

Oct. 24, 1967

J. S. WARSEN
GOLF PRACTICE DEVICE

3,348,416

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5 Sheets-Sheet 2

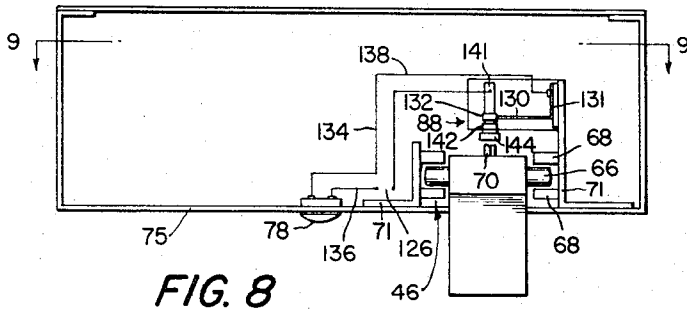


FIG. 8

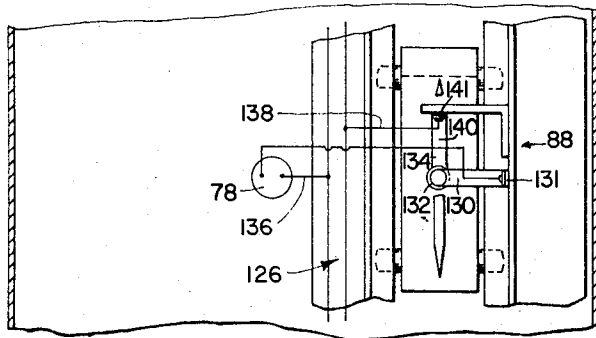


FIG. 9

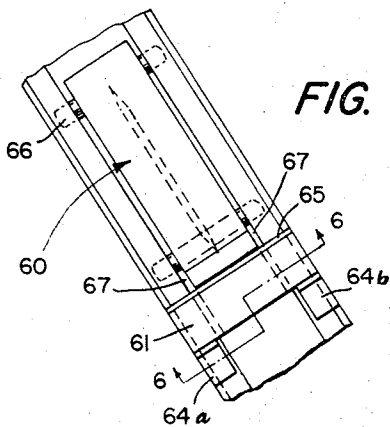


FIG. 5

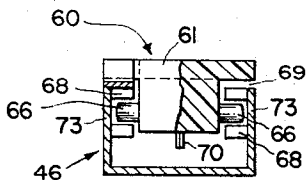


FIG. 6

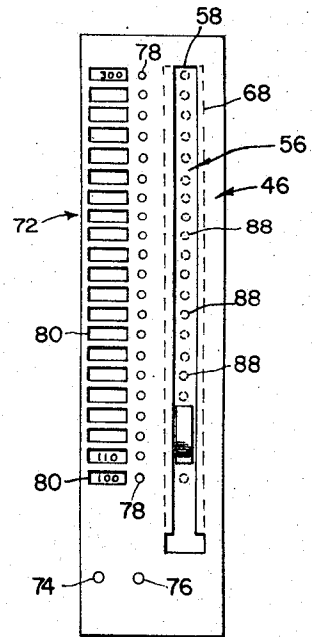


FIG. 7

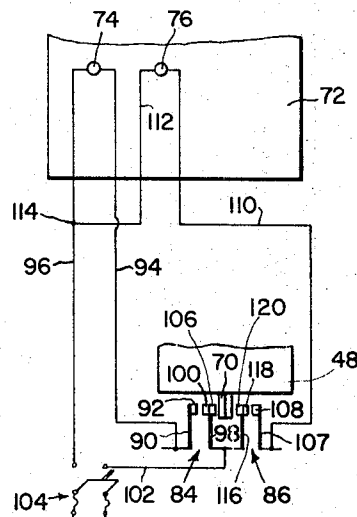


FIG. 10

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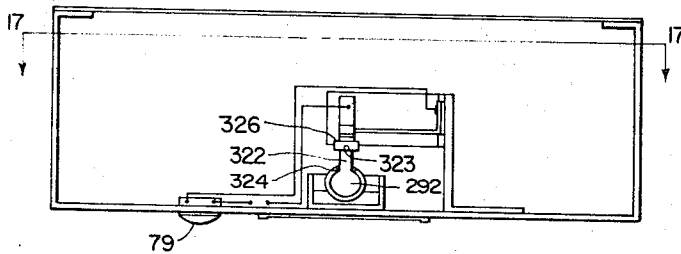


