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(54) **CARRYING BAG CONTAINING A SEPARATE COMPARTMENT CONFIGURED TO CARRY A SPORTS PRODUCT**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

The invention relates to a carrying bag comprising a first compartment and a second compartment, separated from the first compartment. At least one of the first compartment and second compartment is configured to receive a sports product and contains an opening arranged for exposing a portion of said product to the outside world. The first compartment is arranged above said second compartment in a carrying position of the carrying bag. The invention also relates to a method of manufacturing such a carrying bag.

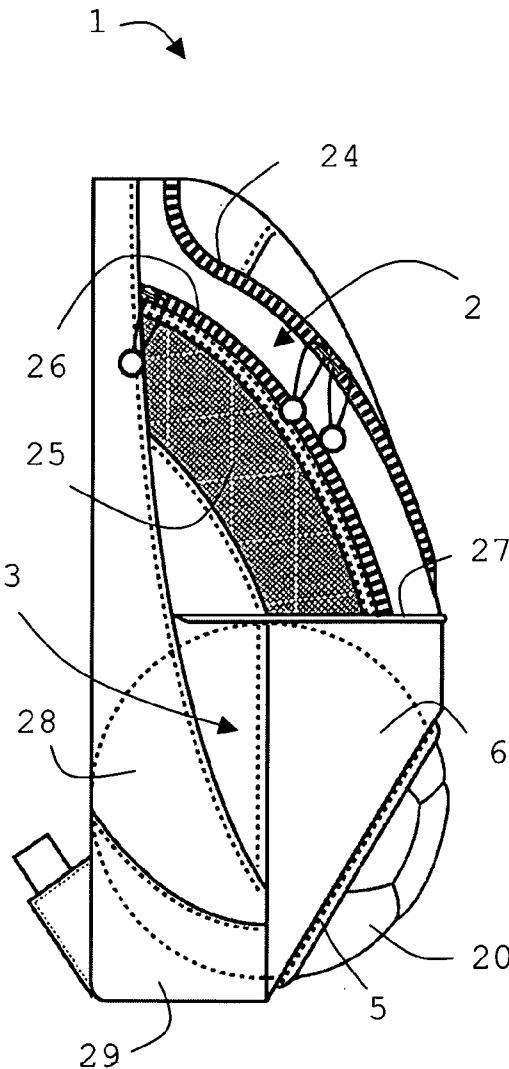
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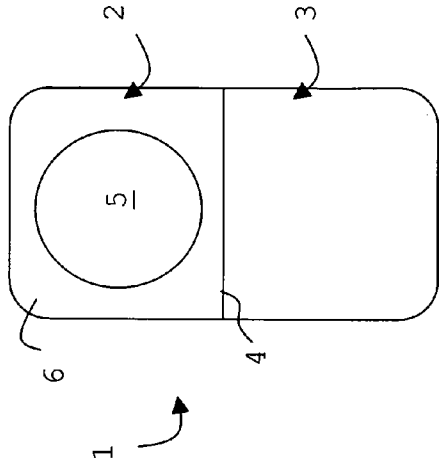


