United States Patent

Rogers

[15] **3,689,069**

[45] **Sept. 5, 1972**

[54] AMUSEMENT DEVICE

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[22] Filed: **Oct. 21, 1970**

[21] Appl. No.: **82,754**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/85 R**

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63f 7/06**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/85 G, 85 B

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

An amusement device for providing entertainment and testing one's skill in tossing a ball through a basket. The device has a smooth, hard, playing board with markings resembling a miniature basketball court and baskets are provided at each end of the court. The playing board is surrounded on all sides by walls which slope downwardly from each end of the playing board to a minimum height at the middle of the playing board so that a player standing outside the walls and executing a toss from behind selected limit marks which marks entered over the top edges of the walls, may toss the ball for the basket and bounce the ball at prescribed areas on the playing board and through the basket. The ball remains on the playing board if the player has exercised the necessary skill.

9 Claims, 3 Drawing Figures

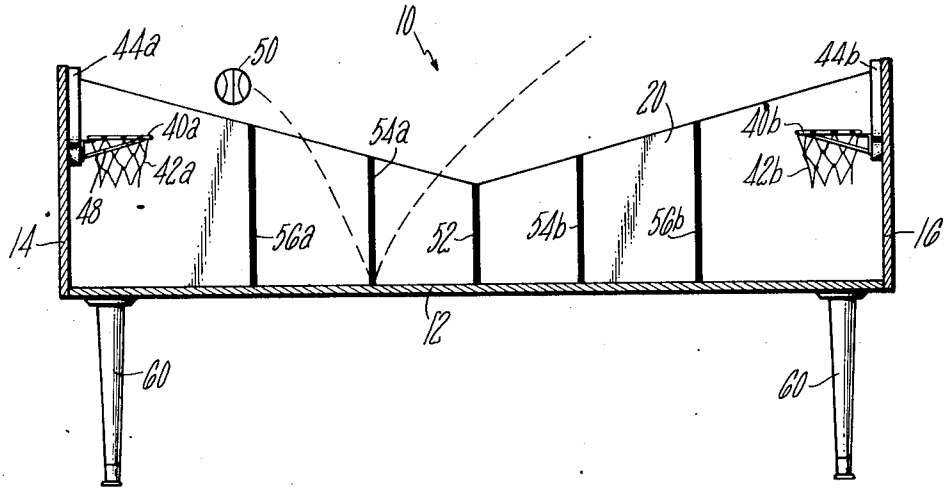


FIG. 1

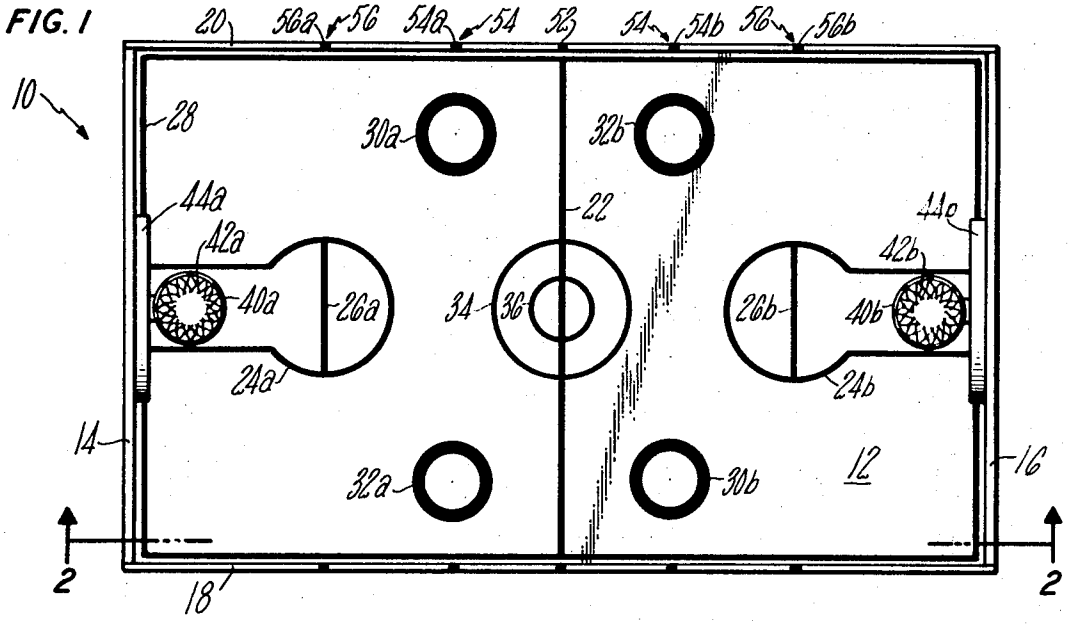


FIG. 2

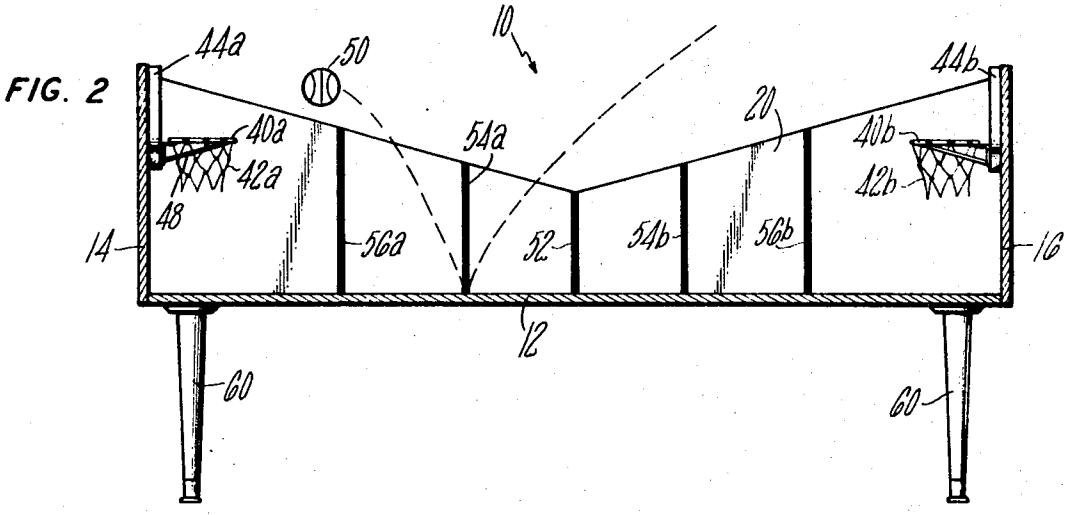
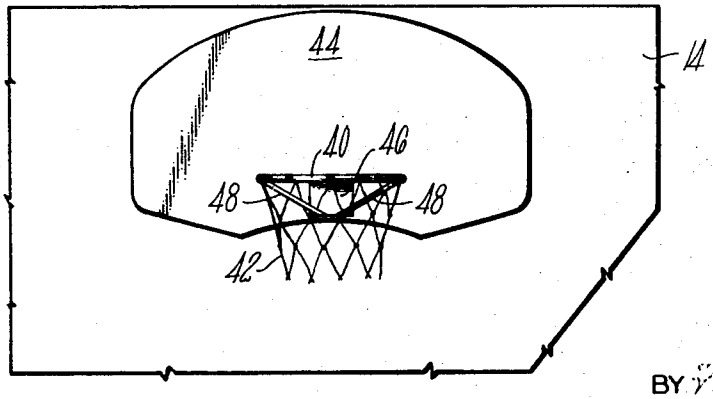


FIG. 3



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AMUSEMENT DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates to the field of amusement devices and is more particularly concerned with recreational games of skill in which a number of players attempt to manipulate a ball through a basket to accumulate points.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Amusement devices employing a ball and a basket and in which the object of the game is to throw the ball into the basket are already known in the prior art. U.S. patents disclose amusement devices in which players combine their skill with chance to maneuver a ball between the ends of a court where scoring baskets are positioned. In each case points are accumulated by a player whenever he manages to propel the ball through the air into the basket. After each player or team has had an equal number of opportunities to score points, the player or team accumulating the largest number of points is considered to be the winner.

