Nov. 28, 1967 E. I. SELKER 3,355,173

BASEBALL GAMEBOARD

Filed May 21, 1964 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

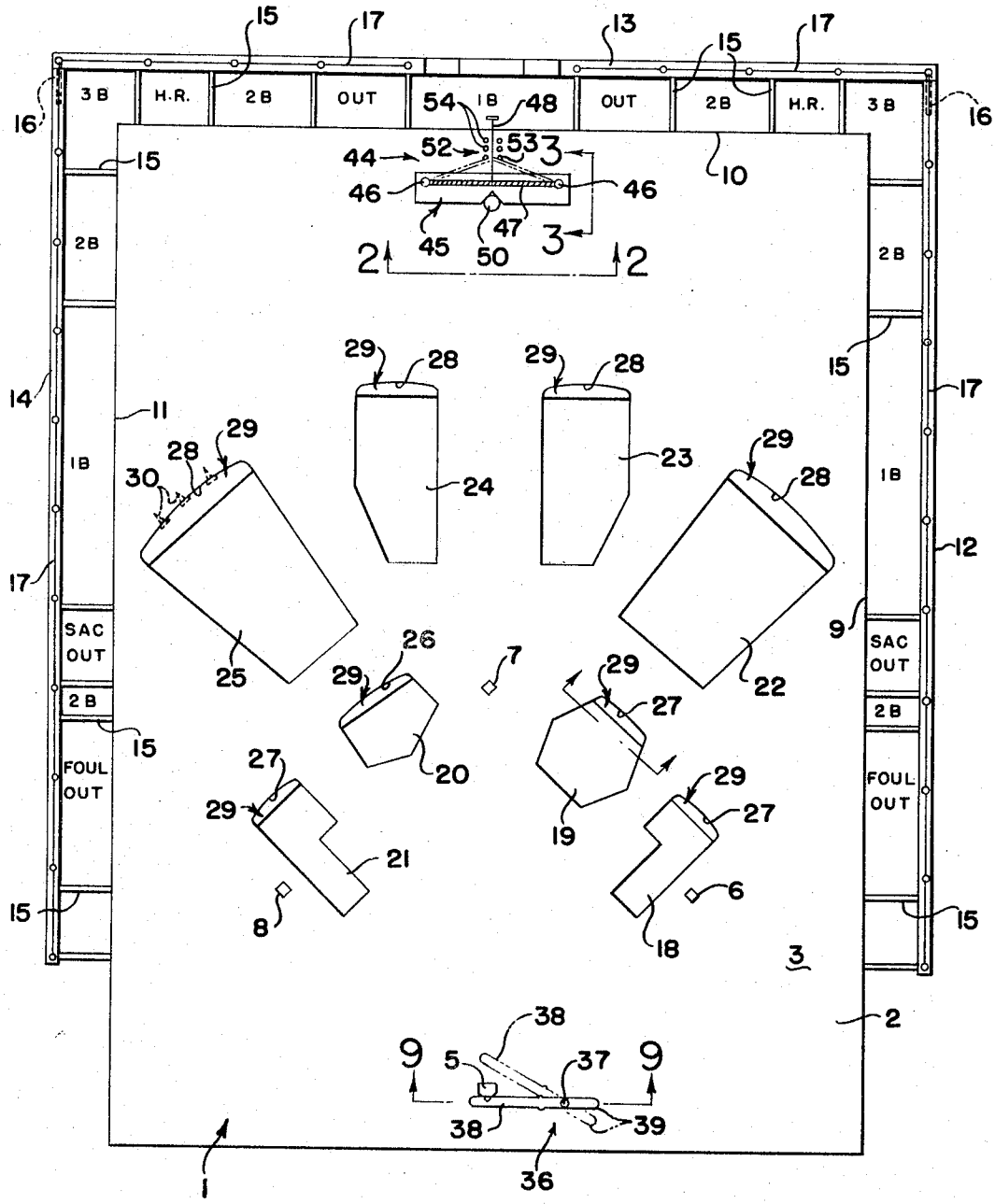


FIG. 1

INVENTOR.
EUGENE I. SELKER

BY

Fay & Fay
ATTORNEYS

Nov. 28, 1967 E. I. SELKER 3,355,173

BASEBALL GAMEBOARD

Filed May 21, 1964 3 Sheets-Sheet 2

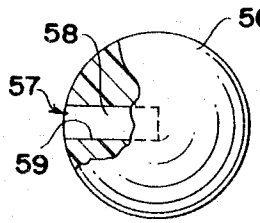


FIG. 4

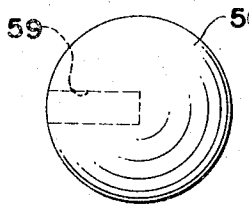


FIG. 5

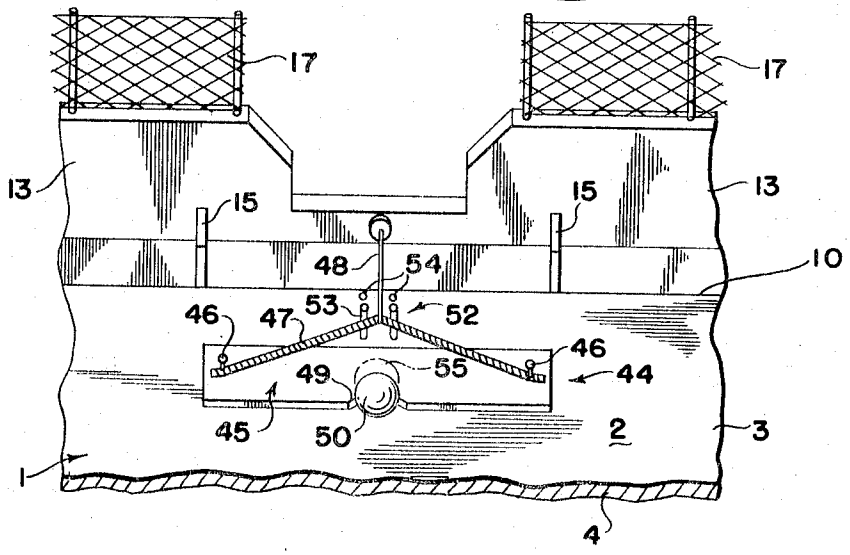


FIG. 2

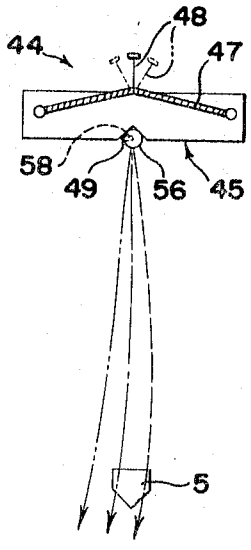


FIG. 6

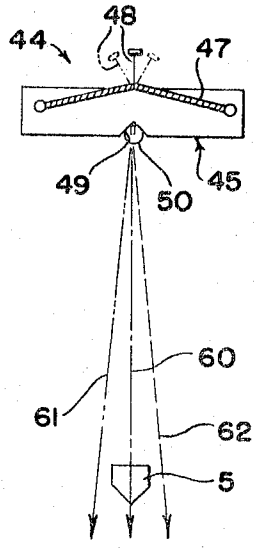


FIG. 7

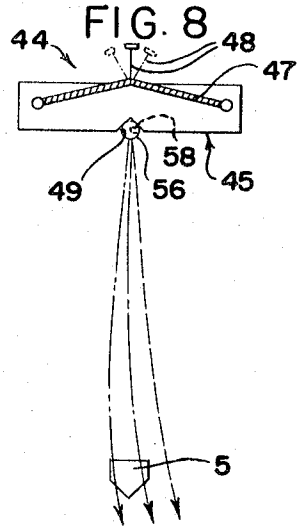


FIG. 8

INVENTOR.
EUGENE I. SELKER

BY

Fay & Fay

ATTORNEYS

Nov. 28, 1967 E. I. SELKER 3,355,173

BASEBALL GAMEBOARD

Filed May 21, 1964 3 Sheets-Sheet 3

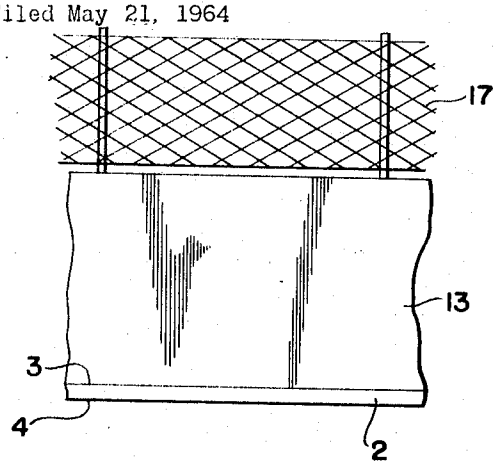


FIG. 13

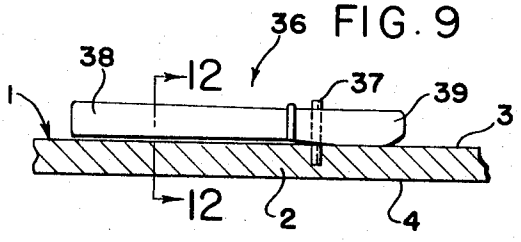


FIG. 9

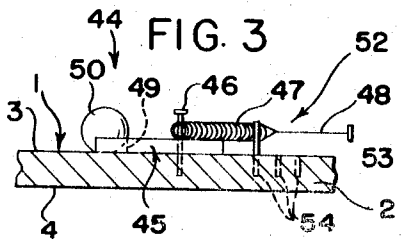


