United States Patent [19]

Chorey

[11] **3,883,138**

[45] **May 13, 1975**

[54] **BATTING TEE APPARATUS**

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[22] Filed: **Aug. 6, 1973**

[21] Appl. No.: **385,842**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/26 R**
[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63b 69/40**
[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/26 R, 202, 33, 203, 273/207; 124/11 R, 13 R, 13 A; 248/333

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

Improved batting tee apparatus useful in teaching the fundamentals of hitting a baseball properly. The tee includes a base that is supported on a member which simulates, or is "home plate." Tubes extend upwardly from the base and are in telescoping relation for height adjustment. A rubber ball support is connected to the uppermost tube and is adapted to support a baseball. The tee apparatus may be shifted at will to various locations relative to home plate to simulate high, low, inside or outside pitches and, as a safety measure, may be easily and quickly removed from the home plate area when a runner on third base attempts to score a run. The upwardly extending tubes comprise first and second tubes wherein the upper end of the first tube is provided with an inner bushing for receiving the lower end of the second tube. The second tube is held in the first tube by a thumb screw which extends through the first tube and bushing and abuts the lower end of the second tube. The upper end of the second tube is provided with a tubular ball support. The ball support is provided with a series of spaced apart grooves to enhance frictional engagement with the second tube when telescopically inserted therein.

2 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures

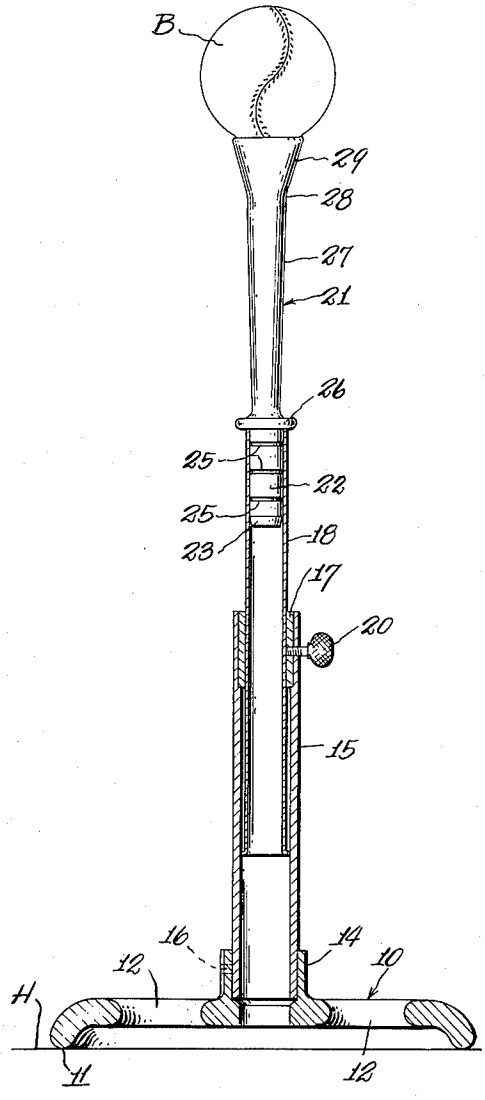


FIG. 1.

