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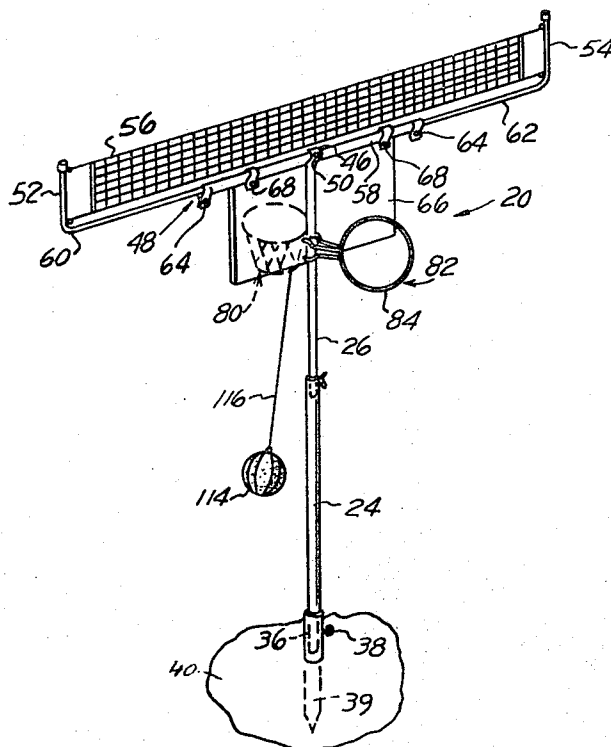
[54] **BALL TRAINING AND GAME DEVICE**
27 Claims, 14 Drawing Figs.

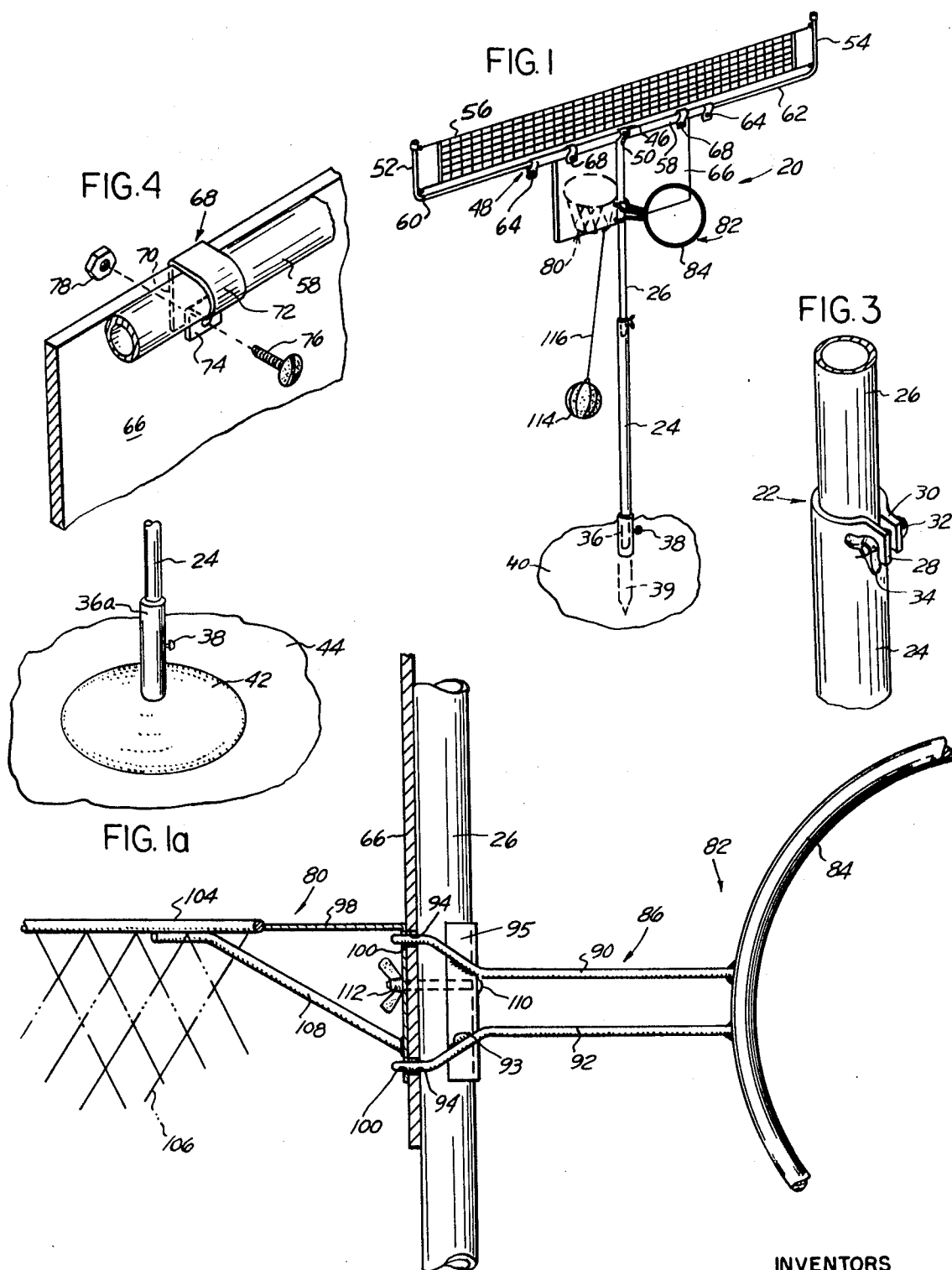
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A63b 63/06, A63b 71/02
 [50] Field of Search..... **248/411,**
161, 221; 273/1.5, 26, 55