FIG. 16

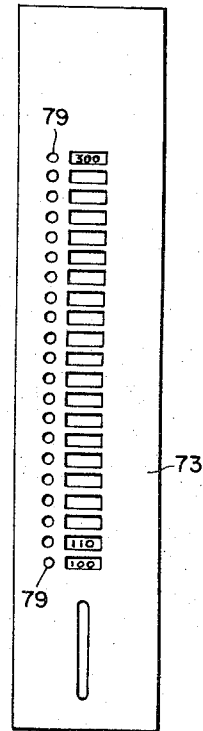


FIG. 15

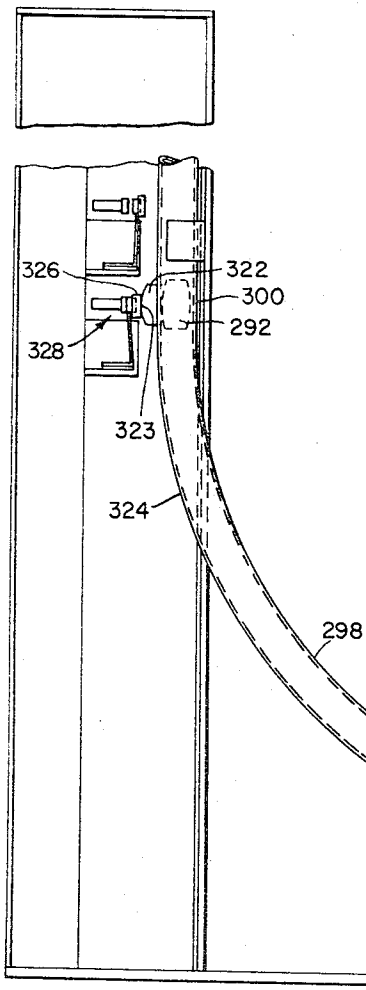


FIG. 17

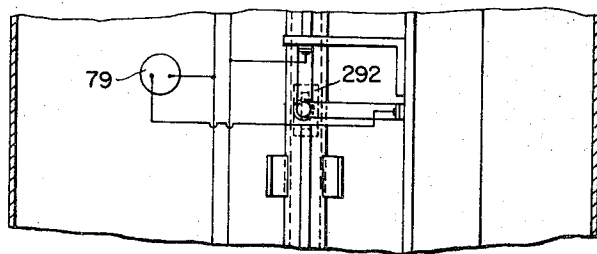


FIG. 14

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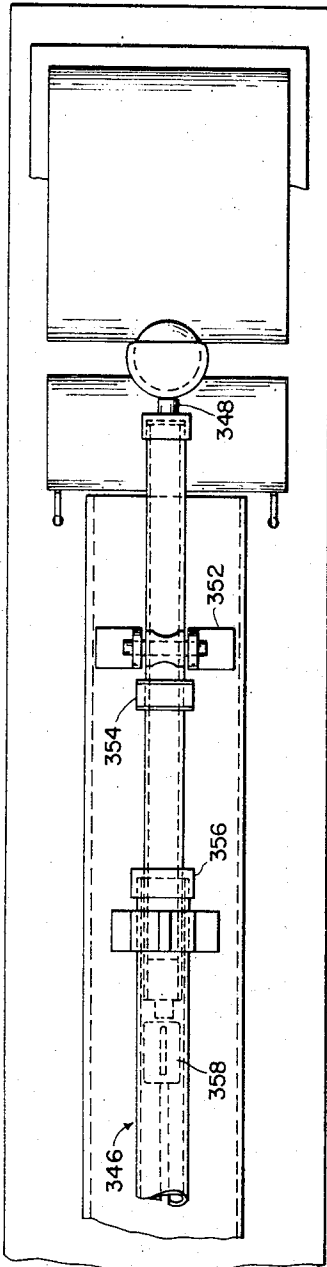


