May 7, 1968 J. R. WRIGHT 3,381,961

BASEBALL GAME USING VARIOUS SHAPED DISCS TO REPRESENT VARIOUS TYPES OF PITCHES

Filed Oct. 18, 1965 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

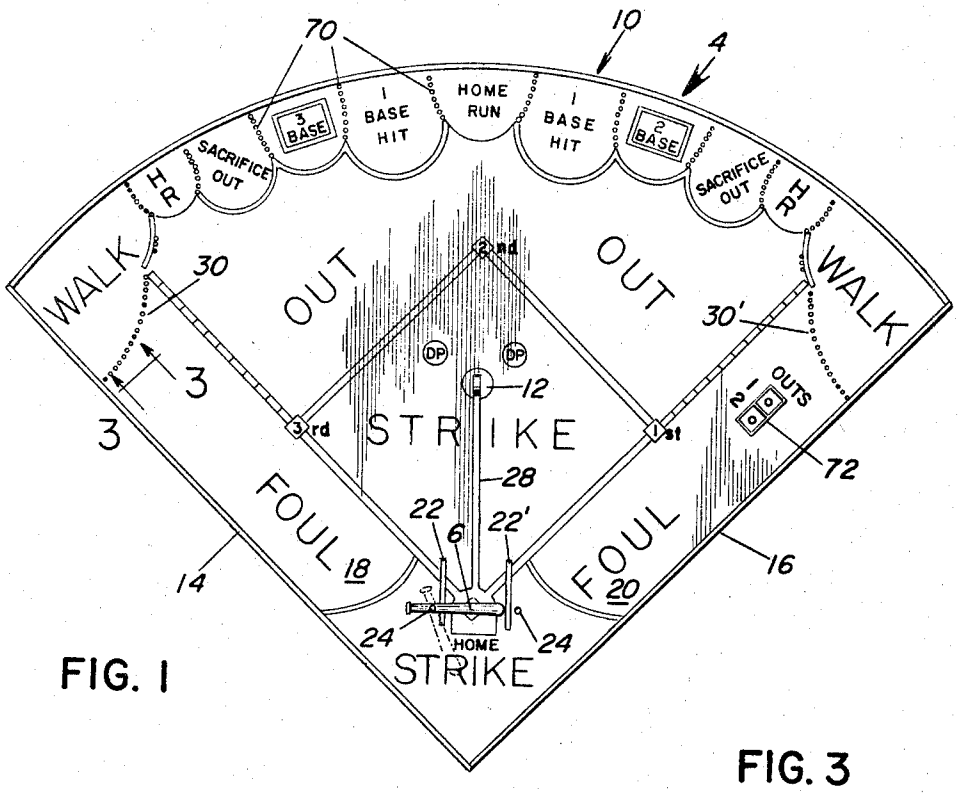
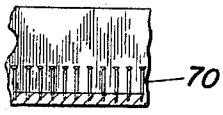


FIG. 1

FIG. 3



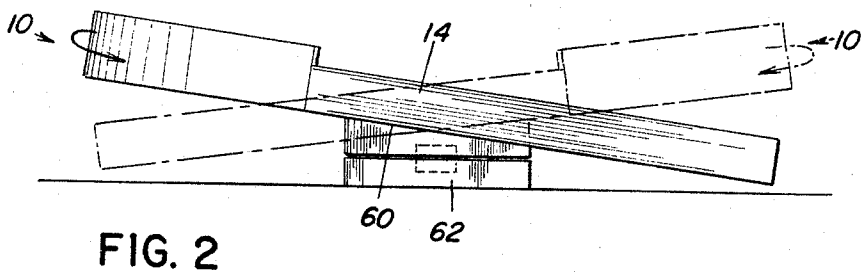


FIG. 2

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BASEBALL GAME USING VARIOUS SHAPED DISCS TO REPRESENT VARIOUS TYPES OF PITCHES

