KICKING PRACTICE TETHER
Miro D. Bellagamba, 1337 Voll Road, 45230, and Edward R. Ulmer, 9594 Beechtop Lane, 45238, both of Cincinnati, Ohio
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5 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Elastic tether of substantially length having spring clip means at one end for attaching to the laces of a ball and being pivotally connected to a bridle at the other end, the bridle being an elastic member substantially shorter than the elastic tether and being provided with hooks at the ends thereof for removably attaching same to a pair of spaced apart anchor means.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to a tether designed to facilitate individual kicking practice for football, soccer and related games. It is the case without saying that kicking is a most important aspect of certain games, such as football and soccer, but it has long been realized that individual kicking practice is somewhat undesirable. Obviously, after each kick the individual must retrieve the ball. This requires a substantial expenditure of time and energy and clearly prevents maximum concentration on the art and technique of kicking alone.

Using two people for kicking practice does solve the retrieval problem in part, but in any given time period, each participant is able to utilize only one half the time for his own practice.

Use of an entire team or plurality of people for practice is of course necessary to coordinate a team effort. However, such practice does not truly permit concentration on the art and technique of kicking, and to the extent that it requires participation of the entire team, prevents those not directly involved in kicking from practicing other techniques.

Finally, kicking practice in any of the forms noted above requires considerable space. While this is no problem in suitable weather conditions where practice is done outdoors, it has generally been considered impossible to get suitable kicking practice indoors.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

This invention contemplates an elastic tether of substantial length, one end of which includes spring clip means for securing the tether to the laces of a ball. The other end of the tether is pivotally secured to the central portion of a bridle member, which in turn is secured at its ends to a pair of spaced apart anchor means.

The anchor itself can vary in design. According to one embodiment of the invention, the anchors comprise a pair of posts or supports suitably driven into the ground. In the case of an indoor practice tether, the anchors may comprise suitably weighted members, or can be provided with fixtures for securing them to the floor anchors commonly found in a gymnasium.

Keeping the foregoing comments in mind, it is a primary object of the invention to provide a kicking tether which will facilitate individual kicking practice. In other words, to provide a kicking tether so designed that an individual, by himself, can direct his full concentration to the perfection of the art and techniques of kicking. A further object of the invention is to provide a kick-
end the hook 24 by means of which it can be removably attached to the anchors to be described. Preferably, the bridle 14 will be of “shock cord” and may be somewhat heavier in diameter than the tether 10. In an exemplary embodiment of the invention, the tether 10 will be 3/8 inch in diameter, while the bridle 14 may be 1/8 inch in diameter. The length of the bridle 14 will generally be on the order of 3/2 of the length of tether 10.

As indicated earlier, the tether 10 must be secured to the central portion of the bridle 14 in such a way that it can pivot freely. As shown in FIG. 4, this is accomplished by means of the sleeve 26 which is freely rotatable about the tether 14, and constrained to its central location by the collars 28. The tether 10 is secured to the sleeve by simply wrapping it around the sleeve and securely clamping it with the clamp 30.

The anchors indicated generally at 16 in FIG. 1 are shown in more detail in FIGS. 2 and 3. These anchors each comprise a vertical central post 32, having the pointed end 34. In the embodiment shown, the post 32 is simply a hollow tube with the point being formed by cutting the end of the tube at an acute angle. Suitably secured a short distance below the upper end of the post 32 are the three support legs 34, 36 and 38. It will be observed that the legs 34, 36 and 38 all extend angularly outward from the upper end of the central post, and are of a length approximately equal to half the length of the central post. Once again, the support legs may desirably be hollow tubes which are welded to the upper end of the post 32.

As seen in top plan view, the legs 34 and 36 are coplanar with the central post 32, while leg 38 is normal to that plane. Adjacent the uppermost end of the central post 32 is the eye-bolt 40, which provides means for releasably securing the hooks 24 on opposite ends of the bridle 14.

In utilization of this invention, the apparatus is set up as shown in perspective in FIG. 1. That is, the anchors 16 are driven into the ground a short distance apart with the support legs 38 extending toward each other. The bridle 14 is hooked in place. It should be noted at this time that the spacing between the anchors 16 is close enough that the bridle 14 is not under tension, and may rest freely on the ground. The clip 18 on the end of the tether 10 is fastened to the laces of a ball 12. The individual desiring kicking practice may then stand in a position normal to a line between the anchor 16, but not far enough away from them that the tether 10 is under tension. Upon kicking the ball, the combined length and elasticity of the tether and bridle will permit observation of the initial flight of the ball. It is then returned by means of the elasticity of the tether and bridle to the kicker.

While the invention has been described in terms of a specific embodiment, it will be understood that no limitations are intended. For example, the author 16 illustrated are of a heavy design, suitable for extended practice by adults. In the case of a unit designed for kicking practice for children, the anchors might desirably include only a vertical post, perhaps configured with a screw portion for securing into the ground. Obviously, if the device is to be used indoors, the anchors will be of a design which can easily be anchored to the floor of a gymnasium or the like.

Accordingly, no limitations are to be inferred or implied except as set forth in the claims which follow.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A kicking practice tether for use with a ball having laces and comprising:

   (a) a pair of spaced apart anchor means;

   (b) a first elastic member extending between said spaced apart anchor means, said member being of a length relative to the distance between said anchor means and the height of said anchor means such that said elastic member is not under tension and rests freely on the ground;

   (c) swivel means centrally carried by said first elastic member;

   (d) a second elastic member, one end of said second member being secured to said swivel means, said second elastic member being substantially longer than said first elastic member; and

   (e) means for releasably securing the other end of said second elastic member to said laces of a ball.

2. The tether claimed in claim 1 wherein said swivel means comprises a sleeve freely rotatable about said first elastic member.

3. The tether claimed in claim 2 including means to constrain said sleeve at substantially the center of said first elastic member.

4. The tether claimed in claim 1 wherein said means for releasably securing the other end of said second elastic member to said laces of a ball comprises a spring biased clip having overlapping jaws.

5. The tether claimed in claim 1 wherein the length of said first elastic member is on the order of 3/2 the length of said second elastic member.

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ANTON O. OECHSLE, Primary Examiner
T. BROWN, Assistant Examiner