FIG. 1A

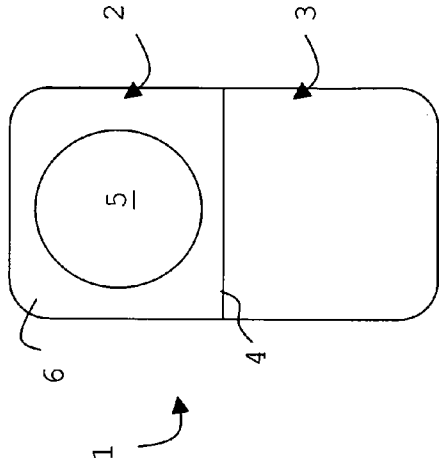


FIG. 1B

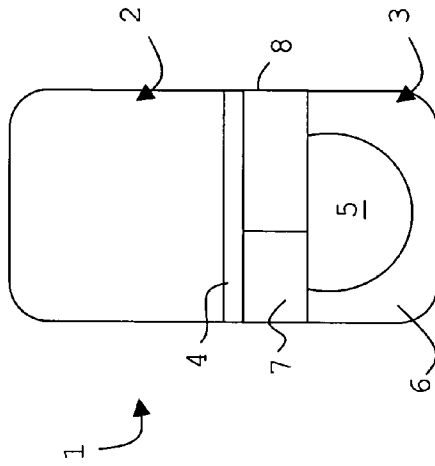


FIG. 1C

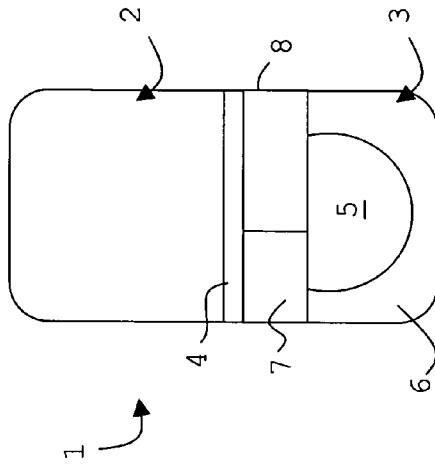


FIG. 1D

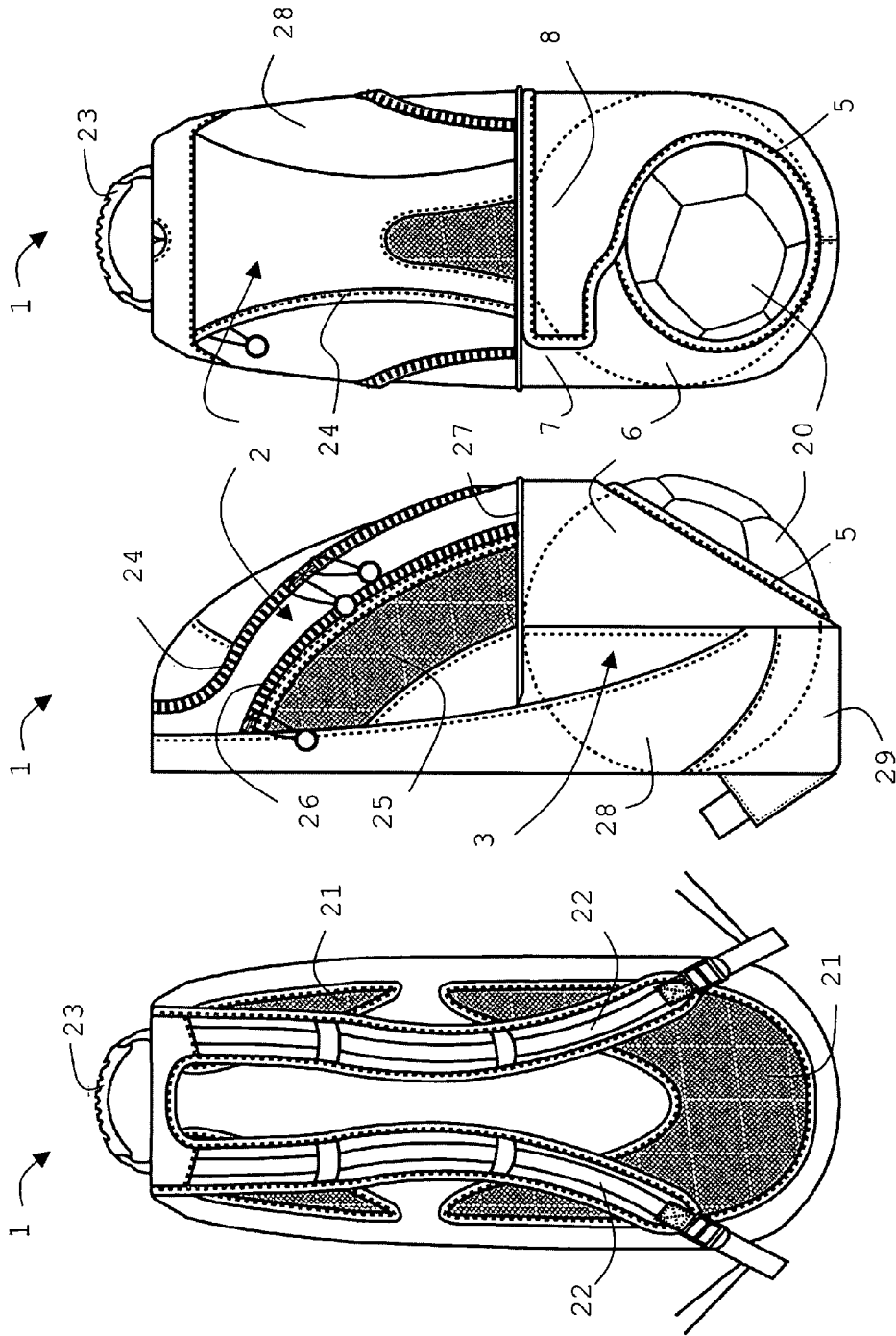


FIG. 2A

FIG. 2B

FIG. 2C

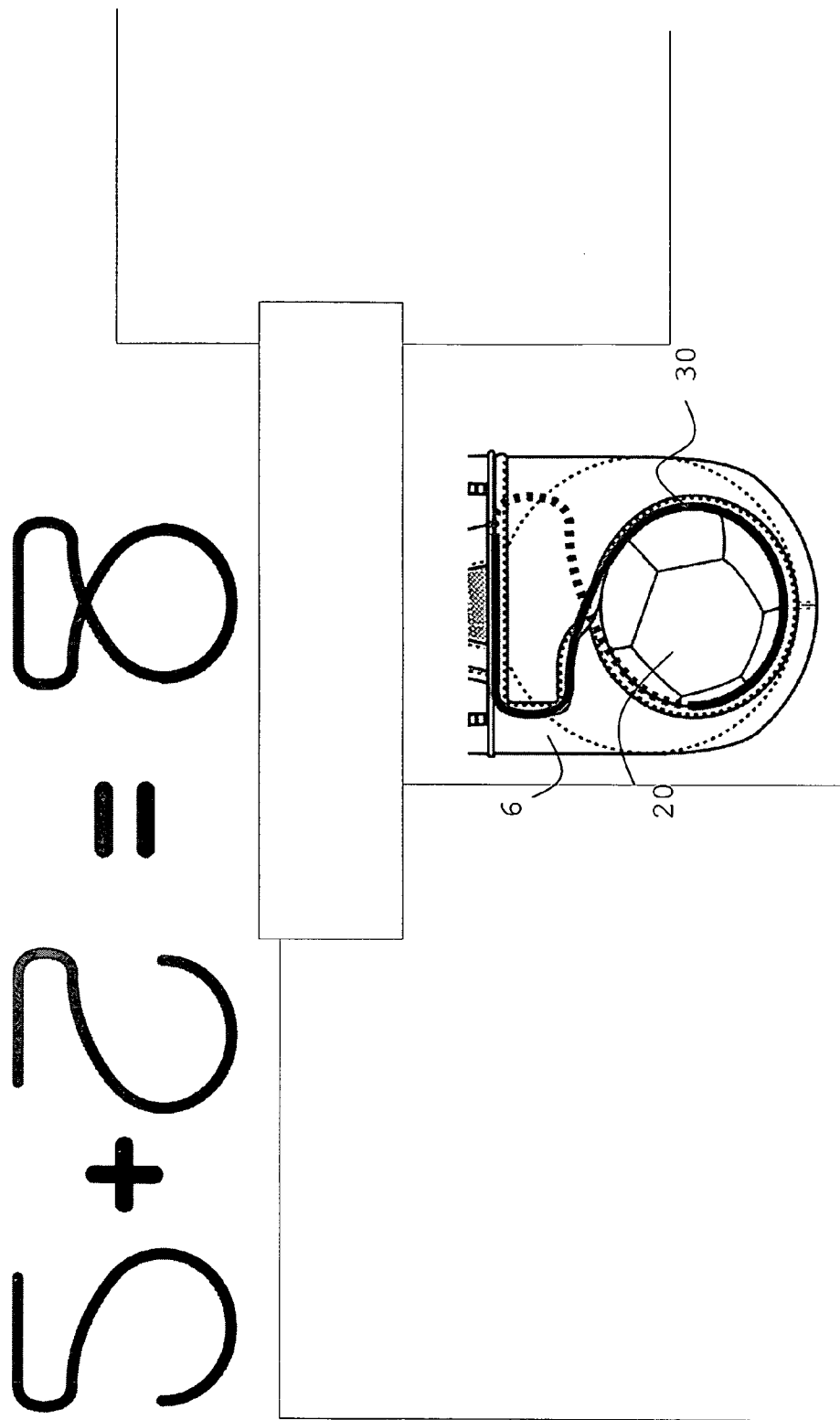


FIG. 3

**CARRYING BAG CONTAINING A SEPARATE
COMPARTMENT CONFIGURED TO CARRY
A SPORTS PRODUCT**

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] Generally, the invention relates to a bag containing a separate compartment for a product. More specifically, the invention relates to a carrying bag containing a separate compartment configured to carry a sports product.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Carrying bags have evolved from simple means used by a human for carrying objects to fashion articles that, apart from the primary function of carrying objects, must at least convey a user-desired appearance and image to others. This evolution has also been observed for carrying bags for sports products, such as sports balls.

[0003] Sports products, such as sports balls, have evolved to become fashion articles as well. The brand of a sports product is extremely relevant in particular circles. Also, the outer appearance of a sports product of a user has become relevant to convey a personal message or image to others. An example of a sports ball of which the outer appearance can be varied to a great extent is disclosed in US 2006/0229149. Therefore, a desire exists for a carrying bag that is not only fashionable in itself, but is also capable of showing the fashionable sports product when carrying the bag.