FIG. 3

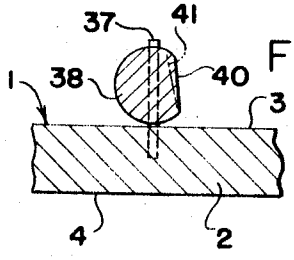


FIG. 12

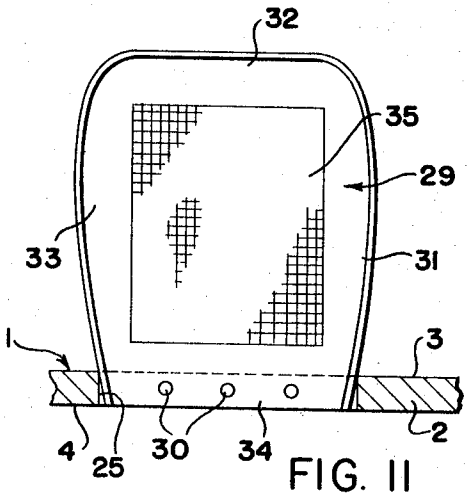


FIG. 11

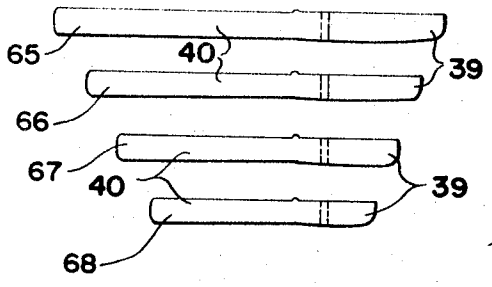


FIG. 10

INVENTOR.
EUGENE I. SELKER

BY

Fay & Fay

ATTORNEYS

United States Patent Office 3,355,173 Patented Nov. 28, 1967

3,355,173

BASEBALL GAMEBOARD

Eugene I. Selker, 4938 N. Sedgewick Road, Lyndhurst, Ohio 44124

Filed May 21, 1964, Ser. No. 369,167
6 Claims. (Cl. 273—89)

This invention concerns a baseball gameboard.

In the broadest sense, a baseball gameboard of this invention is comprised of a relatively flat board or mounting base, which has a number of apertures therein and a corresponding number of fielder deflectors. These fielder apertures and fielder deflectors are designed, marked and interconnected in a manner which has statistically been proven to simulate the function of their real-life counterparts. The mounting base is marked to simulate a baseball diamond having a home plate, first, second, and third base. The home plate is located in the middle of one side of the mounting base or board. A pitching device is mounted on the middle of the other or rear side of the mounting base and a batting device is provided at home plate in order to propel the ball coming from the pitching device into the playing field. A wall extends along the rear side of the mounting base and along a substantial majority of the right and left sides of the mounting base. A number of receptacles are formed by interconnecting specified areas of the wall to the mounting base with dividers.

Suitable means are provided to pitch the ball to the batter. This pitching device consists of a pitching mound attached to the mounting base. A pair of opposing pins are mounted in the pitching mound and a spring is connected between these pins.