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ABSTRACT: A ball training and game device for outdoor or indoor use comprising a standard adopted to be supported in the ground or on the floor for the support of multiple ball training or game devices of exchangeable character and in which the standard is composed of telescoping tube sections adapted to be clamped at adjustable height positions. The interchangeable devices comprise a combination of backboard and basket to one side of the standards and a freely rotatable loop or similar ball target device which may be either rotatable and mounted, or weighted, so as to assume a normal vertical orientation, or resiliently mounted, at the opposite side of the standard. The mounting portion of the loop includes a bracket having two arms extending around opposite sides of the standard and extending through openings in the backboard to lock them together, and a common bolt fastening both the bracket and backboard to the standard. The top of the standard is provided with an extendable transverse member having outer ends formed into posts for the mounting of a net thereinbetween for volleyball practice or the like, all of these devices being readily removable and interchangeable. Also included are a tethered basketball and a rotatably mounted baseball batter's practice device.

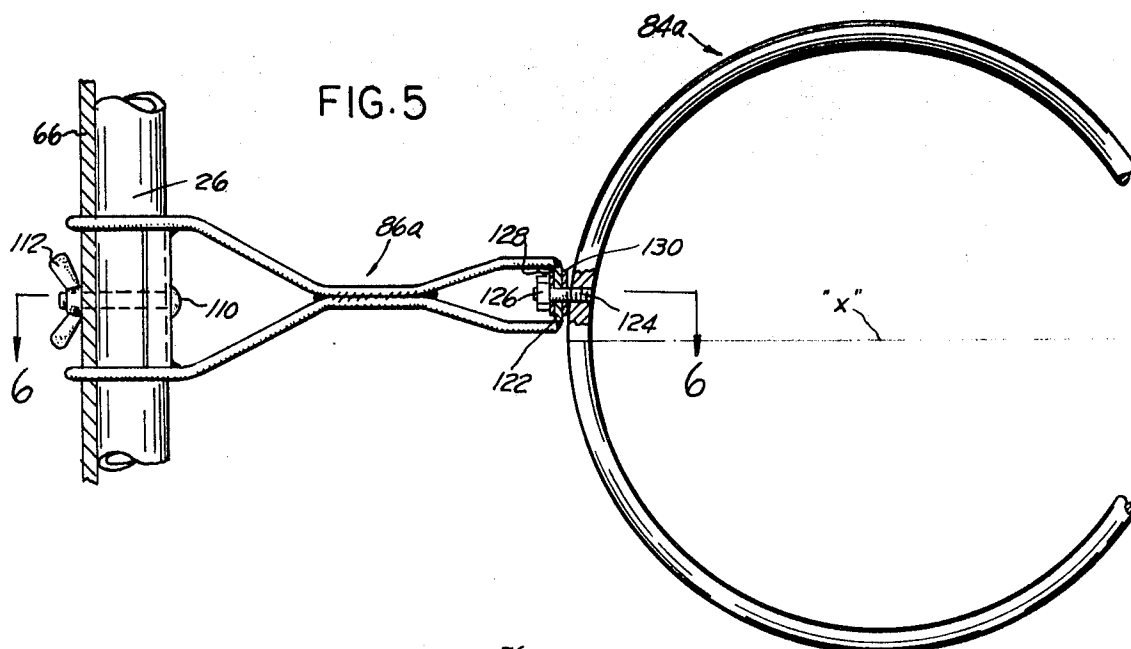
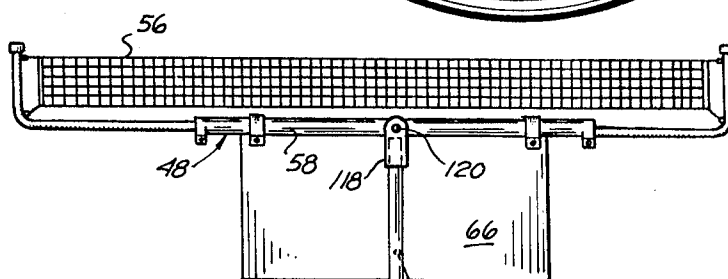
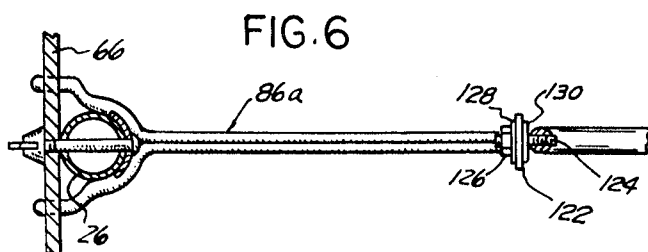
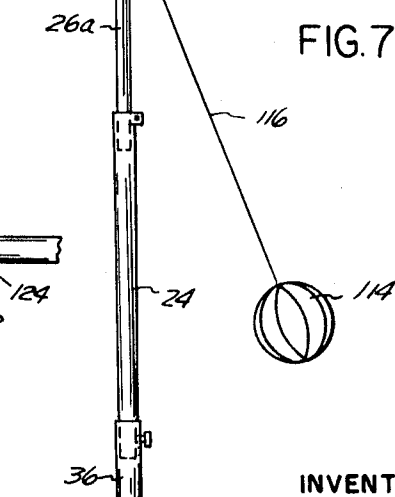