FIG. 19

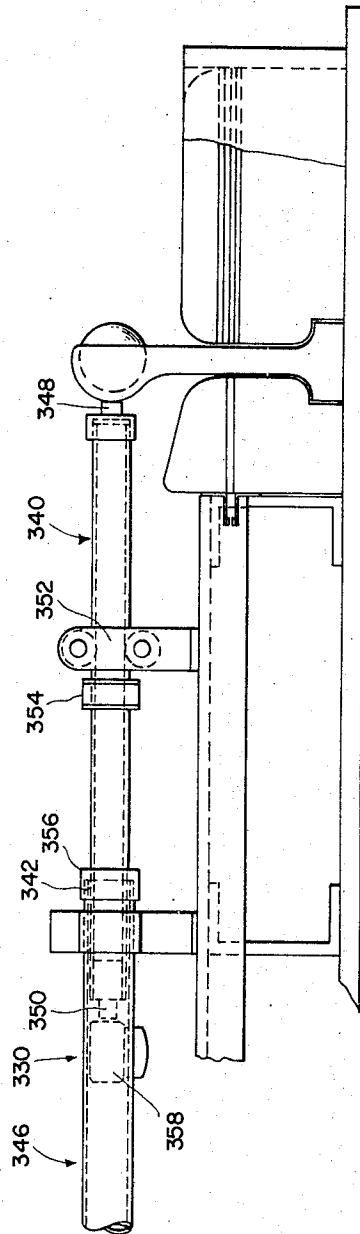


FIG. 18

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7 Claims. (Cl. 73—379)

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

This invention relates to golf practice devices in which there is a provision for tee means to provide a means for hitting a golf ball with a golf club in the usual manner, means to hold the golf ball captive and to contain it within an area of safety, means to record the probable movement of the golf ball as well as the probable distance to which it would have been hit if not held captive, and indicating means to indicate the direction and distance of the probable flight of the ball if not held captive. The means to record the probable movement of the golf ball comprise a track and a vehicle having contact means such as a keel adapted to contact various contact points along the track to operate the indicating means. The vehicle may also comprise cushioning means adapted to abut the captive golf ball at the tee end of the track.

The tee means provide a novel means for holding a golf ball in proper striking position together with resilient shock absorbing means to take up and diminish the excess force of the blow against the ball.

The recording and indicating means comprise a vehicle and track arrangement in one form of the invention, a keyboard arrangement in another form of the invention, and circular gauges operated either by electricity or pneumatically in other forms of the invention.

In some forms of the invention, the ball is struck and in turn strikes another component or vehicle to work the recording and indicating means, and in other forms of the invention, the ball and its carrier strike the recording and indicating means directly.

The principal information to be obtained from the use of the invention is the direction which the ball would have taken if not held captive; that is, straight, left or right, and the distance which the ball would have achieved if not held captive. It is not necessary in a device of this sort to actually pinpoint the exact spot where a ball would fall if not held captive in the device. It is sufficient and important, however, to know the distance which the ball would have achieved and also whether the ball went straight or generally to the right or to the left. All forms of the invention give substantially accurate indications of left, straight and right and distance, and provide devices which automatically reset themselves after each blow, ready for the next swing.

Each form of the invention provides a rugged, shock absorbing device simple to build and maintain and consistently accurate in its recording and indicating of the results of each strike against the ball.

The invention is illustrated in the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a side elevational view with parts cut away;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged side elevational view with parts cut away, being a continuation of the upper part of the device as shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a top plan view of the device of FIG. 1 with parts cut away;

FIG. 4 is a sectional view along the lines 4—4 in FIG. 3;

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FIG. 5 is a view taken from a position between top plan and front elevation of a portion of the device illustrated in FIG. 1 of the drawings, the arrows 5—5 in FIG. 1 designating the position of the view;

FIG. 6 is a sectional view taken along the lines 6—6 in FIG. 5;

FIG. 7 is a front elevation of the panel portion of the device;

FIG. 8 is an enlarged top plan view of the view shown in FIG. 7;

FIG. 9 is an enlarged rear elevation detail of the view taken along the lines 9—9 in FIG. 8;

FIG. 10 is a wiring diagram showing components illustrated in FIGS. 4 and 7;

FIG. 11 is an elevational view similar to FIG. 1 showing a second form of the device;

FIG. 12 is a sectional view along the lines 12—12 in FIG. 11;

FIG. 13 is a top plan view of a portion of the device shown in FIG. 11;

FIG. 14 is a side elevation of the second form of invention with parts cut away, being a continuation of that part of the device shown in FIG. 11;

FIG. 15 is a front elevation of a panel as used with the second form of the invention;

FIG. 16 is an enlarged top plan view of the panel of FIG. 15;

FIG. 17 is a view taken along the lines 17—17 in FIG. 16;

FIG. 18 is a side elevation of a third form of the invention;

FIG. 19 is a top plan view of the form of invention shown in FIG. 18.