[0004] US 2006/0207900 discloses a bag for carrying a sports ball and other items. The bag has a ball compartment that is separate from other compartments and configured to receive and hold a sports ball. The ball compartment is adapted to conform to the shape of the sports ball. The ball compartment may be formed such that a portion of the sports ball is exposed to the outside world when carrying the bag. The ball compartment comprises a flexible net as a cover part.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] Although the prior art carrying bag fulfils some of the fashion requirements of users, the carrying bag suffers from problems relating to practical use of the bag.

[0006] It is an object of the invention to improve the practical use of a carrying bag while meeting the fashion requirement of exposure of at least a portion of the sports product to the outside world.

[0007] To that end, a carrying bag is proposed comprising a first compartment and a second compartment, separate from the first compartment. At least one of the first compartment and the second compartment is configured to receive a sports product. The compartment contains an opening such that, in use, a portion of said product is exposable to the outside world. The first compartment is arranged above said second compartment in a carrying position of the carrying bag.

[0008] In contrast with the prior art carrying bag having the compartments arranged beside each other in a carrying position of the bag, the first and second carrying bag are arranged over each other in this position. As a consequence of the vertical placement of the compartments, the manoeuvrability of a user carrying the bag is improved. Also, the arrangement of the compartments improves the weight distribution allowing the bag e.g. to stand upright when the bag is placed on the ground.

[0009] Moreover, a carrying bag is proposed comprising a first compartment and a second compartment. At least one of

the first compartment and second compartment is configured to receive a sports ball and contains an opening such that, in use, a portion of the sports ball is exposable to the outside world. The compartment configured to receive said sports ball contains at least a wall portion defining the opening and comprising a rubber material, preferably neoprene™.

[0010] The ball compartment of the prior art carrying bag contains a flexible net. Such a net is sensitive to damage, does not protect the sports product appropriately, has an unattractive appearance and does not fully embrace the sports product. Using a rubber material, such as a synthetic rubber material (e.g. neoprene™), improves the robustness, product protection security for the sports ball and attractive appearance of the of the compartment holding the sports ball.