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FIG. 8

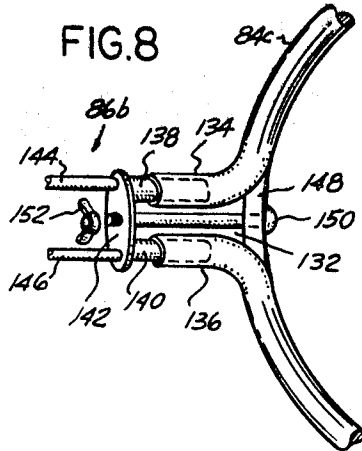


FIG. 9

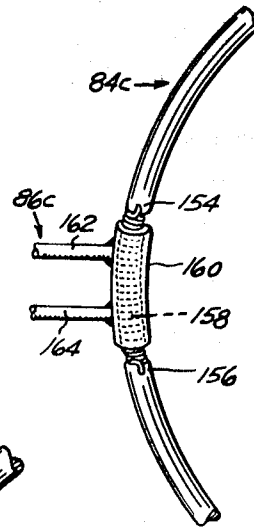


FIG. 13

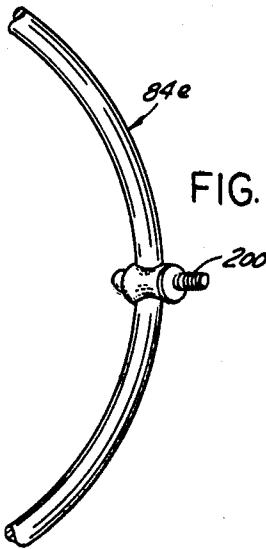


FIG. 10

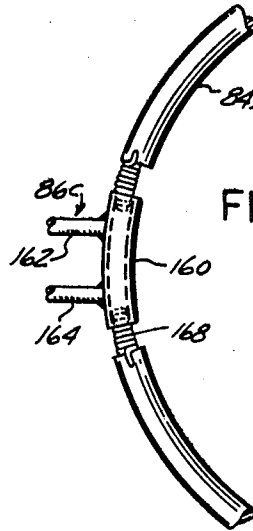


FIG. 12

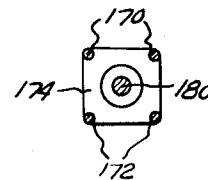
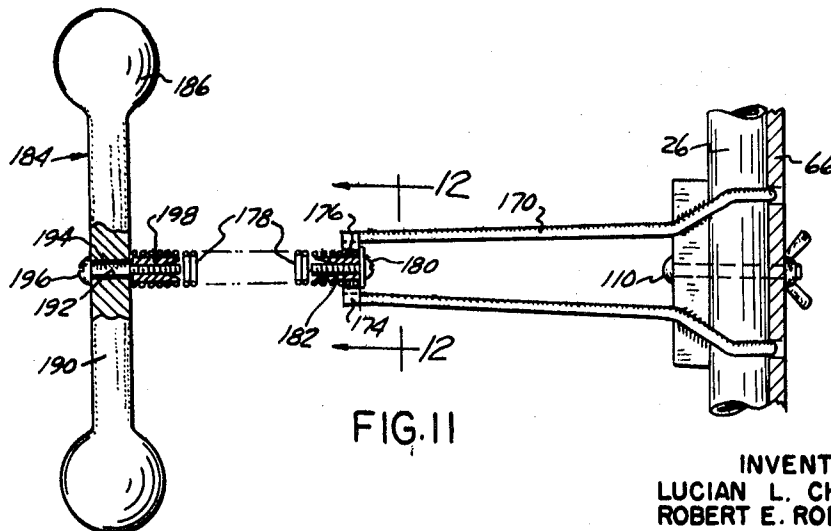


FIG. 11



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BALL TRAINING AND GAME DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates in general to a combination ball training and game device, and more in particular to a multiple ball game training device of the type usually supported on a standard to which is mounted a backboard and a basket adapted for goal-shooting practice.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Adjustable and demountable ball game practice devices are known in the art.

The known devices generally comprise a backboard mounted on a standard or pole and a basket mounted in front of the backboard, the object being to permit a player to practice tossing the ball through the basket and in which the backboard provides a rebound surface for the ball when thrown thereagainst. It is also known in the art to provide a tethered ball suspended from an arm or bracket secured to the standard. This is known to be provided in conjunction with the basket and backboard for the practice of goal shooting or independently thereof as a game device.

Although these known devices are usually made adjustable and in some instances can be disassembled for portability, they are nevertheless limited in their application to the particular purpose for which they were designed and thus offer little or no variety in the game or practice exercise.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a multipurpose training and game device for indoor or outdoor use, which is mounted on an adjustable standard for raising or lowering of the device, and for convenient disassembly and erection thereof.

At the top of the standard is mounted a transverse longitudinal bar whose ends are formed to provide posts for the mounting of a net between them for volleyball practice or the like. Removably mounted to the transverse bar and to the standard is a backboard to which a basket is attached and a tetherball may be mounted on the backboard or to the standard for tether ball games. At the other side of the backboard is mounted a loop which will be normally positioned in a vertical position relative to the ground for use as a goal target practice device in which the object is to throw a ball through the vertically disposed loop. The loop is preferably constructed such as to be rotatable when hit by a ball so as to lessen the impact of the ball or other object hitting the loop. The rotatable loop is preferably weighted or placed off center to enable the loop to continuously regain its vertical position. In a further modification, the loop embodies resilient means to further lessen the impact of the ball or other object when thrown against the loop. Such a loop will be useful for football passing and baseball pitching practice.