Similar numerals refer to similar parts throughout the several views.

Referring now to FIGS. 1 through 10 of the drawings, I show a first form of the invention in which there is a tee means 40 comprising a flexible ball holding support means 42 to hold golf ball 44 in position ready for striking with a golf club (indicated by arrow A). Various forms of ball holding means such as means 42 which may be used as a part of the tee means 40.

Adjoining the tee means, I provide track means 46 on which a vehicle 48 is adapted to ride freely. The track means 46 may be level or pitched, and also may be straight or curved as desired. The only requirement is that the free riding vehicle 48 shall be returned to a position at the first end of the track means adjacent tee means 40 after each use of the device by some means or other. I prefer to use gravity means for this purpose, and I, therefore, provide, in the preferred forms of my device, that the track be either pitched or curved so that the free riding vehicle 48 will always seek the lowest end, such as the first end of the track means 46. Thus, the free riding vehicle 48 will be positioned at the first end of the track adjacent tee means 40 so that it may be moved away from said lowest end or first end 50 of track means 46 as a result of the user of the device striking the golf ball 44.

I may provide a cushion block 52 to soften the blow when ball 44 is struck and the force of the strike is transmitted from held ball 44 to vehicle 48 through cushion block 52. Cushion block 52 is mounted to a suitable portion of the main body portion of vehicle 48. Vehicle means 48 and track means 46 may be constructed of metal, plastic, wood or other suitable material.

In order to utilize the force of gravity to return vehicle 48 to its starting position adjacent tee means 40, I provide track means 46 with a curved intermediate portion 54 and a final substantially vertical portion 56. Thus, the first or starting end 50 of the track means 46 is the lowest end. The intermediate portion 54 is curved, and the final section of the track 56, ending in the second end 58, will be substantially higher than the first or starting end 50. After ball 44 is struck and vehicle 48 is moved along track 46, it will usually finish in a substantially vertical position between the intermediate portion 54 and the second end 58 somewhere on the final end portion 56 of the track 46.

An optional arrangement may be made to have vehicle 48 strike a second vehicle 60 somewhere along the track route 46, such as at point 62. The purpose of providing the optional second vehicle 60 is to provide a device with a shorter track footage since the action of first vehicle 48 striking second vehicle 60 will use up a certain amount of the force, and the combined travel of both vehicles 48 and 60 will be shorter than the track footage travel of a single vehicle. The second vehicle is indicated in FIG. 1 of the drawings at reference numeral 60, and it is understood that the construction of the second vehicle 60 is substantially the same as the construction of the first vehicle 48, and a suitable stop as indicated at reference numerals 64a and 64b will be provided to hold vehicle 60 in position against the force of gravity and to stop vehicle 60 on its return trip. Vehicle 48 (and in a similar construction, vehicle 60) are provided with sliding elements 66 adapted to fit between track guides 68 which are either mounted along or integral with the body portion 73 or support means 71 of the track means 46. Sliding elements 66 are preferably made of a metal, or plastic, and may comprise a wheel arrangement or any other type of means in conjunction with a track or a track guide which will permit a vehicle to ride freely.

Vehicle 48 is provided with keel means 70 which is located longitudinally in the fore and aft direction, preferably at the bottom of the vehicle, and is principally used as a contact engaging means to engage contacts in the recording and indicating portions of the device. Various contacts are positioned at various portions of the device to close circuit means to make indicating signals such as lights or other means operative in order to record and indicate to the user of the device the probable direction and probable distance which a ball would have achieved after being struck if not held captive by the device. The signal indicating means such as lights are positioned on a panel board 72 which may, for purposes of convenience and ease in the use of the device, be located alongside the final portion 56 of track means 46 as illustrated in FIGS. 7 and 8 of the drawings.