In these prior art devices, however, the ball is propelled by means of a mechanical device operated by a player. In such amusement devices the actual skill of the player relates more directly to his ability to operate the mechanical device rather than his ability to maneuver the ball itself. In addition, where a mechanical device is employed to project the ball toward the basket, a throw is always subject to the inadequacies or inaccuracies of the mechanical device itself and therefore a true comparison of the player's skills cannot be achieved. Still further, the actual enjoyment of the game may be interferred with due to the inaccuracies or malfunctioning of the mechanical devices themselves which are in fact unrelated to the true abilities of the players.

It is accordingly an object of the present invention to disclose an amusement device which truly tests the skill of a player in passing a ball through a hoop.

It is a further object of the present invention to disclose an amusement device in the form of a table basketball apparatus.

It is a further object of the present invention to disclose a game apparatus which tests the skill of the participants in manipulating a ball without the use of a mechanical projecting device.

It is still a further object of the present invention to disclose an amusement device employing a resilient ball and gaming board to test the skill of a plurality of players.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to an amusement apparatus which permits a number of players to participate in a table-type basketball game. The device has a smooth uninterrupted playing board which bears markings resembling a miniature basketball court and scoring baskets are mounted at each end of the court. The playing board is completely enclosed by end walls, from which the baskets are supported, and side walls extending the full length of the court and connecting with the end walls.

The playing board, in addition to the conventional court markings, also contains a second set of markings consisting of a plurality of areas to be employed by the players in bouncing a resilient ball from the playing board through the baskets at the ends of the court. In conjunction with the plurality of areas, the side walls bear a third set of markings which have a preselected relationship with the plurality of areas to limit the movements of the players when executing shots for the basket.

While the court markings resemble the markings of a minature basketball court, the baskets and the resilient ball are not correspondingly reduced in scale and are, in general, substantially oversized with respect to the playing court. In addition, the baskets are mounted to the end walls by means of backboards which are employed by the players to deflect balls into the baskets. The backboards, like baskets, are oversized in comparison to the reduced scale of the court markings.

In cooperation with the end walls, the side walls are specially shaped to retain the resilient ball on the playing board with a minimum of interference to the players during the game. To this end, the side walls and the end walls have the same height at their junction near the corner of the playing board; however, near the middle of the playing board, the side walls have a reduced height.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The novel amusement device with its numerous objects and advantages will be better understood by reference to the following drawings in which the same elements bear the same reference numerals throughout the several figures.

FIG. 1 is a plan view of the amusement device showing the markings on the playing board and along the top edge of the side walls.

FIG. 2 is a sectional view of the amusement device showing the limit marks on the side walls and their relationship to the baskets at the ends of the playing board.

FIG. 3 is a view showing the inside surface of an end wall to which a backboard and basket are mounted.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIGS. 1 and 2 disclose the general configuration and arrangement of the amusement device for playing a realistic game of table basketball. The amusement device, generally designated by the numeral **10**, is a box-like structure formed by a playing board **12**, end walls **14** and **16** and side walls **18** and **20**. In order to form the box-like structure, the end walls **14**, **16** and the side walls **18**, **20** are connected to the playing board **12** and to each other at the abutting faces. If the walls and board **12** are constructed from a fiberous material such as plywood, the joints may be formed by means of screws and glue. If desired, the joints may be morticed to improve the rigidity of the structure. A molding strip may be added to the exposed edges of the structure to protect the players at the otherwise sharp edges of the structure and also to improve the general appearance of the structure. While wood is suggested as one material from which the playing board and walls may be constructed, it is contemplated that other materials such as a fiber board, press board, metal, plastic or composition material can be used for the playing board **12** and walls **14**, **16**, **18** and **20**.