The loop is interchangeable with a baseball batting practice device, which can be mounted on the same bracket to which the loop is mounted and thus needs no modification or auxiliary attachments to complete the change. All of the various devices mounted to the standard can be easily assembled and removed and erection or disassembly of the complete device takes but a short time.

Further novel features and distinct advantages will appear or be specifically pointed out as the following detailed description proceeds with reference to the attached drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the drawings, several embodiments and modifications have been illustrated, in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective illustration of one embodiment of the present novel device shown in assembled position ready for practice or play;

FIG. 1a is a perspective illustration of a modified base support for the device shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged fragmentary detailed view of a preferred loop, backboard and basket attachment to the standard of the device shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged illustration in perspective of a fragmentary portion of the standard of the device shown in FIG. 1 and illustrating the telescoping adjustment and locking arrangement;

FIG. 4 is an enlarged perspective illustration of a fragmentary portion of the backboard and transverse bar attachment as used in the device shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 illustrates a modified loop arrangement which may be used with the device shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 6 is a cross section through the bracket attachment for the loop shown in FIG. 5 as seen along line 6—6 thereof;

FIG. 7 illustrates a modified form of the present novel device shown in assembled position;

FIG. 8 illustrates a modification of the loop attachment to the loop bracket shown in FIG. 5;

FIG. 9 is a fragmentary illustration of a loop having resilient means embodied therein;

FIG. 10 is a fragmentary illustration of a further modification of a resiliently equipped loop;

FIG. 11 is a fragmentary illustration of a modified loop bracket having a baseball batting practice device attached thereto;

FIG. 12 is a cross section through the loop bracket shown in FIG. 11 along line 12—12 thereof; and

FIG. 13 is still another fragmentary view of a modified loop attachment for use with the loop bracket shown in FIG. 11.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