Vehicle 60 is provided with a cushion block 61 made of rubber or other resilient synthetic material. Block 61, at its upper portion, will hit stops 64a and 64b on the return trip. Stops 64a and 64b are outside of the pathway of the track and are spaced apart to permit cushion block 52 and its support 53 of vehicle 48 to pass between. The intermediate and lower portions of block 61 will be hit by forward end 63 of vehicle 48. The forward end 63 of vehicle 48, when used in a two-vehicle form of the invention, may be slanted slightly in order to hit block 61 squarely if the vehicles meet on a curve as shown in the drawings. At the forward upper end of block 61, I provide a metal strip 65 attached to the rear of runners 67 to support upper end of block 61 against action of stops 64a and 64b. Block 61 is somewhat T-shaped in cross section and has a spacing as shown at reference numeral 69 to provide clearance for the thickness of the front panel sheet 75 of panel 72.

In a preferred form of the invention, the panel board 72 will comprise a left direction indicating means such as a red light 74, a right direction indicating means such as a green light 76, and a series of distance indi-

cating means such as lights 78, each of which is positioned serially after the next lower one to indicate a definite simulated distance starting with, let us say, the figure 100 representing 100 yards, and increasing in preferred increments of 10 yards to a simulated distance of, let us say, 300 yards, or more if desired. The distance between increments may be varied as desired. In this form of the invention, this would require 20, or more, indicator means, or lights 78, each of which may have a distance indicator sign, or other such means 80. When these indicating means are in the form of lights, they may be actuated by circuit means comprising circuit closing switches or contacts as follows:

Contact means 84 may be utilized to close the circuit means to actuate signal 74, contact means 86 may be utilized to close circuit means to actuate signal 76, and a series of contact means 88 may be used to close circuit means to actuate indicating signals 78. Switch contact means 84 has an arm 90 having a contact end 92 which is connected to a conductor 94 which in turn is connected to signal means 74 which in turn is connected to a conductor 96. Contact 84 has another arm 98 having a contact end 100. Arm 98 is connected to a conductor 102. Conductors 96 and 102 are both connected to a source of electricity such as a power line or battery, optionally by means of fused switch such as switch 104, for protection.

I have just described a circuit means for an indicating signal such as lamp 74 which is in normally open position because of the break between contacts 92 and 100. Arm 98 is a springy arm and may be moved toward arm 90 when pressure contact is applied at point 106. Keel 70 of vehicle 48 is adapted to bear against contact point 106 when ball 44 is struck in a manner which would cause it to be driven toward the left. The direction of force of such a blow will cause vehicle 48 to be forced toward the left of track 46. Since elements 66 are not fitted within guide members 68 with close tolerance, especially at lower end 50 of track 46, vehicle 48 will be caused to veer to the left causing keel 70 to pass in contacting relationship with contact 106 to such an extent to force it over to the left causing contacts 92 and 100 to mate, closing the circuit and lighting light 74. Contact 86 works in a similar manner through arms 107 having contact point 108, being attached to conductor 110 to signal means 76, and through conductor 112 to junction point 114 and to conductor 96. Contact switch 86 also has a springy arm 116 having contact 118 and being connected to conductor 102. If the ball 44 is struck with a blow that would cause it to veer to the right, then keel 70 will similarly be forced to the right during the ride of vehicle 48 to bear against contact means 120 causing contacts 118 and 108 to mate closing circuit means to light indicator light 76.

The clearances of vehicle 48 and its sliding elements 66 along track guides 68 are such that if the ball is struck squarely, the vehicle 48 will ride straight along the center of track 46 with keel 70 clearing contact engaging portions 106 and 120 on both sides. Neither of the signal lights 74 or 76 will light, thus indicating that the ball has been hit true on a center course. If, on the other hand, the ball is struck with a force which would cause it to go to either left or right, the corresponding signal 74 or 76 will be activated as described hereinabove.

Indicating means such as light 78 are actuated by means of a series of separate circuits taken off a power supply line such as power source 126 which may be an extension of a utility supply power line or any other electrical power source. I shall describe the operation of one of the circuit means for operating and indicating means such as a light 78 with the understanding that it will apply to all of the series installed in the device. Contact means 88 has an arm 130 on insulated base 131 having a contact end 132. Base 131 is con-

nected to a conductor 134 which in turn is connected to a light 78 which in turn is connected to conductor 136 which is connected to one side of the power supply 126. The other side of power supply 126 is connected to a conductor 138 which is connected to insulated base 141 of switch arm 140 which has a contact end 142 having a mechanical contact means 144 attached to it.