[0011] The invention also relates to a combination of a carrying bag and a sports ball and to a method of manufacturing a carrying bag.

[0012] Further advantageous embodiments and advantages of the invention are defined in the dependent claims and the following description.

[0013] The invention will be further illustrated with reference to the attached drawings, which schematically show preferred embodiments according to the invention. It will be understood that the invention is not in any way restricted to these specific and preferred embodiments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] In the drawings:

[0015] FIGS. 1A-1D are schematic illustrations of the carrying bag according to different embodiments of the inventions, and

[0016] FIGS. 2A-2C illustrate a back profile, a side profile and a front profile, respectively, of a carrying bag carrying a sport ball according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0017] FIG. 3 illustrates a detail of the carrying bag of FIG. 2C.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] FIGS. 1A-1D are schematic illustrations of the carrying bag 1 according to different embodiments of the inventions. The carrying bags 1 are depicted in the carrying position and without carrying a sports product.

[0019] The carrying bag 1 of each of the embodiments comprises at least a first compartment 2 and a second compartment 3. It should be acknowledged that carrying bags 1 may have further compartments (not shown), that may either be directly accessible or accessible via one or both of the first and second compartments 2, 3.

[0020] The first compartment 2 and second compartment 3 are separated by an intermediate wall portion 4 and are separately accessible. This allows to store items in both compartments 2, 3 without interference. The compartment 2,3 that is configured for receiving a sports products contains an opening 5 through which this compartment can be accessed. The opening 5 may have a circular shape.

[0021] The first compartment 2 is arranged above the second compartment 3 in the carrying position of the carrying bag 1. As a consequence of the vertical placement of the compartments 2,3, the manoeuvrability of a user carrying the bag 1 is improved. Also, the arrangement of the compartments 2,3 improves the weight distribution allowing the carrying bag 1 e.g. to stand upright when it is placed on the ground.

[0022] One of the compartments 2, 3 is configured to receive a product, e.g. a spherical product. In the following paragraphs, it is assumed that the product is a sports ball. The sports ball may have spherical shape, such as a soccer ball, a volleyball or a basket ball, or a non-spherical shape, such as a rugby ball or an American football. It should be acknowledged, however, that a carrying bag wherein both compartments 2, 3 are configured to receive a sports product is within the scope of the invention.

[0023] The wall portion 6 of the compartment 2, 3 that is configured to receive the sports ball and that is visible in FIGS. 1A-1D may comprise a stretchable material, such as a synthetic rubber material. The material may e.g. be neoprene™. Neoprene is a trade name of Dupont for a family of synthetic rubber based on polychloroprene. Neoprene is used for a wide variety of applications, but is particularly known in sports environments for diving and surfing wetsuits. Neoprene is particularly advantageous for the present application of a carrying bag because of its ability to match the shape of a sports ball and its wear performance, flexibility, stretch ability, and product embracing performance.

[0024] The stretchable material wall portion 6 may be stitched to other panels of the carrying bag by means of an elastic binding, possibly in combination with a seesaw stitching pattern. This allows a better embracing of the sports product by the wall portion 6.

[0025] In FIG. 1A, the lower compartment 3 is configured to receive a sports ball. In this embodiment, the carrying bag 1 can be placed on the ground in an upright position when the lower compartment 3 carries a sports ball (not shown).

[0026] In FIG. 1B, the upper compartment 2 is configured to receive a sports ball. In this embodiment, the lower compartment 3 can be used for carrying more heavy items.

[0027] In FIGS. 1A and 1B, the opening 5 in the wall portion 6 has a circular shape. The diameter of the opening 5 is smaller than the diameter of the spherical sports ball for which the compartment 2 or 3 is intended. The stretchable nature of the material defining the opening 5 allows a user to enter the ball through the opening 5 in the ball receiving compartment 2, 3 while after introduction, the ball is contained in the compartment 2, 3.