As illustrated in FIG. 1, the present novel training and game device 20 is comprised in general of a post or standard 22, which preferably is composed of several telescoped tubular pipe sections 24 and 26, in which the upper sections 26 is telescopically attached to the lower section 24 for height adjustment of the device. As seen in FIG. 3, the upper tubular section 26 extends into the lower tubular section 24, which is provided at its upper end with integral outwardly extending opposite flanges or ears 28 and 30, which are adapted to receive a fastener 32 provided with a wingnut 34 or the like to adjust the degree of extension of the upper tubular section 26 with the lower tubular section 24 by loosening the wing nut 34 and for securing the upper section 26 to the lower section 24 in the adjusted position by tightening the wingnut 34 by which the flanges or ears 28—30 are drawn together to tightly clamp the upper section to the lower section.

The lower tubular section 24 of the standard 22 is similarly telescopically adjustably supported within a tubular base section 36 to which it will be clamped by means of a setscrew 38 or the like.

Thus, the sectional construction of the standard 22, in addition to the desired height adjustment, provides for easy erection and disassembly and convenient portability.

As illustrated in FIG. 1, the base section 36 has a spiked end 39 to be driven into the ground 40 for outdoor support of the standard 22. If desired, however, and as illustrated in FIG. 1a, the base section 36a may be secured to a dished base 42 of the circular or other convenient configuration for support of the standard upon an even ground surface 44. This base support is adaptable for indoors as well as outdoor use and to provide a secure support for the standard the dished base 42 is made reasonably heavy so as not to be easily displaced.

Again referring to FIG. 1, and with further reference to FIGS. 2 and 4, the upper end of the upper standard section 26 is flattened and shaped into a hook 46 for the receipt and support of a transverse bar assembly 48, preferably made of tubing. The transverse bar assembly 48 extends normal to the standard 22 and in both directions therefrom and is secured at its midpoint to the hook portion 46 of the standard by means of a screw 50 or the like. The ends of the transverse bar assembly 48 are formed to extend upwardly from the bar to form opposite posts 52 and 54 to which may be mounted a net 56 or

the like to thus provide a convenient means for volleyball game practice or the like.

The transverse bar assembly 48 is preferably constructed such as to provide a central tubular outer portion 58 which is secured to the standard and which opposite open ends each telescopically receive a rodlike extendable bar portion 60 and 62 respectively, which outer ends form the posts 52 and 54. The extendable bar portions 60 and 62 are longitudinally adjustable with the central portion 58 for any desired length adjustment of the transverse bar assembly 48. The opposite ends of the tubular central portion 58 are each provided with an integral flanged clamp 64 which is of the same structure described herebefore in regard to the telescoping connection of the standard 22 as shown in FIG. 3. Thus, the extendable bar portions 60 and 62 are securely clamped in the desired adjusted position to the central portion 58 by means of the clamps 64.

As particularly illustrated in FIG. 4, a backboard 66 is mounted along its upper edge to the center portion 58 of the transverse bar assembly 48 by means of clips 68. Each of the clips 68 has a straight leg portion 70 for abutment against one side of the backboard 66 which is joined to a tube-retaining body portion 72 for extension around the central tubular portion 58 and whose lower end 74 provides an opposite straight portion for abutment against the other side of the backboard 66 underneath the bar portion 58. The clip 68 is secured to the backboard 66 by means of a screw 76 extending through the straight end 74 of the clip, through the backboard and through the opposite straight portion 70 at which side the screw is threaded into a nut 78. By tightening of the screw 76 and nut 78, the backboard 66 is securely fastened to the central bar portion 58.

With particular reference to FIG. 2, a basket assembly 80 is secured to the front side of the backboard 66 and a ball target device 82 is attached to the rear side of the backboard 66 and the upper section 26 of the standard 22 extending therefrom in opposite direction to the basket assembly 80. The ball target device 82 comprises a loop 84 which is attached rearwardly as by welding or brazing to a bracket member 86, which comprises a pair of parallel rods 90 and 92 extending horizontally towards the standard 22. The pair of rods 90 and 92 are welded at 93 to a semicircular plate 95 which extends around the upper section 26 of the standard 22 and the ends of the rods extend further through appropriate apertures 94 and 96 in the backboard 66, for rigid support of the loop 84 on the standard 22.

The basket assembly 80 comprises a bracket 98 for abutment against the backboard 66, which is provided with apertures 100 and 102 adapted for alignment with the apertures 94 and 96 in the backboard for extension of the ends of the rods 90 and 92 therethrough. Secured to the outer end of the bracket is a basketball hoop 104 to which the basketball net 106 is attached. A pair of diagonal struts 108 supports the basket hoop 104 on the bracket 98 for rigidity. The particular structure of the basketball assembly 80 is of no importance and forms no part of the present invention.