Filed Oct. 18, 1965 2 Sheets-Sheet 2

FIG. 4

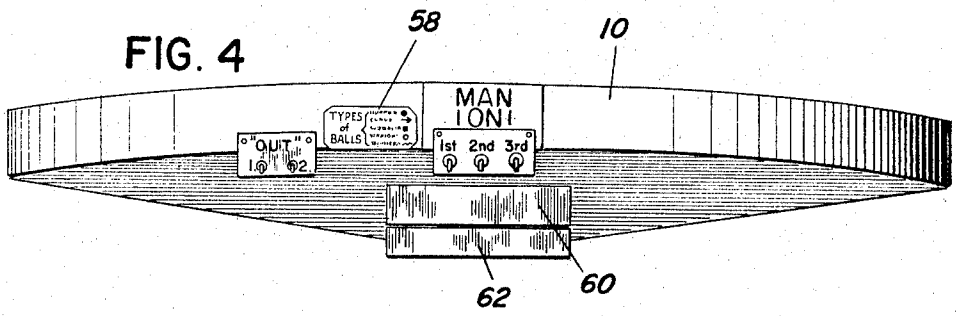


FIG. 5

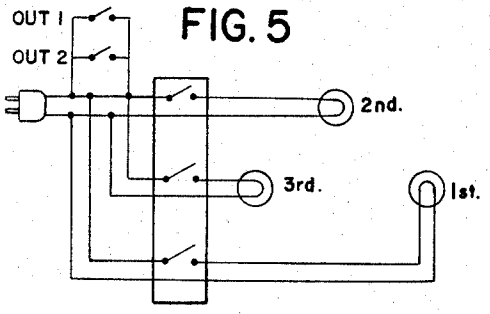


FIG. 6

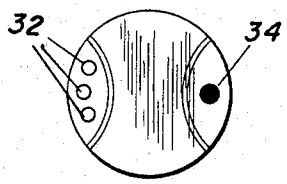


FIG. 7

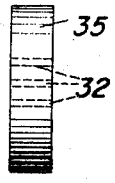


FIG. 8

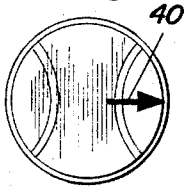


FIG. 9

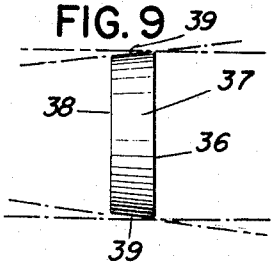


FIG. 10

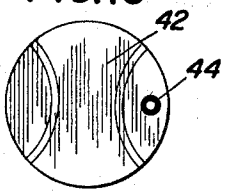


FIG. 11

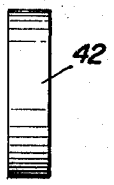


FIG. 12

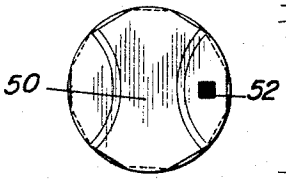


FIG. 13

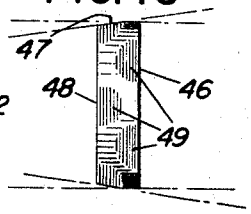


FIG. 14

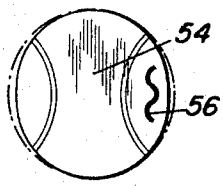


FIG. 15



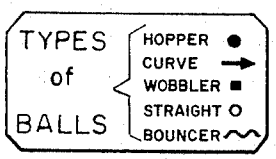


FIG. 16

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3,381,961

BASEBALL GAME USING VARIOUS SHAPED DISCS TO REPRESENT VARIOUS TYPES OF PITCHES

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Filed Oct. 18, 1965, Ser. No. 497,145
3 Claims. (Cl. 273—90)

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

This is a simulated baseball game having a unique pitching system simulated by the rolling of various shaped preformed cylinders representing various types of pitches on an incline apparatus, said apparatus simulating a playing field and including a batting mechanism.

Conventional baseball games usually employ a pitching mechanism which is automatically actuated, and thus lacks the competitive spirit in which baseball is normally played. However, in my baseball game, I have devised a method by which an opponent pitches the ball to the batter, and wherein the opponent is provided with a number of differently shaped balls so that he may throw a straight or curve ball, or various other types, as desired. Thus, my novel baseball game simulates actual playing conditions in that the opponent pitches the ball to the batter, and has a choice of what type of ball to be pitched.

The baseball game utilizes a playing board which is laid out in the shape of a diamond, just as actual baseball playing fields. There are spaces marked off on the baseball playing board which indicate, when the ball is hit to said area, just what type of hit was made, that is, a base hit, a foul, a home run, an out, etc.

Thus it is the object of invention to provide a novel group of differently shaped balls, which are pitched to the batter by the opponent, said balls being either a straight ball, a curve ball, or a hopper or other types of balls normally pitched by baseball pitchers.