It must be further realized that the fielder deflectors of this invention may consist of relatively rigid, yet resilient, members having a peripheral surface with a net between these peripheral surfaces. These fielder deflectors are interconnected to the apertures of the mounting base in a manner which will simulate the function of their real life counterparts.

A suitable batting device consists of a bat pin which is connected to the mounting base and protrudes from its surface. The bat may be an elongated piece of resilient material with an aperture in the shorter side adapted to receive the bat pin. This bat pin is positioned about home plate in a manner which will allow the bat to revolve about it, yet still allow a portion of the bat to pass over home plate.

Suitable means are provided on the pitching mechanism to govern the maximum speed of the pitched balls. Furthermore, the bats have a predetermined resiliency which may either restrict or extend the hitting potential of the batter.

The prior art devices have presented problems. To date, none of these prior art gameboards have been able to simulate the actual conditions of the real life baseball game. Since it is well known that different players have different batting abilities and various pitchers have their own capabilities, a baseball gameboard that would simulate these conditions would be extremely desirable.

Another problem which has not been surmounted by prior art gameboards is the problem of simulating a double or triple play.

A number of these devices are of an extremely complex structure which produces a gameboard which is relatively expensive to manufacture. Furthermore, gameboards of this nature are extremely subject to repair and will not withstand rough handling.

With the problems of these prior art devices in mind, it is a general object to provide a baseball game device of simple construction, manufacture and operation that

closely simulates the actual conditions of pitching, batting and fielding.

A further object of the invention is to provide a pitching mechanism utilizing a number of variously weighted balls, the combination of which, dependent upon the skills of the player, results in controlled pitches of various types, such as curves, fast balls, slow balls, screw balls, all simulating actual play conditions of a pitcher.

It is still another object to provide a batting mechanism which affords maximum manual control so that the skill of the player is the sole determining factor in hitting the ball hard, soft, bunting, fouling and striking out.

It is yet another object to provide a batting device which will allow the batter to give loft to the ball.

It is yet a further object of the invention to provide a baseball gameboard on which a number of apertures are made on the fielding area, which approximate the areas covered by defensive players in real game conditions.

It is a more specific object of the invention to provide various balls, varying governors on the pitching mechanism, various types of bats and various sizes of fielder deflectors, so that the participants of different skills can be made more compatible. This will allow two players of comparable skill to act as a team of nine players by assigning respective pitching, batting and fielding strength or weakness to each hypothetical player by the interchange of appropriate pitching governor, bat and fielding deflector.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a gameboard with a partial peripheral wall about the playing field with receptacles between the playing field and the walls and corresponding nets. These receptacles are of a predetermined size and design, and are placed in positions which will result in hits, outs, home runs and fouls, at approximately the same locations and with the approximate same frequency as under real baseball conditions.

It is still another object of this invention to provide a fielder deflector which together with the design of the fielding apertures results in double plays or triple plays by a hit ball caroming off one fielder deflector into another infielder aperture.

Other and more specific objects of the invention will be apparent from the detailed description to follow.

In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is a top view of the baseball gameboard of the immediate invention;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the pitching mechanism taken along line 2—2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a side view of the pitching mechanism taken along line 3—3 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a side view of an eccentrically weighted ball;

FIG. 5 is a side view of a ball having a radial aperture therein;

FIG. 6 is a top view of the pitching mechanism and portion of the playing field showing some characteristic paths travelled by an eccentrically weighted ball in position with its eccentricity in a plane other than perpendicular to the playing field, as the spring is manipulated;

FIG. 7 is a top view of the pitching mechanism and a partial top view of the playing field showing some characteristic paths travelled by a solid ball, or by an eccentrically weighted ball with its eccentricity in a plane perpendicular to the playing field;

FIG. 8 is a top view of the pitching mechanism and a partial top view of the playing field, showing other characteristic paths travelled by an eccentrically weighted ball, whose eccentricity is positioned in a plane other than perpendicular to the playing field;

FIG. 9 is a sectional view taken along line 9—9 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 10 is a side view of a number of different bats;

FIG. 11 is a front view of a fielder deflector;

FIG. 12 is a cross-sectional view of a bat showing the striking surface taken along line 12—12 of FIG. 9; and

FIG. 13 is a fragmentary side view of the baseball gameboard showing the side wall and net.