[0028] In a more advantageous embodiment, the ball receiving compartment 2, 3 is provided with closing means 7, 8.

[0029] FIGS. 1C and 1D show an embodiment, wherein the closing means 7,8 are in an open state and in a closed state, respectively. In the open state of FIG. 1C, the ball receiving compartment 3 is accessible for introducing a sports ball into this compartment 3. The diameter of the opening 5 may be smaller or larger than the diameter of the sports ball. After introduction of the sports ball into the ball receiving compartment 3, the closing means 7, 8 are closed in order to hold the sports ball in the ball receiving compartment 3. This state will be discussed into more detail with reference to FIGS. 2B and 2C below.

[0030] The closing means 7, 8 in the embodiment of FIGS. 1C and 1D comprise extensions of the stretchable wall portion 6. The extensions 7, 8 form an integral part of the wall portion 6, such that material is used efficiently. The extensions 7, 8 overlap partly in the closed state.

[0031] If the stretchable wall portion 6 is attached to other panels of the carrying bag by means of an elastic binding, the stretching of the extensions 7, 8 is improved.

[0032] In the closed state of FIG. 1D, the closing means 7, 8 are attached by attachment means 9, 10 (shown in FIG. 1C). In FIGS. 1C and 1D, the attachment means 9, 10 comprise Velcro®. A Velcro® strip is also provided on the non-visible side of extension 7 in order to allow the extensions 7, 8 to overlap.

[0033] It should be acknowledged that the attachment means may, instead of or in addition to Velcro®, comprise other attachment means, such as buttons, straps, zipper(s) etc.

[0034] FIGS. 2A-2C illustrate a back profile, a side profile and a front profile, respectively, of the carrying bag 1 carrying a sports ball 20 according to the embodiment of FIGS. 1C and 1D. Identical reference numerals identify identical or similar parts of the carrying bag 1 in FIGS. 1C, 1D and FIGS. 2A-2C.

[0035] The entire perimeter of the sports ball 20 is shown in FIGS. 2B-2C by a dotted line. This dotted line does not necessarily indicate a particular shape of the ball receiving compartment 3 but indicates a typical space that the sports ball 20 will fill.

[0036] As most clearly visible in FIG. 2B, the wall portion 6 comprises a contour interrupted by the opening 5. The opening 5 is dimensioned such that, in a closed state of the closing means 7, 8, an outer surface of the sports ball 20 closes the opening 5 such that the contour of the wall portion 6 substantially matches and continues the outer surface of the exposed portion of the sports ball 20. In other words, the gradient of the outside contour in the vertical and horizontal direction of the carrying bag 1 in the position of FIG. 2B (the carrying position) including the sports ball 20 in the ball receiving compartment 3 varies substantially gradually. As a consequence, the exposed portion of the sports ball 20 does not protrude outside the natural contour of the carrying bag 1 which improves the manoeuvrability and safety of a user carrying the bag 1.

[0037] In FIG. 2A, a back profile of the carrying bag 1 is shown. The back side of the carrying bag comprises raised back pads 21 and straps 22 for carrying the bag 1. A mold grab handle 23 is provided for carrying the bag 1 in an alternative manner.

[0038] As shown in FIG. 2B, the compartments 2, 3 comprise various outer panels. Compartment 2 can be accessed by means of zipper 24. An additional compartment of pocket 25, accessible via a zipper 26 is provided on the compartment 2. A covered piping 27 with main material provides an outside mark of the intermediary wall 4 between the compartment 2 and the ball receiving compartment 3.

[0039] The panels on the outer side of the carrying bag 1 for the compartments 2, 3 comprise different materials. The panels are stitched together to form the carrying bag 1. As mentioned with respect to FIGS. 1A-1D, the wall portion 6 is made of neoprene™ including the extensions 7, 8 for closing the opening 5.