These and other objects of my invention will be apparent from the following specification and drawings in which:

FIGURE 1 is a top plan view of the baseball game playing board, illustrating how the board is laid out;

FIGURE 2 is a side view of the baseball game playing board and its pivotal support, illustrating how the playing board can be revolved to interchange the relative positions of the opponents;

FIGURE 3 is a sectional view taken along the section lines 3—3 of FIGURE 1, and illustrates the means for stopping the ball;

FIGURE 4 is a perspective view looking from the back and bottom sections of the baseball game playing board, in the direction in which the pitcher releases the balls;

FIGURE 5 is a schematic diagram of the electric circuitry of the indicator lights, which indicate the condition of the various bases, as well as the number of outs, at any one time;

FIGURE 6 is a top view of the "hopper" ball;

FIGURE 7 is a side view of the "hopper" ball;

FIGURE 8 is a top plan view of the "curve" ball;

FIGURE 9 is a side view of the "curve" ball;

FIGURE 10 is a top plan view of the "straight" ball;

FIGURE 11 is a side view of the "straight" ball;

FIGURE 12 is a top plan view of the "wobbler" ball;

FIGURE 13 is a side view of the "wobbler" ball;

FIGURE 14 is a top plan view of the "bouncer" ball;

FIGURE 15 is a side view of the "bouncer" ball;

FIGURE 16 is a blown up view of chart 58 which may be referred to by the pitcher when selecting the desired ball.

The baseball game which I have devised utilizes balls which are specially designed to give to the pitcher choice and control over the types of balls thrown to the batter. In conventional baseball games, the balls are usually automatically projected towards the batter by some sort of mechanism, which does not alternate the type of ball thrown. Under actual playing conditions, however, the pitcher must combine his throwing talents with his knowledge of the batting habits of the batter, and his ability to confuse the batter as to the type of ball being thrown. Thus the batter does not ordinarily know whether he will throw a fast ball or a hook, or a curve or a straight ball.

On the other hand the pitcher must exercise varying degrees of control over the particular types of all balls he throws, since some types of balls are more difficult to throw than others. Thus the pitcher must also consider his own expertise, or lack of it, when deciding whether to throw a particular type of ball.

The balls which I have devised for use in my novel baseball game, are designed to present to the pitcher-opponent, this choice. Thus at least five different types of balls are used in my baseball game, which are specially designed to effect the desired ball behavior. The different types of balls which have been developed, are illustrated in FIGURES 6–15, which show the design requirements for the hopper, curve, straight, wobbler, and bouncer balls.

FIGURES 6 and 7 illustrate the structure of the "hopper" ball. It comprises a cylindrically shaped solid wooden ball, in the form of a disc through which three holes 32 have been drilled. Metal slugs are then inserted into the holes, so that they completely fill the drilled out area. The circular mark 34 identifies it as a "hopper" type of ball to the pitcher. The presence of the slugs in a relatively small radial portion around the ball, causes ball 34 to hop irregularly as it is thrown, that is, allowed to roll from the pitcher's mound 12 along the general direction of the pitching line 28 towards the batter. This type of ball is easy to pitch, but its irregular hopping motion makes it difficult for the batter to time his swing accurately.

FIGURES 8 and 9 illustrate another type of ball structure in which the ball 37 simulates the action of a "curve" ball. Thus sides 39 of the ball are both tapered at a constant angle from surface 36 towards surface 38. Depending upon which way the ball is held on the pitcher's mound 12, it will curve towards either the left or right as it rolls towards the batter. The arrow 40 identifies this ball as a curved ball. This type of ball is difficult to control.

FIGURES 10 and 11 illustrate the "straight" ball. That is, the sides and surfaces of ball 42 form a true disc or cylinder. Thus, when ball 42 is released from the pitcher's mound, it will roll directly in a straight line at a fast rate of speed towards the batter. Circle 44 identifies ball 42 as a straight ball. This is a true, straight fast ball and the easiest to control.

FIGURES 12 and 13 illustrate another type of ball structure, the "wobbler." Thus, alternate portions of the side surface 47 immediately adjoining top surfaces 46 and 48 are bevelled unevenly, so that high points 49 alternately and unevenly occur at portions of the sides nearest surfaces 46 and 48. Thus, when the ball is released, it wobbles sideways, much like a penguin, towards the batter. The small rectangular section 52, identifies this ball as a "wobbler." It gives the impression that the pitcher has lost control, and is very difficult to pitch.

FIGURES 14 and 15 show a "bouncer" type of ball. FIGURES 14 and 15 define an oblong type of ball 56, which is elliptically shaped and will alternately speed up and slow down as it rolls from the pitcher's mound 12 towards the batter. Wavy line marking 56 designates ball 54 as the bouncer type ball. It is easy to control.