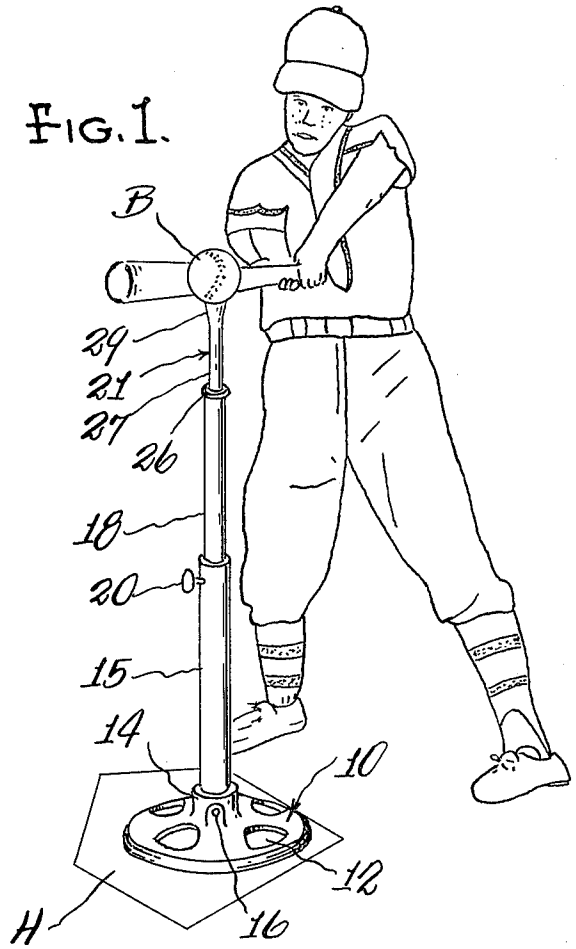


FIG. 2.

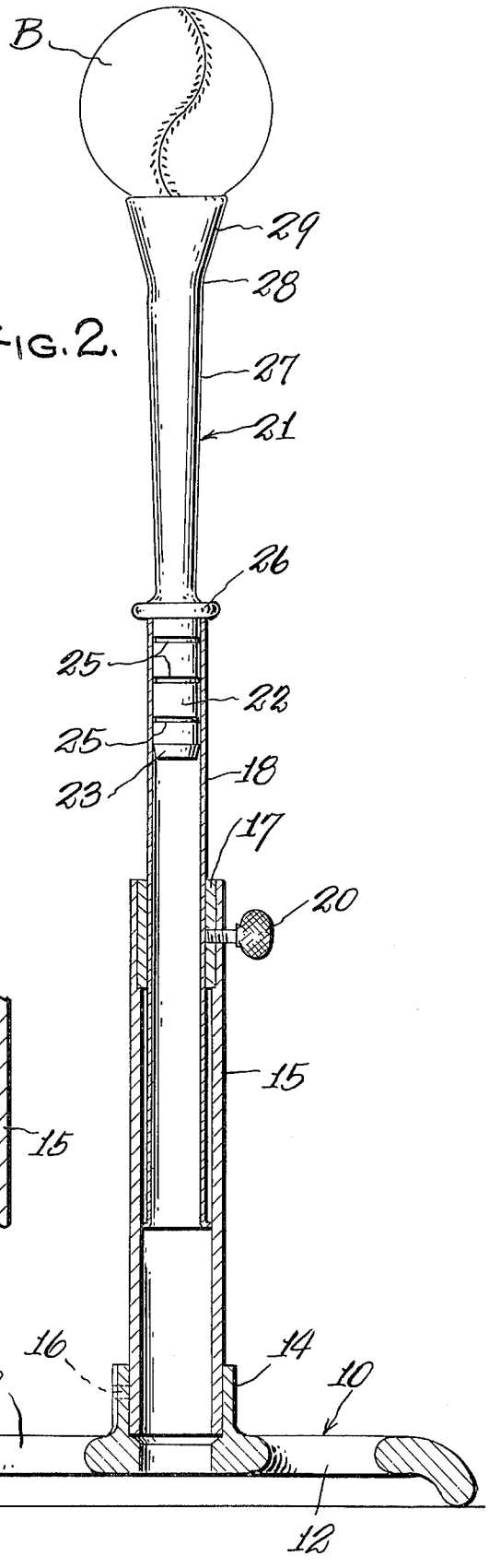


FIG. 3.

