). The player who is on defense on the opening possession sets their blocking pieces, stationary blockers 38, in blocking zone 32 of game board 12 as illustrated in FIG. 2. Although any number of stationary blockers 38 may be used, two or three blocking pieces are preferred, with two being the most preferred.

The reader will appreciate that the defensive player may “gamble” and concentrate stationary blockers 38 in one small area of the field or may conservatively spread stationary blockers 38 out. If the defensive player believes the offensive player is not very good at shooting at the corner scoring regions, then the defensive player may elect to place stationary blockers 38 near the middle of the blocking zone 32 as shown in FIG. 2.

Stationary blockers 38 and table football 32 may be any shape or size. Stationary blockers 38 and table football 32 may also be made out of any material, including paper, plastic, wood, or foam composite. Because table football 42 is thumped with the shooter’s fingers, it is desirable for table football 32 to be made of a lightweight, yet rigid material. A paper-foam composite such as the material used in foam board is a good material for such an application. In the preferred embodiment stationary blockers 38 are made of the same material as table football 32, but they may also be made of dissimilar materials.

Once the defensive player places their blocking pieces in the blocking region, the offensive player then rolls a dice (or uses some other random selection means) to randomly select an actual scoring region from the various shooting regions. Various scoring regions are illustrated in FIG. 1. Right side 22 is the scoring region corresponding to the right half of the goal line. Left side 24 is the scoring region corresponding to the left half of the goal line. Left corner 28 is the scoring region corresponding to the left portion of the left half scoring region. Right corner 26 is the scoring region corresponding to the right portion of the right half scoring region. Left corner 28 and right corner 26 are a quarter of the width of game board 12 from sideline to sideline in the preferred embodiment. The reader will note that left side 24 and rights side 22 are shown on opposite sides of the field of left corner 28 and right corner 26 for illustration purposes only. For each possession, the scoring regions are on the same side of the field. Since game board 12 is bi-directional, the players may switch offensive and defensive roles without moving around the game board.
pieces in a small region. For example the defensive player may position the blockers to protect one corner. If the offensive player randomly selects the protected corner, then it will be more difficult to score. Accordingly, the use of blockers and randomly selectable scoring zones makes the game much more exciting by introducing the element of strategy into the game.

[0031] In addition, the use of blockers and randomly selectable scoring zones allows defensive players to adapt their playing strategy to their opponent. For example, some players may not be very effective when attempting to score at corner scoring zones. Knowing this fact, a defensive player may elect to leave these targets unprotected. Instead the defensive player may cover the center of the playing field with the hope that the offensive player will not score if the random selection means returns a corner target as the actual scoring region.

[0032] Once the actual scoring region is established, the offensive player may launch table football 42 a designated number of times across game board 12 to land in the actual scoring region. If the football lands in the actual scoring region in one of the attempts, the offensive player scores a touchdown. In each possession, an offensive player has four opportunities to score a touchdown. If the player does not score on the first three attempts, the player has an option of kicking a field goal or attempting a touchdown one final time.

[0033] To score a touchdown, part of table football 42 must come to rest on and cover the goal line, scoring line 18, in the actual scoring region. If the actual scoring region is the “left half,” the offensive player launches table football 42 at the region of scoring line 18 indicated by scoring zone 46 in FIG. 2. There are many ways that table football 42 may be launched across game table 12. For example, the offensive player may simply give table football 42 a quick push while table football 42 is behind shooting line 48, causing table football 42 to slide toward scoring zone 46. Also, the offensive player may thump table football 42 with a finger while it is resting flat on its side in the shooting region behind shooting line 48, causing table football 42 to spin and slide toward scoring zone 46.

[0034] If after three unsuccessful attempts the player elects to attempt to kick a field goal, the player rolls a dice (or uses some other random selection means) to determine a kicking location. Various kicking zones 34 may be marked on game board 12 including a “close center” location, a “long center” location, a “right hash mark” location, and a “left hash mark” location as illustrated in FIG. 1. From the selected kicking location the offensive player attempts to launch the table football through the air into goal 14 or goal 16 (depending on which side of game board 12 the offensive player is playing from). The preferred way to launch table football 42 involves (1) holding table football 42 in a vertical orientation so that one end points up while the other end rests on the selected kicking zone 34, and (2) thumping table football 42 so that it flies toward goal 14.

[0035] As mentioned previously, goal 14 is placed on the opposite end of the game board from the offensive player as indicated by FIG. 2. An example of goal 14 is illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 4. Goal 14 includes goal enclosure 52 and net 56. As illustrated in FIG. 3, goal enclosure 52 includes a forward facing panel which faces game board 12 and offensive player. Substantially rectangular opening 54 is provided in the forward facing panel. A graphical depiction of goal post 62 is provided around opening 54 for added realism. Although opening 54 may be any size, optimal dimensions have been obtained from experimentation. The preferred width 60 of opening 54 is 4 to 8 inches, with 4 to 6 inches being the most preferred range. The preferred height 58 of opening 54 is in the range of 12 to 20 inches, with 16 to 18 inches being the most preferred range. Opening 54 is vertically offset from game board 12 by a preferred height of 2 to 6 inches, with 2 to 4 inches being the most preferred. Ledge 64 is provided at the bottom of opening 54.