Arm 140 is a springy arm so that any pressure placed on mechanical contact means 144 will move contact 142 toward contact 132 causing them to touch and to close the circuit in a manner similar to that described hereinabove for contact switches 84 and 86. Mechanical contact means 144 is moved by the force of the bottom 146 of keel 70. Contact means 88 are placed along the track 46 so that vehicle 48 or 60, as the case may be, having a keel 70 with a bottom 146 must move mechanical contact means 144 sufficiently to engage contact points 132 and 142 each time the vehicle passes a contact switch means such as contact switch means 88. Thus, if the surface of mechanical contact means 144 which faces toward track guides 68 is a given distance from the inner edge 150 of an adjoining track guide 68, then the depth of keel 70 to its bottom 146 from the bottom 152 of the vehicle sliding elements 66 must be greater, so that the bottom 146 of keel 70 will ride through the normal position of mechanical contact means 144, and displace them to cause points 142 and 132 to make the circuit, to light a light 78.

Thus, as a vehicle passes each contact switch means 88, a corresponding indicator light 78 will light up. The stronger the blow on the ball 44, the further the vehicle will go causing a greater number of lights to light and indicating the ball to be driven a greater distance. Thus, referring to FIG. 7 of the drawings, if the first two lights 78 are lit, it will indicate that the ball was driven a simulated distance of 110 yards. If, on the other hand, all 20 of the lights 78 are lit in succession, it will indicate that the ball has been driven a simulated distance of at least 300 or more yards.

The tee means 40 comprises a resilient base associated with the holding support means 42 for the golf ball 44. The resilient base or platform means is made of natural rubber or any synthetic, resilient deformable material suitable for the purpose. There is a forward section 160 and a rear section 162. Between the forward section 160 and the rear section 162 of the base or platform means, there is a space 164 sufficiently wide to permit a resilient ball holding support means 42 to be positioned in fairly close fitting relationship. Resilient ball holding means 42 has a pedestal 166 which is flared out to make it wider than the midsection 168. Conforming flares 170 and 172 are made in the configuration of the body portions of platform portions 160 and 162 respectively. This is done so that resilient ball holding support means 42 can be replaced in the platform means of the tee 40 when desired, as follows:

There are two holding blocks 174 and 176 which may be maintained in position by means of screws 178 and 179 respectively. When it is desired to replace a ball holding support such as support 42, one of the blocks such as block 176 is removed by removing screw 179 and the entire ball holding means 42 is moved laterally to remove it from the tee means 40. Another ball holding means 42 may then be placed in position and locked in by replacing block 176.

Resilient platform means 160 and 162 will, in large measure, absorb the terrific blow to which the golf ball 44 is subjected. When the ball is struck as indicated at arrow A, it will move forward at a fast rate, first hitting block 52 to cause vehicle 48 to move, and then hitting upper portion 260 of platform 160. During this time, ball holding means 42 will stretch and bend around in the direction of the travel of the ball 44 and hood 254. Hood 254, after striking surface 260, will rebound immediately and surface of ball 44 will strike surface 262 of platform

portion 162. It will then rebound again back to surface 260, and then back again to 262, and so on, as many times as it takes for the ball 44 to regain a neutral position.

I have provided a series of shim blocks 264 in platform 162 for the purpose of regulating the height of the top 262 of the platform with relation to the ground level 266, and also to accommodate the height of the ball 44 to the level of the tee means 40 to accommodate various different woods and irons.

I have also provided an alternate form of contact means for the left and right indicator signal lights. Instead of using contact means 84 and 86 as described hereinabove, I may provide contact means 270 and 272 mounted in the resilient deformable material of platform portion 160. Contact means 270 has contact points 274 and 276. If the ball 44 is struck to the left of platform surface 260 to a point, let us say, point X at reference numeral 278, it will cause the material of the platform 160 to deform, permitting contact points 274 and 276 to touch. Contact switch 270 is connected to signal light such as signal light 74 by means of a circuit identical to the circuit described hereinabove for connecting contact means 84 to signal light 74. Thus, when points 274 and 276 which are normally open are caused to touch, the circuit will close causing the light to light if the ball is hit to the left side of the platform. Contact means 272 is constructed in a similar manner, and is connected to indicator light 76 in a similar manner, and if the ball is hit to point Y, reference numeral 280, the right indicator light will light. If the ball is hit to the central portion of the platform, neither switch 270 or 272 will operate because there will not be sufficient force to compress the portion of resilient material in which they are located, and this will indicate that a ball is struck true on a straight course since neither the left nor the right indicator light will be lit.