In the embodiment illustrated, the baseball gameboard has a playing field 1 which is comprised of a mounting base 2, which can be mounted either on legs, a short table, or lay flat on the floor. It is to be understood that the cross section of the mounting base 2 is substantially rectangular in shape, with upper and lower sides 3 and 4 substantially parallel. This mounting base 2 is marked with home plate 5, first, second, and third bases, 6, 7, and 8, respectively, base paths and an infield, outfield and foul lines, to simulate the regular baseball field. The distances between the bases 6, 7, 8 and home plate 5, and other measurements are correspondingly scaled down distances from the actual game of regulation baseball. The playing field 1 is enclosed on right side 9, rear side 10 and left side 11 by wall members 12, 13 and 14, respectively. These wall members are fastened to their respective sides 9, 10 and 11 by means of dividers 15. These dividers 15 may by fixedly connected to their respective walls by such fastening means as screws, nails, or glue, and also to their respective edges of the mounting base. Additional fastening means 16 are provided to interconnect walls 12, 13 and 14. These fastening means 16 may include screws, bolts, interconnecting grooves, or other such fasteners.

It is to be understood that the rear wall 13 is of a shape which is adapted to receive the player's hand in order to actuate the pitching mechanism. The height of the wall 13 is related to the size of the gameboard of the immediate invention, since it must be of sufficient height to prohibit certain fly balls from becoming home runs. It is to be understood that these walls 12, 13 and 14 could be the same height. A net 17 is mounted above the walls 12, 13 and 14, as seen in FIG. 2. The net 17 has an opening on the rear wall 13 which corresponds to the aperture in wall 13.

The mounting base 2 has apertures 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25 of a predetermined size and positioned in a manner which will simulate their real-life counterparts. The first baseman 18 is represented by an aperture of approximately one square unit. He is positioned relatively close to the first base and inward toward home plate in order to eliminate bunted balls and to receive balls caromed off the other three infielder fielder deflectors. The second baseman aperture 19 is mounted in his usual, approximately mid-position between first and second base and has a slightly larger area than the first baseman. The shortstop 20 is positioned between second and third base, 7 and 8, a little closer to second base 7. The shortstop aperture 20 has a rear face 26 which is twice the comparable distance of rear faces 27 of the other infield players 18, 19 and 21. Thus, the shortstop 20 covers more distance, yet with an aperture of approximately the same area as the other infield players 18, 19 and 21. The third baseman aperture 21 is located between second and third base, 7 and 8, a slightly further distance from 8 than the first baseman aperture 18 is from first base 6. The third baseman aperture has an area slightly less than the first baseman. Right and left fielders 22 and 25 are represented by apertures 22 and 25 which have approximately twice the area of first baseman aperture 18. The center fielder is represented by apertures 23 and 24, which each have an area twice the size of aperture 18. The apertures 22, 23, 24 and 25 have a rear face 28 on which their respective fielder deflectors may be mounted. Fielder deflectors 29 are slidably mounted on their respective faces 26, 27 and 28 of their respective fielder apertures 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25. Thus, the fielder deflectors may be inserted into their respective curved slots 27 and 28 and may be taken out for storage and for stability. These respective faces may be slightly curvilinear towards home plate. These fielder deflectors 29 have a peripheral surface of members 31, 32, 33 and bottom member 34, with a net 35 connected between these members 31, 32, 33 and 34. Members 31, 32 and 33 are quasi-rounded in a manner which will allow a ball to bounce off them into another portion of the playing field, or into the aperture in which they are mounted. The net is interconnected by fastening means to the respective sides 31, 32, 33 and 34 of the fielder deflector. This enables the fielder deflector to catch the hit ball just as a player would.

It is to be understood that the deflectors are of a different size, depending on the player. In general, they vary in size, the largest being the shortstop, second baseman and center fielder. Thus, the relative area covered by an actual fielder in play will be simulated and the double or triple play may be simulated by caroming the balls off one deflector to another.