[0036] Goal 14 is shown from the back in FIG. 4. Net 56 covers the back side of goal enclosure 52. A small region of the back is not covered by net 56 so that the user may easily grab table football 42 if it comes to rest into landing area 66. Although net 56 is illustrated as mesh in FIGS. 3 and 4, any knock-down surface which is capable of arresting the forward movement of table football 42 may be used. Those that are skilled in the art will know that if the table football 42 passes through opening 54 in the forward facing panel, the knock-down surface will cause table football 42 to come to rest in landing area 66. This feature allows the players to easily and unequivocally judge if a field goal attempt is good or not good. The knock-down surface is preferably transparent, however, so that the defensive player can look through the back of goal 14 and see table football 42 as it flies toward goal 14. Being able to view the flight of table football 42 makes the game more exciting. If table football 42 comes to rest on ledge 64 the attempt is scored as a field goal.

[0037] The players alternate possessions a designated number of times with each player alternating between offense and defense. This continues until a designated number of possessions have been used. The players may even switch sides relative to game board 12 at a halftime. The player with the most points at the end of the game is designated the winner. Although point values for touchdowns, field goals, and extra points (field goal attempt after a touchdown) may be anything, the conventional values of 6, 3, and 1 respectively are preferred.

[0038] The reader will appreciate that the above described game involves skill. Launching table football 42 so that it comes to rest in a scoring region or passes through opening 54 requires aiming precision. It also requires that the player use the appropriate launching force on table football 42. The more that a player plays the game, the more attuned the player’s skills become.

[0039] Although the preceding descriptions contain significant detail they should not be viewed as limiting the invention but rather as providing examples of the preferred embodiments of the invention. For example, many variations on the scoring and game play can be used. For example, red zone 68 as illustrated in FIG. 1 may be employed for additional variation. If the offensive player lands 3 to 4 table footballs in red zone 68, the offensive player may be awarded a first down. If the player obtains a first down, the player gets four more opportunities to score a touchdown.

[0040] In addition, bumpers 44 may be provided around the scoring zones as illustrated in FIG. 2. Bumpers 44 act as a vertical barrier along the sides of the game board. The offensive player may launch table football 42 against bumpers 44 to get around well placed blockers. Dead zone 70 may be created where no bumpers exist. If table football
42 goes off of the table, such as by passing through dead zone 70, the offensive player turns over the ball, loses a down, or is otherwise penalized.

[0041] Also, penalty line 36 may be provided on game board 12 as illustrated in FIG. 1. Penalty line 36 represents a line which a dice must pass when rolled. If the dice does not roll past penalty line 36 the roll does not count, and the user must roll the dice again. Accordingly, the scope of the invention should be determined by the following claims, rather than the examples given.

Having described my invention, I claim:

1. A game apparatus, comprising:
   a. a game board, representing a football playing field, said game board having a first end and a second end;
   b. a table football;
   c. a goal, configured to be positioned proximal said first end of said game board, said goal including
      i. a forward facing panel, configured to face said game board;
      ii. a substantially rectangular opening in said forward facing panel, said opening opening into a hollow interior region of said goal, said opening vertically offset from said game board;
      iii. a knock-down surface, said knock-down surface positioned behind said forward facing panel relative to said game board, said knock-down surface configured to arrest the forward movement of said table football after said table football passes through said opening and strikes said knock-down surface; and
      iv. a landing zone, positioned between said forward facing panel and said knock-down surface, said landing zone configured to receive said table football after said knock-down surface arrests said forward movement of said table football.
   2. The game apparatus of claim 1, wherein said knock-down surface comprises a transparent material.
   3. The game apparatus of claim 1, wherein said knock-down surface comprises mesh.
   4. The game apparatus of claim 1, wherein said substantially rectangular opening has a horizontal width of 4 inches to 8 inches.
   5. The game apparatus of claim 1, wherein said substantially rectangular opening has a vertical height of 12 inches to 20 inches.
   6. The game apparatus of claim 1, wherein said table football comprises a flat disk.
   7. The game apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a first blocker.
   8. The game apparatus of claim 7, said game board further comprising a first sideline and a second sideline extending between said first end and said second end, a flat surface between said first end, said second end, said first sideline, and said second sideline, said flat surface configured to permit said table football to slide on top thereof, said game board including
      a. a shooting region, said shooting region proximal said first end of said game board between said first sideline and said second sideline, said shooting region representing a location for launching said table football therefrom;
      b. a plurality of potential scoring regions proximal said second end of said game board between said first sideline and said second sideline, wherein one of said plurality of potential scoring regions is randomly selectable as an actual scoring region with a random selection means, said actual scoring region representing a target for launching said table football thereat; and
      c. a blocking region between said shooting region and said plurality of scoring regions, wherein said first blocker is selectively placed within said blocking region.
   9. A game apparatus, comprising:
      a. a flat disk, representing a table football;
      b. a first blocker;
      c. a game board, representing a football field, said game board having a first end, a second end, a first sideline and a second sideline extending between said first end and said second end, a flat surface between said first end, said second end, said first sideline, and said second sideline, said flat surface configured to permit said flat disk to slide on top thereof, said game board including
         i. a shooting region, said shooting region proximal said first end of said game board between said first sideline and said second sideline, said shooting region representing a location for launching said flat disk therefrom;
         ii. a plurality of potential scoring regions proximal said second end of said game board between said first sideline and said second sideline, wherein one of said plurality of potential scoring regions is randomly selectable as an actual scoring region with a random selection means, said actual scoring region representing a target for launching said flat disk thereat;
         iii. a blocking region between said shooting region and said plurality of scoring regions, wherein said first blocker is selectively placed within said blocking region; and
      d. a goal, configured to be positioned proximal said second end of said game board.
   10. The game apparatus of claim 9, wherein said random selection means is selected from a group consisting of:
      a. a spinning pointer wheel;
      b. a die; and
      c. combinations thereof.
   11. The game apparatus of claim 9, wherein said game board has a goal line extending from said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said first end, wherein said plurality of scoring regions includes
      a. a left half scoring region, corresponding to the half of said goal line between said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said first sideline; and
      b. a right half scoring region, corresponding to the half of said goal line between said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said second sideline.
   12. The game apparatus of claim 9, wherein said game board has a goal line extending from said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said first end, wherein said plurality of scoring regions includes:
      a. a left corner scoring region, corresponding to a region of said goal line between said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said first sideline; and
      b. a right corner scoring region, corresponding to a region of said goal line between said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said second sideline.
   13. The game apparatus of claim 11, wherein said game board has a goal line extending from said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said first end, wherein said plurality of scoring regions includes;
a. a left corner scoring region, corresponding to a region of said goal line between said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said first sideline, said left corner scoring region smaller in width than said left half scoring region; and
b. a right corner scoring region, corresponding to a region of said goal line between said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said second sideline, said right corner scoring region smaller in width than said right half scoring region.

14. The game apparatus of claim 9, further comprising a first bumper extending along said first sideline proximal said first end and a second bumper extending along said second sideline proximal said second end.

15. The game apparatus of claim 9, wherein said goal is configured to be positioned proximal said first end of said game board, said goal including
a. a forward facing panel, configured to face said game board;
b. a substantially rectangular opening in said forward facing panel, said opening opening into a hollow interior region of said goal, said opening vertically offset from said game board;
c. a knock-down surface, said knock-down surface positioned behind said forward facing panel relative to said game board, said knock-down surface configured to arrest the forward movement of said table football after said table football passes through said opening and strikes said knock-down surface; and
d. a landing zone, positioned between said forward facing panel and said knock-down surface, said landing zone configured to receive said table football after said knock-down surface arrests said forward movement of said table football.

16. A method of playing a game, comprising the steps of:
a. providing a game board, a flat disk, and a first blocker, said game board representing a football field, said game board having a first end, a second end, a first sideline and a second sideline extending between said first end and said second end, a flat surface between said first end and said second end, said flat surface configured to permit said flat disk to slide on top thereof, said game board including
   i. a shooting region, said shooting region proximal said first end of said game board between said first sideline and said second sideline, said shooting region representing a location for launching said flat disk therefrom;
   ii. a plurality of potential scoring regions proximal said second end of said game board between said first sideline and said second sideline, wherein one of said plurality of potential scoring regions is randomly selectable as an actual scoring region with a random selection means, said actual scoring region representing a target for launching said flat disk thereat;
   iii. a blocking region between said shooting region and said plurality of scoring regions, wherein said first blocker is selectively placed within said blocking region; and
b. placing said first blocker at a location within said blocking region;
c. randomly selecting said actual scoring region with said random selection means after said first blocker is placed at said location; and
   d. launching said flat disk at said actual scoring region from said shooting region after said actual scoring region is randomly selected.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said step of randomly selecting said actual scoring region includes rolling a dice.

18. The method of claim 16, further comprising the step of placing a second blocker at a second location within said blocking region prior to randomly selecting said actual scoring region with said random selection means.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein said step of launching said flat disk at said actual scoring region comprises sliding said flat disk across said flat surface toward said actual scoring region.

20. The method of claim 17, wherein said game board has a goal line extending from said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said first end; wherein said plurality of scoring regions includes
a. a left half scoring region, corresponding to the half of said goal line between said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said first sideline;
b. a right half scoring region, corresponding to the half of said goal line between said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said second sideline;
c. a left corner scoring region, corresponding to a region of said goal line between said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said first sideline, said left corner scoring region smaller in width than said left half scoring region; and
d. a right corner scoring region, corresponding to a region of said goal line between said first sideline and said second sideline proximal said second sideline, said right corner scoring region smaller in width than said right half scoring region.

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