The basket support bracket 98 is secured to the backboard 66 opposite from the loop 84 by means of a threaded stud 110 which extends through the loop support plate 95, upper standard section 26, backboard 66 and the bracket 98 at which end the stud is threaded to receive a wingnut 112 or the like to simultaneously secure both the hoop 84 and basket assembly 80 to the upper standard section 26 and to the backboard 66.

As further shown in FIG. 1, a tethered ball 114 has been provided which may be attached by a cord 116 at any convenient location on the backboard 66 for tetherball games.

A somewhat modified embodiment of the present invention is illustrated in FIG. 7 in which the transverse bar assembly 48 is attached to the top of an upper standard section 26a by means of a tubular adapter 118 attached as by means of a rivet 120 or the like, to the center portion 58 of the transverse bar assembly 48. Thus, the complete transverse bar assembly 48, together with the backboard 66, can be easily removed from

the top of the upper standard section 26a by lifting the tubular adapter 118 off of the standard so that this structure will not interface with the tetherball play. In this embodiment, the cord 116 of the tethered ball 114 is attached directly to the upper standard section 26a of the standard instead of to the backboard 66, so that the ball 114 will not be removed from the device upon removal of the transverse bar assembly 48.

FIGS. 5 and 6 illustrate a modified loop arrangement for the target device 82. In this instance, the parallel rods of the loop-supporting bracket member 86a are welded together intermediate their ends and the outer ends of the rods are attached as by brazing or welding to a plate 122. The loop 84a is attached to a threaded stud 124 which extends through the center of the plate for rotation therein. The stud 124 is secured to the plate 122 by means of a nut 126 and, preferably, wear plates 128 and 130 are positioned respectively between the nut 126 and the plate 122 and between the latter and the surface of the loop 84a to facilitate rotation of the loop 84a. To retain the loop 84a in a normal vertical position relative to the ground, the loop is supported on the bracket 86a in an offcenter position, as indicated by the centerline "X" of the loop 84a, so that, if a ball strikes the loop, the loop will rotate, but will always regain its normal vertical position. Instead of placing the loop 84a in an offcenter position, the lower portion of the loop may be made heavier than the upper portion to permit the loop to always regain its vertical position.

The modified embodiment of FIG. 8 illustrates a nonrotatable loop attachment which comprises a loop 84b which is split at one side as at 132. The ends of the loop at the split are bent outwardly away from the loop 84b to provide a pair of parallel tubular arms 134 and 136 adapted to be telescopically fitted over correspondingly aligned studs 138 and 140 which are part of a loop bracket 86b. The studs 138 and 140 are secured to a plate 142 which, in turn, is welded on or otherwise secured to the ends of a pair of rods 144 and 146 which form the main portion of the bracket 86b. To securely retain the loop 84b on the bracket 86b an intermediate fastening member 148 is provided to bridge the loop split 132 and which may be suitably secured to the loop 84b by welding or the like. The fastening member 148 is adapted to receive a bolt 150 for extension through the loop split 132 between the arms 134 and 136 and through the plate 142 at which side the bolt is secured by a nut 152 to clamp the loop 84b to the supporting studs 138 and 140. In FIG. 9, a modified loop 84c is shown to be split at the side where the loop is secured to a bracket 86c. The spaced ends 154 and 156 of the loop 84c are connected by means of a coiled spring 158 which main portion is contained within a tubular adapter sleeve 160 disposed between the ends 154 and 156 of the loop 84c. The intermediate adapter sleeve 160 is attached as by welding or the like to a pair of rods 162 and 164 which comprise the support bracket 86c. This loop 84c, thus, has a built-in resiliency to absorb impact loads if hit by a ball or other object. Obviously, this greatly reduces stresses on the device to prevent bending of the tubular sections or breakage at any point.

The embodiment in FIG. 10 shows a further modification of a resiliently suspended loop 84d and, in this instance, the spaced ends 154 and 156 of the loop 84d are attached each to a short coil spring 166 and 168 respectively, the ends of which are threaded from opposite sides into the intermediate tubular adapter sleeve 160. This arrangement, likewise, provides a resilient loop construction to absorb impact loads of objects thrown against the loop 84d.