The batting mechanism 36 has a batting pin 37 which may be mounted on either side of home plate 5 in the mounting base 2 and protruding from the surface of it in a substantially vertical direction. A bat 38 having a hole therein is slid over the pin and rests against the mounting base 2. Thus, a pivotably mounted bat which is able to move over the home plate 5 is effected. This affords a batting mechanism which allows a great degree of manual control and can be employed from both left or right hand batting positions. It is to be understood that various bats of different resiliency are provided. Under the rules hereinafter set forth, it will be seen that the longer the handle 39 of the bat (distance from the pivot pin 37 to the end of the handle) the greater control and force can be attained. It is also apparent that the longer the bat striking surface 40 is, the more complete coverage of the plate or strike area. Thus, a player using the shortest bat which does not completely cover the home plate 5 is particularly vulnerable to an outside pitch or a skillfully pitched curve, which is a strike.

The bat 38 is swung by any of the following methods: the forefinger or forefinger and middle finger on the end of the handle 39 creating a quick flick of the bat, two or three fingers on the bat with the thumb behind to try and place hit, tilting down on the end of the tapered handle 39 with the index or middle finger at the moment of impact to give more loft to the batted ball, using two or three fingers with the thumb behind the bat and resting the bat vertically so as to strike the pitched ball above the center thereof, and by so topping the ball, effect a bunt. It is to be understood that the bat 38 may have a flat portion 41 on its striking surface; thus, when a fly ball is desired the batter will place his forefinger on the handle 39 and depress it, thus lifting up the batting face 40, and due to frictional contact with the mounting base, tilt the bat to position 41. Since there is a certain amount of looseness between the batting pin 37 and the aperture in bat 38, when the ball is hit it will be forced in an upward direction and the ball will lift, with the possibility of clearing a wall or the net.

A pitching mechanism 44 consists of a mounting plate 45 fastened to the mounting base 2 by means of a conventional fastener, such as a nail, screw, etc. Pins 46 attached to the mounting plate 45 retain the spring 47. Attached to the center of the spring 47 is a member 48, which allows the pitcher to draw back the spring 47 and force the ball forward, when he releases it. The mounting plate has a V-groove 49 in the approximate center in order to center the ball 50 in the pitching mechanism. The ball thus rests on the mounting base 2. If a line were drawn between the spring mounting pins 46, the V-groove 49 would hold the ball a slight distance in front of the line towards home plate, while the spring was pulled in the reverse direction.

The translatory movement of the spring is limited by the governor pegs 52. This variable governor is composed of two opposing pins 53 mounted in the mounting board

2. There are a series of apertures **54** to receive these pins and thus vary the translatory movement of the spring. In the preferred embodiment, the thickness of the mounting plate **45**, when added to one half the thickness of the pitching spring **47**, should permit the spring to hit the ball **50** at a vertical mid-point on the ball. It is seen that the ball can be projected from either the level of the playing field or of the pitching mound itself by positioning the ball in back of the V-groove in the position shown at **55**. Thus, the ball is hit below the center and is projected onto the playing field with a greater speed and some bounce to the ball. Because of the nature of the spring **47** and its pitching mount, a player can vary the force of the speed of his pitch by both the extent to which the string is pulled and the quickness of its release.

To pitch a straight ball (one which can be controlled with respect to the angle of its roll or flight) two methods exist. Use either a perfectly spherical ball or use a weighted eccentric ball. The eccentricity may be concentrated in a plane which is perpendicular to the gameboard (FIG. 7). Thus, when the string **48** is pulled back at a 90° angle to the pitching mound and released evenly, a straight ball will result which will travel along path **60**. When the string **48** is pulled back to the pitching player's left, the ball will travel to the right and follow path **61**. The same is true when the string **48** is pulled to the player's right, since the ball will follow the path **62**.

To pitch or project a curve ball, an eccentrically weighted ball **56** is used. This ball may be of two constructions. In the first construction a radially eccentric weight **57** may be placed in the ball. This ball may be made of a material such as fiberglass or nylon. A material **58**, such as metal, of a density greater than the material composing the remainder of the ball **56** is placed in the aperture **59**. In another embodiment, the ball **56** may have an opening, a radial aperture **59** with no weight therein. This will, in effect, give an eccentric weight to the ball on the side in which there is no radial aperture. To pitch or project a curve ball, an eccentrically weighted ball **56** is placed with the eccentricity **58** lying in a plane either parallel to the plane of the playing field or any variable other than perpendicular. The most effective curves are had by placing the eccentricity **58** towards the low side, as in FIG. 6. Thus, a curve ball may be effected with an eccentrically weighted ball, with eccentric weight **58**, when the spring is pulled back in the various positions shown in FIG. 6. It is to be understood that the greater the mass of the eccentricity, the faster the curve, or a more pronounced curve may be obtained. However, there are limits even to this, because the mass will throw the ball off balance. As a matter of fact, the mass will create a clicking, thus making the ball so off balance that it becomes audible and defeats the purpose of concealing the eccentric weight of the ball in actual play conditions.

