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Morritt

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[54] GOLFING EQUIPMENT

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/208,** 273/32 A, 273/183 A, 273/DIG. 21

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63b 69/36,** A63b 57/00

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/183, 208, 195, 273/196, 197, 198, DIG. 21, 32 A, 33

[56] **References Cited**

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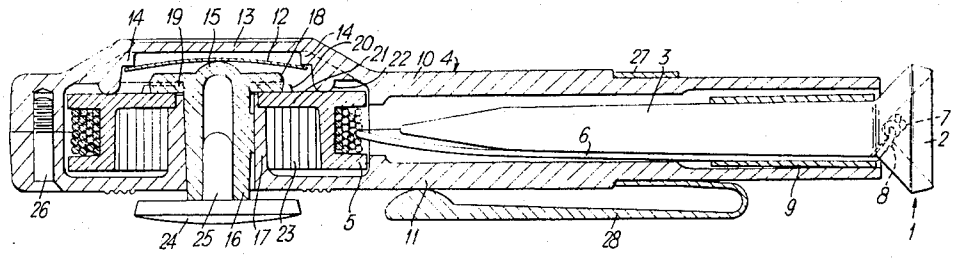
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

An article of golfing equipment has a golf tee attached to a spring-biassed reel by a length of string. The reel is mounted in a casing which receives the tee when the spring rotates the reel to wind the spring onto it. The reel is normally locked by a one-way ratchet but is released to wind in the string by a push-button which has a spike and is detachable from the casing so as to be usable as a ball marker. When practising, the cord can be aligned with the green or hole and used as an aid in swinging the club face in the correct direction. The casing has a spring-clip so that the article can be clipped into the golfer's pocker when he is not using it.

8 Claims, 3 Drawing Figures



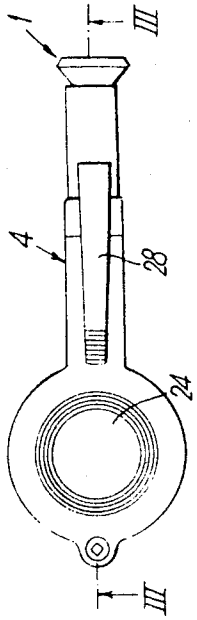


Fig. 1.

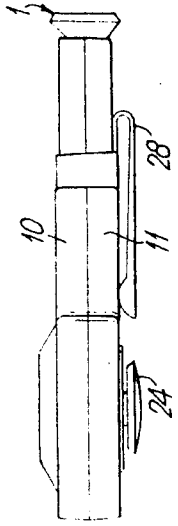


Fig. 2.

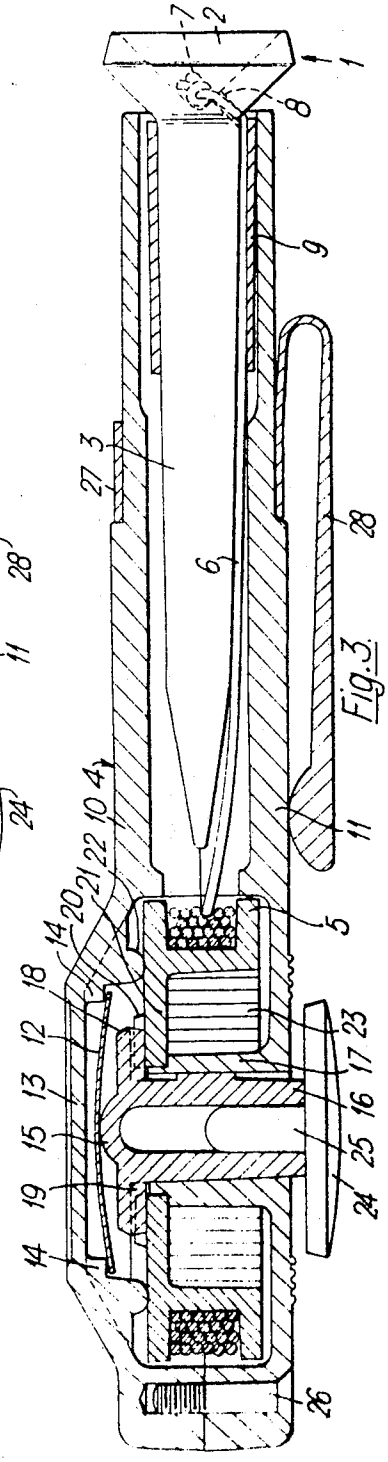


Fig. 3.