As illustrated in FIGURE 1, the baseball game playing board is laid out in a manner similar to actual baseball playing fields. Thus there are three bases and a home plate laid out in the form of a diamond and foul territory adjacent first and third bases. The playing board 4 is rigidly mounted to support 60 which is rotatably mounted via rotatable support 61 to base 62. The playing board comes with a stand upon which base 62 may be mounted, if desired. Of course it can be removed for easy storage. Board 4 is rotatable so that the relative position of the players can easily be changed between half-innings as illustrated in FIGURE 2.

Two or more persons may play, and each player takes his turn at pitching and batting. The pitcher stands at the back 10 of board 4 and places the desired ball—hopper, curve, wobbler, straight or bouncer—on the pitcher's mound 12. Each ball is marked and the pitcher can refer to chart 58 to help in deciding the ball to be thrown. By placing a finger over the marking on the ball, the pitcher can conceal the type pitch being made from the batter. The ball is then released but it cannot be pushed, flipped or shoved. As illustrated in FIGURES 2 and 4, the playing board is inclined at an angle, such that the batter at home plate is at a lower level than the pitcher's mound 12. After the ball is released, it will therefore roll towards home plate. The pitcher cannot touch or pick up the ball before the ball travels past home plate. If there are runners on any base, and the pitcher touches the ball after releasing it, "balk" will be called on the pitcher. The "balk" call will allow runners to advance one base.

The pitcher must immediately raise his hand after releasing the ball. If the ball is batted back and strikes the pitcher's hand, it will be called a hit, thereby allowing the batter to proceed to first base. Any ball hit off the playing board constitutes an out for the batter. Any ball hit high enough to hit the pitcher's upper arm or body is also considered an out.

Lines 22 and 22' define the strike zone. Any pitched ball touching or passing outside these lines will be considered a "ball" unless the batter swings at the pitch and misses. Any pitched ball that passes between these lines will be called a strike unless the batter swings or hits the ball to a counting area. It is also possible to "foul tip" the ball as indicated in the area defined by boundaries 14, 18, the third base line and stops 30 on one side, and lines 16, 20, the first base line and stops 30'. The counting areas are laid out on the playing board, and identified by their common baseball meanings such as Walk, Home Run, Out, 1 Base Hit, 2 Base Hit, Sacrifice Out, etc., as illustrated in FIGURE 1. Spikes 70, as shown in FIGURES 1 and 3, separate portions of the different counting areas. After the ball is hit or missed, the determination of what occurred is made by the final position of the ball, the lowest possible count being dominant. For example, if the ball is lying partly on "base hit" and partly on "out," then the count is "an out." If the ball is on a boundary line, the count will be that of the marking of the area in which the ball is completely contained. For example, a ball lying in a strike area on the lines separating the strike area from an out area, will be called a strike.

As illustrated in FIGURE 1, the batter can either bat left or right handed, since holes 24 are provided on both sides of the home plate, into which the bat 6 may be rotatably mounted. After the first pitch is made, however, the batter cannot switch the batting position until an out is made, or until he reaches a base. To best swing the bat, the bat 6 should be in a slanted position, and the handle should be flipped with the finger in a quick circular motion allowing the bat to contact the ball at the optimum time to get the best hit.

The game is played according to the rules of actual baseball games, except for the few obvious revisions which have been made necessary because it is a simulated game. Each player is allowed to make three outs in his half-inning, and each batter is allowed three strikes for an out. Four balls and the batter receives free passage to first base. All base runners advance on bases ahead of the batter, the same number of bases that the batter gets, except when the batter is walked. Then, the runners are forced. For example, if there is a runner on second base and the batter walks, then the runner on second remains there. If the batter should get a base hit, the runner on second base would advance one base, just as the batter. Any ball hit into a "sacrifice out" area will constitute an out for the batter, but any runners will advance one base if it is the first or second out of the half-inning.

The circles marked DP constitute double play areas, and any ball hit that comes to rest on any portion of the DP areas will constitute an out for the batter, as well as for the leading base runner. Of course, only the batter is called out if no men are on base. For example, if runners are on first base and second base, and the batter hits into a double play area, the leading base runner, that is, the man on second base, is out. However, the man on first base is allowed to advance one base and he would be safe at second base.