The playing board **12** has a playing surface which is smooth, hard and uninterrupted throughout, that is, there are no mechanical devices mounted on the surface or projecting through apertures in the board for the purpose of deflecting a ball in play. The surface of board **12** bears markings which closely resemble those found on a conventional basketball court. For example, a midcourt line **22** divides one end of the court from the other. Each end of the court contains a key line **24** and a foul line **26**. (Letter subscripts *a* and *b* are appended to the reference numerals wherever necessary to distinguish between corresponding elements at opposite ends of the court.) A boundary line **28** circumscribes the entire playing board.

In addition to the miniaturized basketball court markings, the playing surface of the board **12** also bears a plurality of areas marked by circles **30, 32, 34** and **36**. The circles may have different colors to identify particular areas to be used by the players at different times in the course of playing the table basketball game. In one form of the game, the circles identify areas which must be hit with a ball as the player attempts to bounce the ball from the playing floor into a basket for various bounce shots which are defined by the positions of the circle markings.

A basket hoop **40** from which a net **42** is suspended is secured to backboard **44** and mounted to each of the end walls **14** and **16**. The hoop **40** is a metal hoop which projects outwardly from the backboard **44** over the playing surface of the board **12**. As seen in FIG. **3**, the hoop **40** can be mounted to the backboard **44** by means of a bracket **46** secured to the backboard **44** by metal bolts and nuts. The hoop **40** is maintained in a generally perpendicular position with respect to the backboard **44** by means of supporting braces **48** from the lower portion of the bracket **46**. The hoop **40** is connected to the backboard **44** at a central position near the lower edge of the backboard **44** so that the players may make backboard shots in their attempt to score points.

The netting **42** is affixed to the hoop **40** by metal loops depending from the hoop and is opened at the depending end so that a ball can fall through the hoop and net when a shot is successfully made.

With reference again to FIGS. **1** and **2**, it will be noted that the hoops **40** and ball **50** are not to the scale of the markings on the playing surface of board **12** but are on a mutually reduced scale of a standard basket and basketball. In particular, the hoops **40** and also the resilient playing ball **50** which may be either a special rubber ball or an air-inflated, leather-like ball, are proportionally scaled to size with respect to one another but are oversized in comparison to the court markings. This sizing is preferred so that the players can physically handle the ball **50** and execute shots for a basket without the use of special mechanical devices. As seen more clearly in FIG. **2**, the ball **50** may be tossed from a position outside of the box-like structure and bounced from the board **12** into the hoop **40**. The preciseness with which the ball is initially thrown by a player determines whether the ball will pass directly into the hoop **40** at the end of the playing board **12** or be deflected from the backboard **44** into the hoop **40**. The backboard **44** may be correspondingly oversized to deflect the ball **50** into the hoop **40**.

FIG. **2** shows the special construction of side wall **20**. Side wall **18** (not shown) has a similar construction. Side wall **20** has a height above the playing board **12** which varies depending upon the distance from the end walls. In particular, the side wall **20** at the midcourt position has its minimum height while the height at the junction of the wall **20** with an end wall is substantially equal to the height of the end wall. Between the midcourt and end wall positions, the top of the side wall **20** slants continuously between the two heights. The reduced height of the side wall **20** at its center position allows a ball to be retrieved by a player without undue interference and yet prevents a ball from bouncing off the playing surface provided that the player has exercised reasonable care and skill in tossing the ball for the basket or bouncing the ball **50** off of the playing surface. The greater height of the side wall **20** is provided adjacent the ends of the court since greater ball activity can be expected at such locations.