[0040] The neoprene™ wall portion 6 only encloses a portion of the ball receiving compartment 3. One or more other panels 28 defining the ball receiving compartment 3 comprise a fabric of e.g. Denim, Nylon, Polyester, PVC, Leather or another suitable material. This material may also be used for one or more panels of the upper compartment 2 to facilitate manufacturing and to achieve a unitary appearance for the carrying bag 1. The bottom 29 of the carrying bag 1 may be provided with a strong material, such as a bobble PVC base material or hard wearing Nylon or Polyester material, for supporting the carrying bag when it is placed on the ground.

[0041] FIG. 3 shows a detailed portion of the carrying bag 1 depicted in FIG. 2C. The detailed portion illustrates the manner wherein the sports ball 20 is wrapped in the carrying bag 1 wherein the extensions 7, 8 are in a closed state while a portion of the sports ball 20 is exposed. The wrap is obtained by the elastic binding 30 at the outer parts of the stretchable wall portion 6. In the closed state of the extensions 7, 8, the elastic binding 30 forms the virtual '8' wrap, as schematically illustrated in the upper part of FIG. 3. The lower half of the '8' shape creates the opening 5 to expose a portion of the sports ball 20 and the surrounding space/material aids the support and security of the sports ball/product.

1. A carrying bag comprising a first compartment and a second compartment, separated from the first compartment, wherein at least one of the first compartment and second compartment is configured to receive a sports product and contains an opening arranged for exposing a portion of said product to the outside world and wherein said first compartment is arranged above said second compartment in a carrying position of the carrying bag.

2. The carrying bag according to claim 1, wherein the sports product is a sports ball.

3. The carrying bag according to claim 1, wherein the second compartment is configured to receive and hold the sports product.

4. The carrying bag according to claim 1, wherein the opening is defined in a wall portion of the at least one of the first and second compartment configured to receive the sports product and wherein the wall portion comprises a stretchable material.

5. The carrying bag according to claim 4, wherein said stretchable material comprises rubber, preferably neoprene™.

6. The carrying bag according to claim 4, wherein the wall portion comprises at least one closing means configured to partially close said opening to hold said sports product in said at least one of said first and second compartment.

7. The carrying bag according to claim 6, wherein the closing means comprise extensions of said wall portion and wherein said extensions form an integral part of said wall portion.

8. The carrying bag according to claim 6, wherein said wall portion comprises a contour interrupted by said opening and said opening is dimensioned such that, in a closed state of said closing means, an outer surface of said sports product closes

said opening and such that the contour of said wall portion substantially matches and continues the outer surface of said exposed portion of said sports product closing said opening.

9. The carrying bag according to claim 6, wherein said carrying bag comprises an attachment structure for attaching said closing means.

10. The carrying bag according to claim 1, wherein one of the first and second compartments is configured to receive the sports product, said one compartment at the outside being formed from at least two materials forming different panels of said one compartment and wherein the other one of said compartments is formed at least partly from at least one of said two materials.

11. A combination of a carrying bag according to claim 1 and a sports ball.

12. A carrying bag comprising a first compartment and a second compartment, wherein at least one of the first compartment and second compartment is configured to receive a sports ball and contains an opening arranged for exposing a portion of the sports ball to the outside world and wherein the compartment configured to receive said sports ball at least contains a wall portion defining the opening and comprising a rubber material, preferably neoprene™.

13. The carrying bag according to claim 12, wherein the wall portion comprises extensions configured to partially close said opening to hold said sports ball and wherein said extensions are comprised of the same rubber material.

14. The carrying bag according to claim 13, wherein said rubber material is at least partially provided with elastic bindings forming a virtual '8' for wrapping said sports ball.

15. A method of manufacturing a carrying bag comprising the steps of:

stitching panels of said carrying bag in order to form at least a first compartment and a second compartment and wherein at least one of the first and second compartment is configured to receive a sports product and wherein said first compartment is arranged above said second compartment in a carrying position of the carrying bag, and

providing an opening such that a portion of said product is exposable to the outside world.

16. The method according to claim 15, wherein at least one of the panels comprises a rubber material, preferably neoprene™.

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