I have also provided indicators to provide an indication of the number of outs at any one time, as well as for the condition of the bases. Thus, with reference to FIGURE 4, switches 1 and 2 are mounted on board 72, and are thrown consecutively when outs one and two are made. As shown in FIGURE 5, switches one and two are connected to a conventional 120 AC supply, and when closed, respectively activate lights 1 and 2 which are mounted on the right hand side of board 4, as illustrated in FIGURE 1.

Also mounted on the back 10 of playing board 4, are three switches labeled 1st, 2nd and 3rd. These switches are selectively actuated and when closed, cause lights to be activated at their respective bases. The electrical circuitry is shown in FIGURE 5, and illustrates the three lights being connected in parallel to the 120 volt AC supply. Since the "OUT" switches and the "MAN ON" switches, as well as the master list for the identification of the type of balls utilized, are mounted on the back 10 of the playing board 4, where the pitcher is positioned, the pitcher would normally operate the switches to record the status of the game.

Scores should be posted at the end of each half-inning, and runs may be tallied as they are made in the half-inning on a score board which is supplied with my game. I have not illustrated the score board utilized, since it is a conventional score board of the type found in many ball parks. It has three sets of pins across the face, and the top two sets are marked HOME and VISITORS, respectively. When four or six are playing, partners may be chosen. When there are three players, each takes a half inning; the third row of pins can be used to post the score of the third player.

Although I have described my invention with regard to wood balls, other materials can also be used—metal or plastic for example.

Having thus described my invention, I claim the following:

1. A simulated baseball game which comprises:

(A) a playing board laid out in the shape of an actual baseball field, said playing board having areas marked thereon to indicate what kind of hit is made depending upon which area the batted ball comes to rest in;

(B) a plurality of disc shaped balls, each of said balls being shaped so that when rolled they will simulate the types of balls thrown by actual pitchers, one of said balls comprising:

(1) a solid piece of wood, said wood being shaped in the form of a cylinder, with flat surfaces bounding the rounded side of said cylinder;

(2) said cylinder defining a plurality of holes, each spaced at an equal radial distance from the radial axis of said cylinder, said holes defining a matrix eccentric from the radial axis which comprises only a minor portion of said cylinder;

(3) a metal slug mounted in each of said plurality of holes, whereby when said ball rolls on its side from the pitchers mound to the batting mechanism it hops irregularly because the slugs cause the center of gravity of the ball to shift;

(4) and a mark on said ball to identify it as a "hopper" type of ball;

(C) a pitcher's mound;

(D) a home plate with a manually actuable batting mechanism mounted thereby, said pitcher's mound being at a higher level than said home plate on said playing board whereby when the balls are released from the pitcher's mound, they will roll in a manner depending upon their shape, towards the batting mechanism.

2. A simulated baseball game which comprises:

(A) a playing board laid out in the shape of an actual baseball field, said playing board having areas marked thereon to indicate what kind of hit is made depending upon which area the batted ball comes to rest in;

(B) a plurality of disc shaped balls, each of said balls being shaped so that when rolled they will simulate the types of balls thrown by actual pitchers, one of said balls comprising:

(1) a piece of wood with two parallel end surfaces bounding the side of said piece of wood, said side being substantially round, with alternate portions of the side surface immediately adjoining said end surfaces being bevelled unevenly so that high points alternately and unevenly occur at near the end surfaces of said piece of wood, whereby when said ball is released on its side from said pitcher's mound it will roll towards said batting mechanism with a wobbling type of motion;

(2) a mark on said ball to identify it as a "wobbler" ball;

(C) a pitcher's mound;

(D) a home plate with a manually actuable batting mechanism mounted thereby, said pitcher's mound being at a higher level than said home plate on said playing board whereby when the balls are released from the pitcher's mound, they will roll in a manner depending upon their shape, towards the batting mechanism.

3. A simulated baseball game which comprises:

(A) a playing board laid out in the shape of an actual baseball field, said playing board having areas marked thereon to indicate what kind of hit is made depending upon which area the batted ball comes to rest in;

(B) a plurality of disc shaped balls, each of said balls being shaped so that when rolled they will simulate the types of balls thrown by actual pitchers one of said balls comprising:

(1) a piece of wood which is an elliptically shaped disc whereby when said ball rolls on its side from the pitcher's mound to said batting mechanism, it will alternately speed up and slow down;

(2) a mark on said ball to identify it as a "bouncer" type;

(C) a pitcher's mound;

(D) a home plate with a manually actuable batting mechanism mounted thereby, said pitcher's mound being at a higher level than said home plate on said playing board whereby when the balls are released from the pitcher's mound, they will roll in a manner depending upon their shape, towards the batting mechanism.

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