INFLATABLE GAME BALL

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This invention relates to inflatable balls and more particularly to types of considerable size used in playing athletic games or sports, such as football, basket ball, volley ball and the like.

In ordinary balls of this character a leather casing of either elliptical or spherical shape is provided with an elongated slit constituting an opening through which a rubber sac or bladder may be passed when in a deflated condition, the same when entered being filled with compressed air by any convenient means and the edges of the slit secured in juxtaposition by some form of lacing or analogous device.

Although the outer surface of the casing is substantially smooth and uniform, as is highly desirable, the fastening means present a roughened surface objectionable in appearance and not infrequently damage the cuticle and nails of a player's hand.

Furthermore the lacing at the closure not only present an uneven surface but become worn and break at inopportune times and in addition, the perforations in the casing through which the lacing pass obviously weaken the casing very materially.

It is the purpose of the present invention to produce a ball or like casing provided with a slit opening and having a fastening means by which the edges may be brought into intimate contact in an exceptionally rapid manner and without presenting any projections whatever.

A further feature is to provide re-enforcing flaps to the inner surface of the casing adjacent the slit and attach the closing means to such flaps rather than directly to the edges of the slit, thus strengthening in place of weakening the casing.

Another object is to provide an inner flap interjacent the fastening means and inflatable element or bladder whereby it is efficiently protected.

These several advantageous objects and others which will become apparent as the description progresses are accomplished by the novel and practical arrangement of parts hereinafter described and illustrated in the accompanying drawing, forming a material portion of this disclosure, and in which:

Figure 1 is a plan view of a conventional type of foot ball embodying the invention.

Figure 2 is a partial longitudinal sectional view taken on line 2—2 of Figure 1 and drawn to an enlarged scale.

Figure 3 is a similar enlarged transverse sectional view taken on line 3—3 of Figure 1.

Figure 4 is a top plan view of the runner in detail.

The body of the ball consists of a casing 10 composed of several sections united at their edges by closely drawn strong seams 11, the preferred material being grain leather.

Intermediate the length and breadth of one of the casing sections is a narrow elongated opening 12, its width being somewhat exaggerated in the views for the purpose of clarity, and at one end of the opening is a relatively short transverse slit 13 permitting the casing material opposite the end of the opening to be slightly raised, as at 14, for a purpose further on apparent.

A pair of opposed flexible leather tabs 15 are secured by rows of stitches 16, to the inner side of the casing, the tabs being arranged in parallel to the opening 12, at their outer edges and an inner flap 17 of considerably greater area is held by a single row of stitches 18 along one edge to extend completely over the tabs 15 and opening.

This inner flap acts as a protective cushion against which the inner inflatable element or bladder 19 is pressed when distended with air supplied in the usual manner.

Fixed to the inner adjacent edges of the tabs 15 are the opposed elements of an interlocking fastener 20 the same being engaged or disengaged by the passage of a slider 21 having a lower re-entrantly bent portion 22 and containing in its upper portion a recess 23 into which may be entered a hook 24 carried at the end of a manually operable handle 25.

The hook 24 is adapted to pass between the edges of the opening 12, engage the slider recess and draw or push the slider 21 in the act of opening and closing the fastener elements, which it will be noted are below the surface of the casing.

The purpose of the slit 13 is now seen as permitting the insertion of the hook below the material at the final closing of the fastener or in the initial opening of the same.

In carrying out the invention the parts are so proportioned and positioned that the edges of the opening 12 will be substantially in con-
tact, presenting a smooth surface below which the fastener elements and slider are operatively engaged and, as all the mentioned parts are flexible, the casing will retain its roundity when closed.

It is to be noted that no metal parts come in contact with the inner inflatable element and that the exterior of the ball is maintained substantially smooth and unbroken, providing a covering of unusual strength and effectiveness, which can be instantly applied and as speedily removed.

From the foregoing it will be seen that a simple device for this purpose has been disclosed in the preferred form of its embodiment, but it is not desired to restrict the details to the exact construction shown, it being obvious that changes, not involving the exercise of invention, may be made without conflicting with the scope of the appended claim.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is:

An inflatable game ball comprising a casing having a slit, a bladder entrable through the slit into the casing to be inflated there-wherein, tabs fixed on the inner surface of said casing at opposite sides of the slit, interlocking fastener devices on the adjacent edges of said tabs, a flexible flap disposable under said tabs and fasteners, a slider movable over said fastener devices, and a pocket in said casing to receive and conceal said slider.

Signed at New York, in the county of New York and State of New York this 27th day of December A.D. 1926.

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