FIGS. 11-13 illustrate the provision of an interchangeable target device which can be used in either assembly of the device as shown in FIG. 1 or FIG. 7. The interchangeable target device comprises a bracket 86d composed of a pair of spaced rods 170 and 172, which rearwardly are attached to the upper section 26 of the standard 22 in the manner previously described. The other ends of the paired rods 170 and 172 are secured by welding or brazing to a plate 174. The plate 174 is centrally provided with an aperture 176, which is

threaded to receive, in the embodiment in FIG. 11, one end of a closecoiled coil spring 178 extending horizontally away from the plate. The end of the coil spring 178 disposed within the plate aperture 176 receives an expansion screw 180, which sleeve 182, upon tightening of the screw 180, expands to exert a force on the inside of the coil spring in an outward direction to securely clamp the coil spring within the aperture 176. The other end of the coil spring 178 is adapted to support a bell-bar-shaped ball target device 184 consisting of two oppositely disposed ball formations 186 and 188, respectively, which are connected together by a central portion 190 of reduced width. The central portion 190 is provided with a central aperture 192 to permit the extension of the shank 194 of an expansion screw 196 therethrough for rotation of the target device therearound. The threaded end of the expansion screw 196 extends into the end of the coil spring 178 and is provided with an expandable sleeve 198 which upon tightening of the screw 196, expands against the internal surfaces of the coil spring 178 and thereby securely locks the target device to the coil spring 178. The lower ball-shaped formation 188 is preferably heavier than the upper ball 186 so as to permit the target device to continuously tend to regain its vertical position relative to the ground, after being hit by an object. This device, as shown in FIG. 11, can be used advantageously as a baseball batting practice device, and the resilient support of the device by means of the coil spring 178 considerably reduces the effect of impact forces on the bracket 86d or on the standard 22 when the target device 184 is hit by the bat.

With further reference to FIG. 13, the target device 184 can be conveniently replaced with a loop 84e by removing the target device together with the spring 178 from the bracket plate 174. The loop 84e is provided with a threaded stud 200 adapted to be threaded into the aperture 176 for securement of the loop 84e to the bracket plate 174. The loop 84e is preferably rotatable around the shank of the stud 200 and is positioned offcenter, or its lower portion is made heavier, to permit the loop to regain its vertical position.

Thus, by means of the present invention, a multipurpose training and game device is provided having interchangeable target devices including resiliently supported loops and an interchangeable baseball batting device.

The assembly is constructed of a few relatively simple and lightweight parts which can be easily assembled or disassembled and are conveniently portable to be set up at any desired location.

Of particular importance is the resilient support of the target device adapted to absorb the impact load when hit by a ball or other object.

The present invention may be embodied in certain other forms without departing from the spirit of the essential characteristics thereof, therefore, the present embodiments are to be considered in all respects as illustrative only and not restrictive, the scope of the invention being indicated by the appended claims rather than by the foregoing description.

I claim:

1. A training and game device for indoor and outdoor use comprising:

a standard,

first support means to mount a basket on said standard,

second support means associated with said first support means to mount a ball target device on said standard, said ball target device comprising a loop with an opening extending therethrough, said second support means including means mounting said loop for free rotation and normal disposition in a vertical plane relative to said standard, said first and second support means comprising brackets extending in opposite directions from said standard, and

a common fastener adapted to attach both of said brackets to said standard.

2. The device as defined in claim 1 in which said loop is attached at one point along its circumference to said second support means.

3. The device as defined in claim 1 in which a tethered ball is provided comprised of a ball suspended from a cord for attachment to said standard.

4. A training and game device for indoor and outdoor use comprising:

a standard,

first support means to mount a basket on said standard,

second support means associated with said first support means to mount a ball target device on said standard, said ball target device comprising a loop normally disposed in a vertical position relative to said standard and rotatably attached to said second support means and in which the lower portion of said loop is heavier than the remainder of said loop to maintain said loop in said normal vertical position, said first and second support means comprising brackets extending in opposite directions from said standard, and

a common fastener adapted to attach both of said brackets to said standard.

5. A training and game device for indoor and outdoor use comprising:

a standard,

first support means to mount a basket on said standard,

second support means associated with said first support means to mount a ball target device on said standard, said ball target device comprising a loop normally disposed in a vertical position relative to said standard and rotatably attached to said second support means, said loop being positioned off center relative to its attachment to said second means to maintain said loop in a normally vertical position, said first and second support means comprising brackets extending in opposite directions from said standard, and

a common fastener adapted to attach both of said brackets to said standard.

6. A training and game device for indoor and outdoor use comprising:

a standard,

first support means to mount a basket on said standard,

second support means associated with said first support means to mount a ball target device on said standard,

said first and second support means comprising: brackets extending in opposite directions from said standard,

said first support means to mount said basket on said standard comprises a bracket for the support of said basket and said second support means associated with said first support means comprises a support composed of a plurality of rod-shaped arms, one end of said arms being adapted to support said ball target device, the other ends of said arms being attached to a semicircular plate for abutment against said standard, said other ends extending beyond said plate alongside said standard for extension through said bracket of said first support means and a fastener adapted to simultaneously secure said plate and said bracket to said standard in oppositely disposed relationship.