The game is played by substantially the same rules as baseball. If the players are of equal skill or by agreement, the pitching mechanism has either no governor or the same governor for both players, the same bat is used for both players, and the same size fielder deflectors are used for both players. The pitcher, by employing several balls of different eccentricity and a perfect ball, hides the balls behind the center field wall **13** and selects the ball to be pitched. He then places this ball either in the depression **49** on the playing field or on the pitching mound in position **55**. Both hands can be used and maneuvered through the opening of wall **13** which is of sufficient size. One hand serves to conceal the location of the ball and its position, and the other hand to pull the string **48**, to release the spring **47**. It will be found that by a straight single release of a spring, the ball will curve or break in the direction of eccentricity if the eccentricity is in a plane which is not perpendicular to the playing field. The various balls used in conjunction with the pitching mechanism afford a variety of pitches and control thereof. The

ball, when projected or propelled from the pitching mound, must traverse the home plate on the board so that the bat could hit it in order to be classed as a strike. If a projected or propelled ball hits any fielder deflector, it is counted as a wild pitch and any base runner would advance one base. The rules of baseball apply with reference to balls and strikes. Thus, as in regular baseball, the "call" is left to the discretion of the human eye, the players, or a third person (umpire). It is found that with acquired skill in the use of the balls and pitching mechanism a good pitcher can, over the long run, outplay a good hitter or equal player, thus making the similarity to baseball more complete. The batting player swings the bat as hereinbefore described. Contact with the ball must be on the first swing or as the bat crosses the plate. If the bat is swung early or the ball is missed and struck by a spinning bat, it is counted as a strike.

Balls hit out of the playing field to the inside of foul lines are either "foul out," as indicated in the receptacles, or foul strikes. A fair ball hit into the net **17** is counted as a sacrifice fly or sacrifice out. It advances any runner on base, but is still counted as an out. A ball hit "fair" over the fence or wall is a home run. A ball hit through, not over the opening in the center field wall, is a single, which advances a base runner two bases. A ball coming to rest any place in the field is a single, advancing a base runner one base. When, with the runners on base, a hit ball caroms off any fielder deflector and into the fielding hole of another fielder, it shall constitute a double play. A "bunt single" is effected by raising the bat "topping" the ball and seeking to have it stopped dead on the infield.

When players of unequal skill wish to play on a competitive basis, compensation shall be made by assigning the smaller bat to the more skillful player and allowing the less skillful player to extend the spring **47** further by using the last set of "peg governors" or none at all. Different skills may also be equalized by the size of the fielder deflectors, particularly at the shortstop and second baseman. A most interesting and realistic innovation in the use of this game consists of two or more players, selecting nine hypothetical baseball players which can, for example, consist either of a major league team or combination "all star" team of players from major league teams. A lineup is then made listing the current or lifetime batting average of each hypothetical player that bats, eight altogether may be grouped as follows:

	Game Bat	Real-Life Characteristic
65	Hardwood	.325 Plus B. Avg. Long Ball Hitter.
	Softwood	.325 Plus B. Avg.
66	Hardwood	.300 Plus B. Avg. Long Ball Hitter.
	Softwood	.300 Plus B. Avg.
67	Hardwood	.270 Plus B. Avg. Long Ball Hitter.
	Softwood	.270 Plus B. Avg.
68	Hardwood	Under .270 B. Avg. Long Ball Hitter.
	Softwood	Under .270 B. Avg.

The hypothetical player at bat uses the bat corresponding to his real-life characteristic. As for the hypothetical pitcher, the real-life characteristics of earned run average, strike outs, curves, are simulated by assignment of various governors and balls. A fast ball pitcher, for example, will be permitted to use the furthermost governor. It is to be understood that the variations can be determined by the players to a degree further than described.