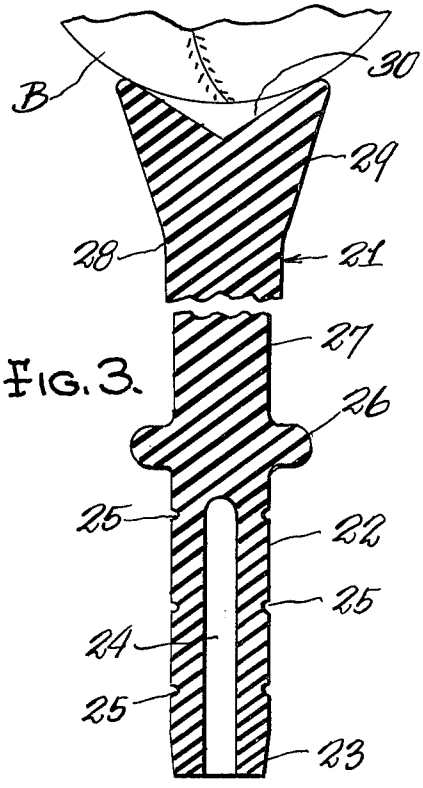
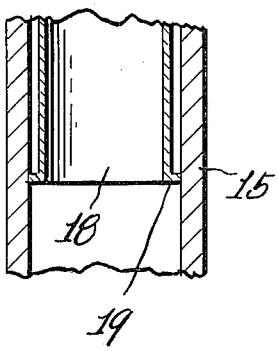


FIG. 4.



BATTING TEE APPARATUS

BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

Batting tees are known in the prior art and have been used in Little Leagues in the playing of the game of baseball. In such use, most of the rules of the game of baseball are observed, but a notable exception is that the pitcher does not throw the ball toward the batter and this has two beneficial effects. First, the pitching arm of a very young player is not developed to the point where it will withstand the rigors of pitching. Many arm problems have been developed by youngsters who tried to emulate the professional players. Secondly, ball control is difficult for a young pitcher and oft times a batter is hit by a pitched ball. In use of batting tees, instead of the pitcher throwing the ball, he merely assumes a fielding relationship around the pitcher's mound, and the catcher places the ball on the batting tee for the batter to hit.

In the prior art known to me, the batting tees are usually connected to home plate and thus present a hazard when a runner from third base attempts to score. Further, such prior art tees are not designed to combine light weight with sturdiness and stability. My invention provides a batting tee that has been engineered to provide the utmost in safety to the players, and to withstand the rigors of play.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

In the drawing accompanying this description and forming a part of this application, there is shown, for purpose of illustration, an embodiment which my invention may assume, and in this drawing:

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of my improved batting tee apparatus, showing a player in process of striking a ball supported on the tee,

FIG. **2** is an enlarged, longitudinal sectional view of the apparatus, with the ball support shown in full,

FIG. **3** is an enlarged, broken sectional view of the ball support, and

FIG. **4** is an enlarged, fragmentary sectional view of a detail.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

My improved batting tee apparatus comprises a base **10**, preferably formed of metal, such as cast aluminum. As seen in FIGS. **1** and **2**, the base is preferably round in plan view and slightly dished to provide an annular, rounded lower edge **11**. The base may be webbed, as shown at **12**, to reduce mass, and is formed with a central, upstanding socket **14**. The rounded corners of the base provide a safe support since it eliminates all dangerous sharp edges that might produce injuries. The base formed as shown in the drawing provides a lightweight support for the tee, and uniform stability in every direction.

Secured in the socket **14** is the lower end of a tube **15** which is preferably formed of aluminum tubing to provide a light-weight but rigid post. A set screw **16** is threaded through the wall of the socket **14** and against the wall of the tube **15** to hold the latter securely attached to the base **10**. The set screw is of the socket head type and of a length so that its outer end does not extend outwardly of the socket **14** to thereby remove another element of injury.

A bushing **17** is disposed within the upper end of the tube **15** to provide for trouble-free sliding movement of a second aluminum tube **18** which is telescopically received within the tube **15**. As seen in the drawing, the tube **15** preferably has a greater wall thickness than the tube **18**. The bushing **17** is preferably formed of bronze and has a press fit with the interior of the tube **15** so that it is firmly anchored therein. As best seen in FIG. **4**, the lower end of tube **18** has an out-turned flange **19** which has a sliding fit with the inner wall of tube **15** and thus steadies the lower end of tube **18**. A thumb screw **20** is threaded through the tube **15** and bushing **17** and its inner end bears against the wall of tube **18** to hold the latter in adjusted vertical position.

