Dec. 5, 1961 V. M. WILKINSON 3,011,734

WATER SKI HANDLE AND REEL FOR ROPE

Filed Sept. 24, 1959

Fig. 1

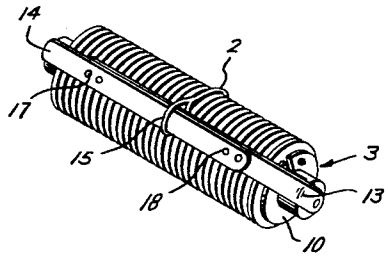


Fig. 2

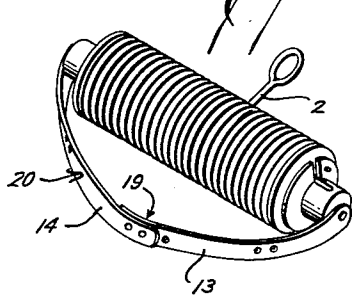


Fig. 3

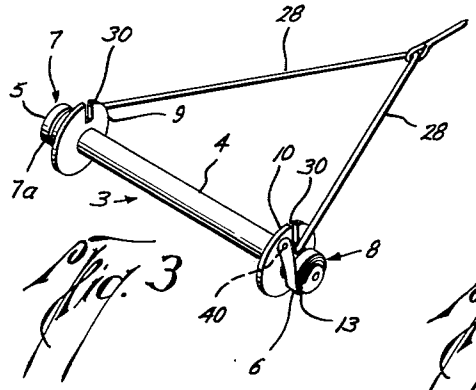


Fig. 4

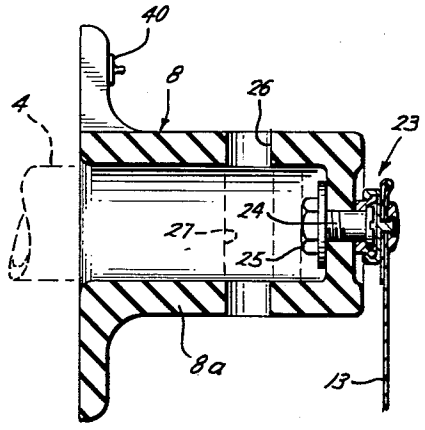


Fig. 5

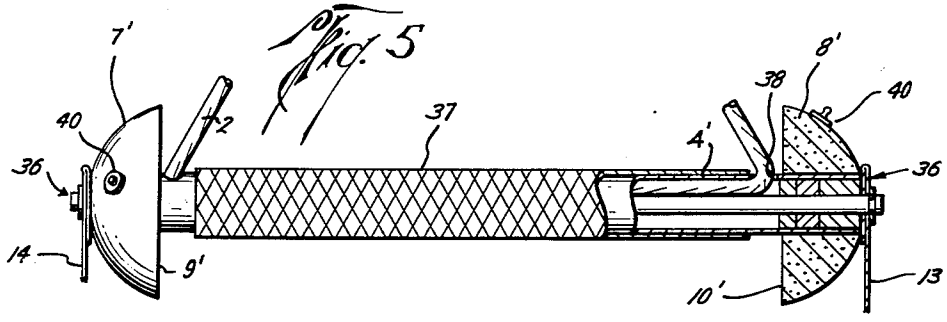
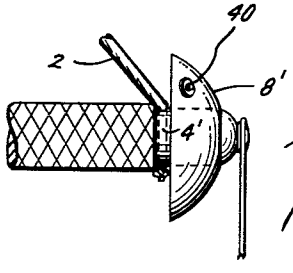


Fig. 6



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WATER SKI HANDLE AND REEL FOR ROPE

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8 Claims. (Cl. 242—96)

The present invention relates to a water ski handle and reel for the tow rope between a boat and a water skier pulled thereby.

At the present time, in water skiing, a great deal of difficulty is encountered by reason of the tow rope becoming fouled in the propeller of the tow boat as the rope is played out to a suitable length to position the water skier a desired distance in relation to the tow boat. The present invention is directed to a device which serves the dual purpose of functioning as a handle which may be connected to a ski rope whereby the skier can be pulled along behind a tow boat, the handle also functioning as a reel whereby the ski rope can be unreeled to thereby aid in inhibiting the tow rope from becoming fouled in the propeller of the boat.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a ski handle construction of relatively simple design which incorporates means whereby the handle functions as a reel to unreel the line which tows the skier whereby fouling of the tow rope is inhibited.

Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become more readily apparent from the consideration of the following description and drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing the handle of the present invention when the tow line or tow rope is wrapped on the handle when not in use;

FIG. 2 is a view somewhat similar to FIG. 1 but illustrates the handle in position when ready for unreeling of the rope;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view showing the ski handle with the ski rope unreeled;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged sectional view of one of the members on one end of the ski handle and illustrating the ski handle in dotted lines;

FIG. 5 is a side view of another form of the ski handle; and,

FIG. 6 is a partial view of a ski handle showing an alternate means of securing the ski rope to the ski handle.

Attention is directed to FIG. 1 of the drawings wherein it will be noted that a ski rope **2** is illustrated as being reeled on the handle designated generally at **3**. When the rope **2** is reeled on the handle **3** as illustrated in FIG. 1 of the drawings, the ski rope can be easily stored when not in use.

In FIG. 3 of the drawings, the ski handle designated generally at **3** is shown as including a tubular elongated body **4** which is provided at each of its ends **5** and **6** with members **7** and **8** thereon. The members **7** and **8** include tubular body portions **7***a* and **8***a* and annular and radially extending portions **9** and **10** integrally formed on each of the body portions **7***a* and **8***a* and which define shoulders whereby the rope **2** may be reeled on the tubular body **4** of the handle **3** between the portions **9** and **10** as illustrated in FIG. 1 of the drawings.

When the rope is reeled on the handle as shown in FIG. 1, the straps **13** and **14** may be each positioned through the loop **15** in the end of the rope, and thereafter the straps **13** and **14** secured together by means of the snaps **17** and **18** which are located at suitable positions on each of the straps **13** and **14**. The straps **13** and **14** are each respectively swiveled at opposite ends of the tubular body **4** and when it is desired to unreel the rope, the straps **13** and **14** may be unsnapped and removed from the loop **15** and thereafter secured together by means of the snaps

adjacent each of their ends as illustrated at **19** in FIG. 2 whereby the straps **13** and **14** form a loop **20** for holding the tubular body **4** while the rope **2** is unreeled therefrom.

In FIG. 4 of the drawings the construction of the member **8** is illustrated in greater detail, and it will be noted that the member **8** is shown as including a tubular body **8***a* which is adapted to be telescopically and snugly received over one of the ends of the body **4** illustrated in the dotted line. The straps **13** and **14** are each swiveled at their respective ends at the adjacent end of the body **4** by any suitable means such as that illustrated at **23**. In the form of the invention illustrated in FIGS. 1–4, the straps are secured at each end of the body **4** by being swiveled to the outer end of the tubular body **8***a*. This permits free rotation of the body **4** relative to the loop **20** formed by the connected straps **13** and **14**. The swivel **23** is of a design well known in the art, and it is believed unnecessary to give a detailed description thereof. It may be secured by any suitable means such as the bolt **24** and nut **25** to the tubular body **7***a* and **8***a* of members **7** and **8**, whereby it may be easily replaced if and when necessary. An opening **26** is provided in the body **8***a*, and coincides with an opening **27** extending through the body **4** at each end thereof whereby a bridle **28** of the ski rope may be secured to the handle. When the rope **2** is to be reeled up on the body **4**, each side of the bridle may be fed through the groove **30** in the shoulder **9** and **10** of each of the members **7** and **8** and the rope thereafter reeled on the tubular body **4**. The construction of member **7** and its arrangement on the handle **4** is similar to that described with regard to the member **8**.

In FIG. 5 of the drawings another form of the tubular body **4** is illustrated wherein an elongated body **4′** is provided which has the semi-spherical members **7′** and **8′** thereon. It will be noted that each of the members **7′** and **8′** telescopically fit over each end of the tubular body **4′**, and are enlarged to provide a portion **9′** and **10′** respectively which define a shoulder whereby the ski rope illustrated at **2** may be reeled on the handle. In this form of the invention the straps **13** and **14** are swiveled directly to the handle as illustrated generally by the numerals **36** and permit free rotation of the tubular body **4** relative to the straps **13** and **14** when they are connected as previously described to form a loop **20** whereby the ski rope **2** may be unreeled. If desired, a suitable covering such as illustrated at **37** may be provided on the tubular body **4′** as shown in FIG. 5 of the drawings.

In FIG. 6 of the drawings, it will be noted that the ski rope **2** is connected through the body **4′** between the surfaces or shoulders **9′** and **10′**, whereas in the FIG. 5 modification the rope **2** is illustrated as extending through openings **38** in the body **4′** between the surface portions **9′** and **10′** and extending along the hollow body **4′**.

When the rope is unreeled and it is then desired to use the handle **4** whereby a water skier may be towed along on the surface of the water, the straps **13** and **14** may be wrapped around the members **7** and **8** as illustrated in FIG. 3 of the drawings and secured with snap means **40** to hold them in position until it is desired to reel the rope on the handle **4**. Snap means **40** are also provided on members **7′** and **8′** as shown in FIGS. 5 and 6.