For ease of description, the principles of the invention have been set forth in connection with but the single illustrated embodiment shown. It is not by intention that the illustrated embodiment, nor the terminology employed in describing it, be limiting inasmuch as variations in these may be made without departing from the spirit of the invention. Rather, I desire to be restricted only by the scope of the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A baseball game comprising a relatively flat mounting base having a front, rear, right and left side, said

mounting base marked to simulate a baseball diamond having a playing field with home plate at the middle of the front side of said mounting base, said mounting base having a plurality of apertures with corresponding field deflectors;

each of said field deflectors connected to its corresponding aperture and designed to simulate the function of a real-life counterpart;

a ball;

a pitching device mounted substantially equidistant from the sides of the mounting base;

a bat with an aperture, a handle and a striking surface rotatably mounted on said mounting base;

a batting pin positioned in said aperture in said bat for rotatably mounting said bat;

said batting pin being located with respect to said home plate in a manner which will allow the striking surface of said bat to pass over said home plate when the bat is rotated about said batting pin;

said aperture in said bat having a diameter sized to envelop loosely said batting pin thus permitting some rotation of the bat about its longitudinal axis; and

the striking surface of said bat having a normally vertical flat portion which, when the bat is rotated about its longitudinal axis, faces upwardly and rearwardly thus lofting the ball as it strikes it.

2. A baseball game comprising a relatively flat mounting base having a front, rear, right and left side, said mounting base marked to simulate a baseball diamond having a playing field with the home plate at the middle of the front side of said mounting base, said mounting base having a plurality of apertures with corresponding field deflectors;

each of said field deflectors connected to its corresponding aperture and designed to simulate the function of a real-life counterpart;

a ball;

a pitching device mounted substantially equidistant from the sides of the mounting base, said pitching device comprising an elongated readily resilient member having its ends attached to the mounting base so that said resilient member is aligned substantially transversely to the path of a projected ball to home plate;

means for grasping said resilient member to cause the central portion thereof to undergo rearward translatory movement before being released to allow said member to project said ball;

means to selectively limit the rearward translatory movement of the central portion of said resilient member by means of a variable governor selectively positioned behind said resilient member;

a batting device including a bat having a handle, striking surface and means for rotatably mounting the bat for movement about an axis generally transverse to its longitudinal axis.

3. The baseball game of claim **1** wherein said ball is unevenly weighted such that said ball when projected travels in a nonlinear path.

4. The baseball game of claim **2** wherein a mounting plate is provided on which said ball may be mounted and wherein said resilient member may strike it at various points on the circumference so that the ball may either be rolled along the surface of the board or lofted into the air.

5. The baseball game of claim **1** wherein said handle of said bat is tapered at its end.

6. A baseball game comprising a relatively flat mounting base having a front, rear, right and left side, said mounting base marked to simulate a baseball diamond having a playing field with a home plate in the middle of the front side of said mounting base, said mounting base having a plurality of apertures with corresponding field deflectors;

each of said field deflectors connected to its corresponding aperture and designed to simulate the function of a real-life counterpart;

a ball;

a pitching device mounted substantially equidistant from the sides of the mounting base, said pitching device comprising an elongated readily resilient member having its ends attached to the mounting base so that said resilient member is aligned substantially transversely to the path of a projected ball to home plate;

a means for grasping said resilient member to cause the central portion thereof to undergo rearward translatory movement before being released to allow said member to project said ball;

a batting device including a bat having a handle and flat striking surface rotatably mounted for movement about an axis generally transverse to the longitudinal axis of said bat with the striking surface normally vertical; and

a means for mounting said bat such that it may also rotate about its longitudinal axis to rearwardly incline said surface.

References Cited

UNITED STATES PATENTS

861,841	7/1907	Heitmann	273—89
870,041	11/1907	Lundberg	273—89
1,157,913	10/1915	Twibell	273—89
1,570,875	1/1926	Cartee	273—89
2,276,457	3/1942	Bock	273—89
2,412,714	12/1946	Caesar	273—90
2,457,390	12/1948	Markussen	273—90
2,462,170	12/1949	Dube	273—90
2,478,429	8/1949	Sinclair	273—89
2,672,343	3/1954	Augier	273—90
2,682,409	6/1954	Irwin	273—89
2,719,040	9/1955	Fischer	273—129 X
2,775,457	12/1956	Galbos	273—89
3,227,452	1/1966	Murphy	273—89

ANTON O. OECHSLE, *Primary Examiner.*