A resilient ball support **21** is disposed at the upper end of tube **18** and it has been found preferable to form this support of molded natural rubber. The support is designed to provide maximum ball exposure and positioning, and the required resilience to withstand repeated impact of the bat with the ball, or in cases of misses, the bat with the support.

As best seen in FIGS. **2** and **3**, the support **21** comprises a lower end **22** adapted to have a close and gripping fit within the upper end of the tube **18**. To assist in insertion of the lower end **22** within the tube **18**, a tapered pilot **23** is formed at the lower extremity. The lower end **22** is hollow, as shown at **24**, so that it will be slightly compressed during insertion into the tube **18** and will thereafter expand into gripping relation with the tube wall. A plurality of annular grooves **25** are formed in the lower end **22** to provide gripping edges for firm engagement with the inner wall of the tube **18**.

A rounded annular flange **26** is formed intermediate the ends of the ball support **21** to engage the upper end of the tube **18** and limit insertion of the lower end **22** into the tube. Upwardly of the flange **26**, the support is in the form of a relatively long, narrow neck **27** which tapers gradually to a slightly enlarged size, as at **28**, where it is integrally joined to a flaring upper end **29**. A conical recess **30** is formed inwardly of the upper end **29** to provide optimum ball support and a view of the ball B with a minimum of lip exposure so as not to interfere with the flight of the batted ball. It will thus be seen that the ball support **21** provides a long, narrow silhouette to give the ball a greater dimension of exposure to the view of the batter.

As seen in FIG. **1**, the diameter of the base **10** is less than the width or length of home plate H and since the base **10** merely rests on home plate it may be easily moved to various positions therein to simulate various inside and outside pitches. Since the base **10** has uniform stability in every direction, the batting tee apparatus will not be easily overturned in the event the batter misses the ball and strikes the rubber ball support **21**, and the resiliency of the latter will absorb the shock of the swing without imparting any shock of the blow to the batter. Further, since the entire tee apparatus is of light weight, it may be easily brushed aside and out of the way of a runner attempting to score from third base, and therefore prevent injury to the runner. In the event that the wing screw **20** is not adequately tightened, the flared end **19** of the tube **18** will prevent the latter from being inadvertently withdrawn from the tube **15**. In this respect, it should be noted that the tube **18** is assembled by moving its upper end through the lower end of the base **10** and tube **15**.

My improved tee apparatus may be used in the customary manner in game play, or it may be used out of play so that an instructor, knowledgeable in the skill of hitting a baseball, may instruct a novice to become a good hitter.

I claim:

1. An improved batting tee comprising:

a base member adapted to rest upon a surface and free of attachment thereto, said base member having gently rounded edges about its periphery to minimize injury to a person in the event of upset thereof, and having an upstanding tubular socket thereon,

a first upstanding tube having its lower end received in said socket and detachably secured therein,

a tubular bushing affixed within said tube adjacent the upper end thereof, said bushing providing an aperture of lesser internal diameter than said tube,

a second upstanding tube telescopingly received within said first tube and slidably engaged with said bushing, said second tube having enlarged means at the lower end thereof to prevent upward movement of said second tube past said bushing,

thumbscrew means releasably locking said tubes in adjusted telescoped position, and, an upright ball support comprising a solid rod of resilient material having a ball-receiving pocket at its upper end, a tapered lower end for frictional insertion into said second tube, said ball support adjacent said tapered lower end thereof being provided with a plurality of peripheral grooves therein to enhance frictional engagement of the ball support with said second tube when inserted therein, an outwardly extending flange thereon adjacent said lower end and having a diameter greater than that of said second tube for limiting the insertion of said ball support into said second tube.

2. The improved batting tee of claim 1 wherein said base member is further provided with a plurality of apertures therein to reduce the weight thereof the edges of said apertures being gently rounded so as to eliminate sharp edges therefrom.

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