FIGS. **1** and **2** also disclose special limit marks **52, 54** and **56** on the inside and top surfaces of the side walls **18** and **20**. The limit marks serve the special function of prescribing limits beyond which a player may not execute a shot for the basket. For example, according to one set of rules, a player may not extend his reach beyond limit mark **56***b* laterally adjacent to foul line **26**b when executing a shot for his basket **40***a*. The limit mark **54** adjacent to circles **30** and **32** can be used as a limit for younger children and handicap players in playing the game. The line **54** gives the children and handicap players an advantage over other players in that they may extend their reach closer to the basket through which they are attempting to pass the ball. The limit mark **52** at midpoint along the court is used by all players when executing a free throw shot. It will therefore be understood that the limit marks **52, 54** and **56** have a preselected relationship to the markings on the playing board. The limit marks may be colored lines located on the inwardly facing surfaces of the side walls **18** and **20** (and also on the outward faces of walls **18** and **20** if desired).

As seen in FIG. **2** the playing board **12** is mounted on removable legs **60** or can be mounted on folding legs. The legs **60** elevate the entire amusement device **10** so that it may be positioned on a floor and the players may stand adjacent the device at either side wall or behind the end wall while attempting to make baskets. Alternately, the legs may be removed or folded and the device can be positioned on an elevated platform such as a table whereby the participants may remain seated or stand adjacent to or behind the table.

It will therefore be seen that the novel amusement device provides a means for testing the skill of the players in passing a ball through a basket without intervening mechanical devices which project or propel a ball through the air. The device simulates more realistically a true basketball game and also allows participation by people who might not otherwise have the physical capacity or conditioning to participate in a real basketball game.

It will, of course, be understood that various modifications and substitutions can be made to the various components disclosed in the amusement device. For example, the side walls with limit marks need not be positioned immediately adjacent the boundary line **28**

but may be disposed at a slightly greater distance away from the boundary line. The materials employed for constructing the walls and playing floor can be varied from those materials discussed above without destroying the essential purpose of the amusement device. Accordingly, the present invention has been described in a preferred embodiment by way of illustration rather than limitation.

What is claimed is:

1. An amusement device comprising:
a playing board having a smooth, hard, uninterrupted playing surface with a first set of markings thereon resembling a miniature basketball court and a second set of markings defining a plurality of areas located near the middle of the court;
end walls extending perpendicularly from the playing board at each end of the playing board;
hoops mounted respectively to each end wall, the hoops projecting inwardly over the miniature court at substantially right angles to the end walls;
side walls extending perpendicularly from the playing board at each lateral side of the board and between the end walls thereby enclosing the miniature court on all sides, the side walls having a third set of markings at preselected locations along the playing board; said markings extending over the top edges of said side walls; and
the side walls being the same height from the playing board as the end walls at the junction with the end walls and continuously inclining downwardly from said junction to the middle of the court, said walls at said middle being at a minimum height above said playing surface.

2. The amusement device of claim 1 wherein:
backboards are mounted respectively to each end wall on the inwardly facing side of the end wall at an elevated position above the playing board and centrally located with respect to the side walls; and
the hoops are mounted to the respective backboards on the end walls at a position centrally located on the lower portion of the respective backboard.

3. The amusement device of claim 1 wherein:
the hoops on each end wall are substantially oversized with respect to the first set of markings resembling the miniature basketball court; and
a resilient ball is included, the ball also being oversized with respect to the first set of markings and proportional in size to the hoop whereby the ball may pass freely through the hoop.

4. The amusement device of claim 3 wherein:
the second set of markings is comprised of a plurality of areas located at fixed stations on opposite sides of the midcourt mark; and
the third set of markings on the side walls are limit marks spaced along the side walls in preselected relationship to the fixed stations and the first set of markings.

5. The amusement device of claim 4 wherein:
at least one of the limit marks of the third set of markings is laterally opposite one of the fixed stations on the court.

6. The amusement device of claim 5 wherein:
the second set of markings additionally includes an area at the center of the court; and
another of the limit marks of the third set of markings is at the midcourt point on at least one of the side walls.

7. The amusement device of claim 5 wherein:
another of the limit marks of the third set of markings is intermediate the one limit mark and the adjacent end of the court.

8. The amusement device of claim 1 wherein:
a net material is suspended from each of the inwardly projecting hoops.

9. The amusement device of claim 1 wherein:
a plurality of removable legs are fastened to the playing board on the surface opposite the playing surface.

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