As previously noted, a great deal of difficulty has been encountered in water ski tow lines in that the tow lines become fouled in the propeller of the boat as the tow line is played out to position the water skier behind the boat. The present invention overcomes this problem in that the loop **20** formed by the connected straps **13** and **14** may be positioned on the shoulder or engaged with the arm of the water skier and as the water skier moves

rearwardly of the boat, the line may be kept taut, or at least up out of the surface of the water and away from the vicinity of the propeller to thereby inhibit fouling of the line.

Of course, the handle body 4 while being referred to as tubular, may be formed of a solid rod, as shown in FIG. 6. Additionally, the handle construction of the present invention enables the tow line to be stored directly on the handle when not in use.

It should be noted that the members 7 and 8 of the present invention are particularly suited for use with any ordinary water ski handle well known in the art. Such handles are usually made of wood and are relatively inexpensive. In using the members 7 and 8 with such a handle, the member 7 would be slipped or fitted on one end of the ski handle and the member 8 on the other.

If the ski tow rope or bridle is connected to the body 4 as shown in FIGS. 1–4 of the drawings, then of course, it will be disconnected when the members 7 and 8 are positioned on the ends of the body 4 and thereafter the bridle or rope will be secured through the members 7 and 8 and through openings 27 in the body. This will also aid in keeping members 7 and 8 on the body during use.

The portions 7*a* and 8*a* of the members 7 and 8 may be constructed of rubber or other suitable material which would fit tightly on the ordinary ski handle, and which will be buoyant in water to help keep the handle afloat when it falls in the water.

Broadly, the present invention relates to a ski handle, and more particularly to a water ski handle which functions also as the reel for unreeling the rope and for storing it when not in use.

What is claimed is:

1. A water ski rope handle and reel including an elongated body, an annular enlargement on each end of said body defining a space therebetween for reeling and storage of ski rope, flexible straps swiveled at each end of said body, snaps secured on each of said straps whereby they may be connected together to form a loop, opening means in said body for connecting a ski rope on said body, said straps and loop formed thereby cooperating with said body to permit unreeling of the ski rope as the user moves away from a boat to inhibit fouling of the ski rope and snaps secured on each of said annular enlargements whereby said flexible straps may be secured thereto when the rope is unreeled.

2. A water ski handle and reel for storage and unreeling of ski rope including an elongated body which may be grasped by a water skier, a rope connected to said body whereby the skier may be towed by a boat, a bridle for connecting said rope to said body, a member positioned at each end of said elongated body and having a portion thereon defining an annular shoulder whereby the ski rope may be reeled up on said body between said shoulders, said elongated body having an opening in each end thereof for receiving one end of said bridle, each of said members positioned at each end of said elongated body having an opening therein coinciding with one of said openings in each end of said elongated body also for receiving one end of said bridle, and means permitting the ski rope to be unreeled as the skier moves to position behind the boat to thereby inhibit fouling of the ski rope.

3. A water ski handle and reel for storage and unreeling of ski rope including an elongated body which may be grasped by a water skier, a rope connected to said body whereby the skier may be towed by a boat, a member positioned at each end of said elongated body and having a portion thereon defining an annular shoulder whereby the ski rope may be reeled up on said body between said shoulders, means permitting the ski rope to be unreeled as the skier moves to position behind the boat to thereby inhibit fouling of the ski rope, and said means including, straps swiveled at each end of said body, snaps secured on said straps whereby said straps may be connected together to form a continuous band from one end of said body to the other, said band enabling said body to rotate relative thereto whereby the ski rope may be unreeled, and additional snaps on said members at each end of said body whereby said straps may be secured thereto when the rope is unreeled.

4. The combination recited in claim 3 wherein said members at each end of said body telescopically engage said body and wherein the ski rope extends therethrough, and said shoulders on said members having openings therein whereby the ski rope may be reeled on said body between said shoulders.

5. The combination recited in claim 3 wherein the ski rope is secured to said body between said shoulders.

6. An adapter to be positioned on each end of a water ski handle including a tubular body, an annular radially extending enlargement on one end of said body, a flexible strap swiveled at one end of said body and adapted to be wrapped around said body, and snaps secured on said flexible strap whereby said strap may be connected to a similar flexible strap whereby a loop may be formed.

7. The structure recited in claim 6, including opening means in said tubular body adapted to coincide with an opening means in the water ski handle for connecting a ski rope on said body.

8. The structure recited in claim 2, wherein each of said annular shoulders has a groove therein adapted to receive one side of said bridle whereby said bridle may be fed through said groove and said bridle may be reeled on said elongated body.

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