I have thus described a form of my invention in which after a ball is struck there will be an indicating of direction by means of left or right indicator lights, and there will also be an indication of distance by means of yardage indicator lights such as lights 78.

A second form of invention, having a different track and vehicle arrangement, is illustrated in FIGS. 11 to 17 of the drawings. In this second form, there is a first vehicle 290 and a second vehicle 292, both of which are mounted on track means 294. Track means 294 comprises a lower end section 296 which is substantially similar to lower end 50 of track means 46 of the first form of the invention. The intermediate section 298 and the final section 300 differ from track 46 in that they are substantially tube shaped. Vehicle 290 which rides only on lower end 296 of track 294 is substantially similar to vehicle means 48. Its forward run, after being struck by ball holder hood 254 on cushion block 302, is limited by rubber collar stop 304 mounted on lower end 306 of the tubing of intermediate track portion 298. Forward end 308 of vehicle 290 will hit stop 304 to stop vehicle 290 and start it back to its first position at starting end of track 296. A strike rod 310 with a resilient striking head 312 extends forwardly of vehicle end 308 and has a diameter less than the diameter of the tube portion of track 294 so it may enter end 306 and contact second vehicle 292.

Thus, when vehicle 290 is struck, it will push vehicle 292 forward, then 290 will be stopped and returned while 292 continues to travel forward. Tee means 40, ball holder 42 and ball 44 are similar to that of the first form of the invention.

Vehicle 290 has a keel 314 similar to keel 70 which may be used to indicate right and left direction or signal lights either through contacts 316 and 318 similar to contacts 84 and 86, or through tee contacts such as contact 320 located on both sides of tee means 40 in the same manner as contacts 270 and 272. Vehicle 292 has a keel means 322 which extends through a continuous slot 324 along track sections 298 and 300, and whose bottom 323

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is the means to displace mechanical contact means 326 of contacts 328 to operate distance or yardage indicators similar to lights 79 on a panel such as panel 73.

Vehicle 292 has a cylindrical barrel-like shape, and is slide fitted within the tubing of track means 298. Its starting position is designated at reference numeral 330. It will return to this position by force of gravity. Striking head 312 acts as a stop means to stop vehicle 292 at its starting position on the return run.

Thus, a blow on ball 44 in the direction of arrow as shown in FIG. 11 will cause vehicle 290 to move forward with force until end 308 hits bumper 304. In the meantime, resilient striking end 312 will push vehicle 292 forward. Both vehicles will return to their starting positions by force of gravity, ready for the next use. It is to be understood that right and left indications as well as distance indications will be made for each use in a manner similar to that shown in the first form of invention.

In FIGS. 18 and 19 of the drawings, I show a third form of invention substantially similar to the second form of invention except that vehicle 290 is replaced with a striking bar 340. Striking bar 340 is cylindrical in shape, and is adapted to fit into end 342 of the tube of a track 346 which is similar to intermediate section 298 and final end section 300 of track 296. Striking bar 340 has a striking cushion means 348 and a striker end 350. It is held in position by a bracket 352 into which it is slide fitted, and has a stop collar 354 adapted to be stopped by rubber cushion means 356 at tubing end 342. The vehicle 358 in this form of invention is identical to vehicle 292 of the second form of invention, and in all other respects, this third form of invention is similar to the second form of invention with respect to the track means and the signal indicating means and the panel means which need not be described herein again.

While I have described my invention in its preferred forms, there are other forms which it may take without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention, and I, therefore, desire to be protected for all forms coming within the claims hereinbelow.