7. The device as defined in claim 6, in which the one end of said rod-shaped arms is attached to a plate having a central threaded aperture to removably secure said ball target device thereto.

8. The device as defined in claim 7, in which said ball target device is a loop.

9. The device as defined in claim 7, in which said ball target device is a baseball-batting device, and means to resiliently connect said baseball-batting device to said plate.

10. The device as defined in claim 9, in which said resilient means comprises a close-coiled coil spring having one end secured within said threaded aperture and said other end secured to said baseball-batting device.

11. The device as defined in claim 10, further comprising a pair of expandable screws adapted to secure said baseball-batting device to said coil spring and said coil spring to said plate.

12. The device as defined in claim 9, said baseball-batting device comprising opposed ball-type head portions connected by a central portion, one of said ball-type head portions being heavier than the other one to maintain said ball-type head portions in substantial vertical position relative to said standard.

13. A training and game device for indoor or outdoor use comprising:

- a standard,
- a transverse member removably secured to said standard,
- a backboard attached to one side of said standard,
- first support means to mount a basket on said standard,
- second support means associated with said first means for mounting a ball target device on said standard, and said transverse member having extensible outer ends formed into posts for the mounting of a net in between them.

14. The device as claimed in claim 13, in which said backboard is removably attached to said transverse member and said basket is attached to said backboard and to said standard.

15. The device as defined in claim 14, further comprising clip means adapted to secure said backboard to said transverse member, said clip means being formed from a flat single piece of sheet material having a body portion adapted for securement around said transverse member, said body portion being connected to opposite parallel leg portions spaced from each other for the reception of the upper edge of said backboard in adjoining relationship to said transverse member, and fastening means provided to secure both said leg portions of said clip to said backboard.

16. The device as defined in claim 13, in which said transverse member comprises a longitudinal tubular center portion and said extensible outer ends comprising rod members longitudinally slidably inserted within said tubular center portion.

17. The device as defined in claim 16, in which the ends of said tubular center portion are provided with clamp means to secure said extensible outer ends in longitudinally adjusted position relative to said tubular center portion.

18. A training and game device for indoor and outdoor use, comprising:

- a standard;
- a backboard attached to one side of said standard;
- a transverse member carried by said standard proximate the top portion of said backboard, said transverse member having extendable outer ends formed into posts for the mounting of a net thereinbetween.

19. A training and game device as defined in claim 18 including means to mount a basket on the backboard side of said standard.

20. A training game device as defined in claim 18, including

means for mounting a ball target device on said standard.

21. The training and game device for indoor and outdoor use as defined in claim 18, further comprising a ground support for said standard, means to removably mount a ball target on said standard, said means comprising a bracket having opposite parallel arms for extension alongside said standard, said arms being attached to a plate adapted for abutment against said standard, and fastening means securing said plate to said standard.

22. The device as defined in claim 21 in which said plate is formed to conform to the cross-sectional shape of said standard and said fastening means comprises a bolt extending through said plate and said standard and a nut securing said bolt to said standard.

23. The device as defined in claim 21, in which said standard is composed of a plurality of longitudinal tubular members assembled in telescoping relationship for longitudinal adjustment relative to each other, and clamp means associated with at least one of said tubular members to lock said tubular members together.

24. The device as defined in claim 23, in which said clamp means comprises a pair of integral ears stamped out of the material of said tubular member and fastening means extending through both of said ears to clamp said ears together.

25. A training and game device for indoor and outdoor use comprising:

- a standard,
- first support means to mount a basket on said standard,
- second support means associated with said first support

means to mount a ball target device on said standard, said first and second support means comprising brackets extending in opposite direction from said standard, a common fastener adapted to attach both of said brackets to said standard, said ball target device comprising a loop normally disposed in vertical position relative to said standard, said loop being split adjacent its attachment to said second support means comprising opposite spaced ends, a tubular adapter disposed between said opposite ends for attachment to said second support means, and resilient means adapted for connection of said opposite ends to said tubular adapter.

26. The device as defined in claim 25, in which said resilient means comprises a coil spring supported within said tubular adapter having each of its ends attached to one of said spaced ends of said loop.

27. The device as defined in claim 25, in which said resilient means comprises a pair of oppositely disposed coil springs having one end attached to said tubular adapter and the other end to a respective one of said spaced ends.

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