Wherefore I claim:

1. A golf practice device including tee means comprising resilient support means holding golf ball means adjacent track means, said track means comprising a first end comprising said tee means, an intermediate portion and a second end, a vehicle having a main body portion including cushioning means adapted to ride along said track means normally positioned at said first end of said track means, said cushioning means adapted to abut said golf ball means when said vehicle is at said first end of said track means, a pair of electrical contacts disposed off center along opposite sides of the vehicle track relatively near the first end, a plurality of pairs of electrical contacts extending from the first mentioned pairs toward the second end of the vehicle track, indicator panel means comprising left and right indicating means and a plurality of means to indicate distances of vehicle travel, electrical circuit connections between said electrical contacts on said vehicle track and said right, left and distance indicator means on said panel, and a source of electrical power; said vehicle including contact engaging means adapted to be displaced laterally during travel of the vehicle, said contact engaging means adapted to contact one of said first mentioned pairs of contacts when displaced laterally to the left and another of said first mentioned pairs of contacts when displaced laterally to the right, and also to contact said plurality of contacts as said vehicle rides from said first end of said track means toward said second end of said track means; so that when the held golf ball means is struck squarely toward the center line of the track by club means, it will cause the vehicle to travel along the track means between and clear of the first mentioned contacts, then against each of the plurality of contacts along the total distance it travels on the track means, and when the held golf ball means is

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struck at an angle, the vehicle contact engaging means will be displaced laterally and contact one of the said first mentioned pairs of contacts and then each of the plurality of contacts along the total distance it travels on the track means.

2. A golf practice device including tee means comprising resilient support means holding golf ball means adjacent track means, said track means comprising a first end comprising said tee means, an intermediate portion and a second end, a vehicle having a main body portion adapted to ride along said track means normally positioned at said first end of said track means, a pair of electrical contacts disposed off center along opposite sides of the vehicle track relatively near the first end, a plurality of pairs of electrical contacts extending from the first mentioned pairs toward the second end of the vehicle track, indicator panel means comprising left and right indicating means and a plurality of means to indicate distances of vehicle travel, electrical circuit connections between said electrical contacts on said vehicle track and said right, left and distance indicator means on said panel, and a source of electrical power; said vehicle including contact engaging means adapted to be displaced laterally during travel of the vehicle, said contact engaging means adapted to contact one of said first mentioned pairs of contacts when displaced laterally to the left and another of said first mentioned pairs of contacts when displaced laterally to the right, and also to contact said plurality of contacts as said vehicle rides from said first end of said track means toward said second end of said track means; so that when the held golf ball means is struck squarely toward the center line of the track by club means, it will cause the vehicle to travel along the track means between and clear of the first mentioned contacts, then against each of the plurality of contacts along the total distance it travels on the track means, and when the held golf ball means is struck at an angle, the vehicle contact engaging means will be displaced laterally and contact one of the said first mentioned pairs of contacts and then each of the plurality of contacts along the total distance it travels on the track means; said contact engaging means of said vehicle being in the form of a keel extending from the main body portion of the said vehicle, said keel being of a width narrower than the distance between said first mentioned pairs of contacts, and said keel being of a depth relatively as great as the distance of each of said second mentioned plurality of contacts are from the main body of the vehicle as it travels along the track.

3. The golf practice device as defined in claim 2 in which the left and right indicating means comprise electric lights and the distance indicating means comprise electric lights.

4. The golf practice device as defined in claim 3 in which the left and right indicating lights comprise at least one pair of lights in contrasting colors.

5. The golf practice device as defined in claim 3, in which the left indicator light comprises at least one light means in the form of a letter L, and the right indicator light comprises at least one light means in the form of a letter R.

6. The golf practice device as defined in claim 2, in which the tee means comprises a forward platform and a rear platform made of a deformable resilient material and having means to receive removable golf ball holding means, said removable golf ball holding means being made of a resilient material and comprising a golf ball, said golf ball, when held in said golf ball holding means, being relatively higher than the highest point of said platform means and in a position to strike the said vehicle when said golf ball is struck.

7. The golf practice device as defined in claim 2, in which the tee means comprises a forward platform and a rear platform made of a deformable resilient material and having means to receive removable golf ball holding means, said removable golf ball holding means being

made of a resilient material and comprising a golf ball, said golf ball, when held in said golf ball holding means, being relatively higher than the highest point of said platform means, together with a second vehicle on said track means interposed between said first mentioned vehicle and said tee means, said golf ball being positioned so as to strike the said second mentioned vehicle when said golf ball is struck, and said second mentioned vehicle being movably mounted on said track so as to strike said first mentioned vehicle after being struck by said golf ball.

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