GULFING EQUIPMENT

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to golfing equipment and in particular to equipment used in teeing-off.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Golf tees are usually made from wood or cheaper grades of plastics material. The former are often broken and the latter suffer breakages in the winter at low degrees of temperature caused by embrittlement of the plastic, whereas in the summer when the ground is hard they go soft, and it is difficult to push them into the ground. Tees are therefore constantly either lost or broken. To carry a supply of tees around in one's pocket can be a nuisance and extremely painful when they penetrate the pocket lining. There is also the expense of constant replenishment. Apart from this, golfers spend much time searching for their tee after taking a shot, thus causing slow play.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the invention is to enable a golfer economically to have and use a golf tee of superior quality material, by keeping the golf tee captive and retrievable by the golfer.

According to the invention we provide an article of golfing equipment which includes a golf tee attached by a flexible element to a releasably braked spring loaded reel biassed to draw the flexible element and hence the tee towards itself, and a casing for the reel which includes a portion for receiving the tee.

The reel may be releasable from a unidirectional brake to draw the tee towards itself. The casing may be equipped with a clip such as a fountain pen type pocket clip, for attaching it to a garment of the golfer. A push button for releasing the reel from a lock may have a protruding pin and to be removable from the device so that the removable button may then be used as a ball marker.

A particular embodiment of the invention is shown in the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a plan view of one particular article embodying the invention

FIG. 2 is a side elevation of the article and,

FIG. 3 is a section on the line 3—3 of FIG. 1.

The article of golfing equipment consists of a golf tee 1 having a cupped head 2 and a spike portion 3, the latter being for sticking into the ground and the former being for receiving a golf ball before the golfer addresses it. The device also consists of a casing generally indicated at 4 and within the casing a spring loaded reel 5, with a light flexible cord 6 extending between the head 2 of the tee 1 and the reel 5. The cord passes through an aperture 8 in the base of the cup being prevented from slipping back by a stop e.g. a knot 7 tied within the cup, and adjacent the head 2 the cord is held along the stem portion 3 of the tee by a rubber sleeve 9. The casing 4 is made up in two parts 10 and 11 which meet in the junction plane seen most clearly in FIG. 2. Between them these two parts make up a casing having a long cylindrical part at one end for receiving the stem 3 of the tee 1 and a short but much greater diameter cylindrical part at the other end, disposed with its axis perpendicular to that of the first part, for receiving the reel 5. At one axial end of the short cylindrical part a flat spring 12 is held clear of abutment with an end wall

13 of the part by ledges 14, and resiliently bears against a nose 15 of a hollow stem 16 which is journalled in a cylindrical post 17 on the other casing part 11. The stem 16 is keyed to the post 17 so that it cannot rotate. It has a disc 18 at one end, on which are provided ratchet teeth 19 on one face. These can engage and mate with oppositely directed ratchet teeth 20 on the end plate 21 of the reel 5. The ratchet teeth have each one perpendicular face (i.e. lying in a plane containing the axis of rotation of the reel) and one obliquely inclined face. The reel 5 is prevented from moving axially on the one hand by a projecting rib 22 on the casing part 10, and one the other hand by engagement with the post 17. It is resiliently urged to rotate in one direction by a flat torsion spring 23 anchored to the reel. In a channel rim of the reel 5 the string 6 is anchored and retained, being wound on the reel in such a way that it is drawn off the reel against resistance from the spring 23. The string 6 is drawn off by the tee 1 being removed from the casing, and the teeth 20 and 19 are so directed that this can be done against clicking resistance by those teeth. Their perpendicular faces lock together to prevent complete return of the string into the casing. Release from this locking action can only be achieved by pressing on a push button part 24 which has a projecting nose 25 which fits within the hollow stem 16. Pushing on the button 24 moves the sleeve axially against the resistance of the spring 12 and frees the teeth 19, 20 from their engagement so that the spring 23 can take over and draw the string 6 back towards the casing. The tee 1 is then received by the casing, the stem 3 of the tee 1 being drawn towards and into the long cylindrical part of the casing, as shown in FIG. 1, this directing being helped by the retention of the string 6 along part of the stem 3 by the sleeve 9.

The casing parts 10 and 11 are held together at one end by a screw 26 and towards the other end by a spring clip 27 which forms part of a fountain pen-type clip 28 for retaining the device in the pocket, for example, of the user.

Because the tee 1 will not become lost and is retrievable it can be made of high quality material. Because the button 24 is detachable it can be used as a ball marker.

A further advantage is that when practising the cord can be aligned with the green or hole and used as an aid to swinging the club face in the correct direction.

I claim:

1. An article of golfing equipment which includes
a tee having a head portion and a stem portion,
a casing,
a portion of the casing for receiving at least the stem portion of the tee,
a reel mounted in the casing for rotation about an axis of rotation,
a spring biassing the reel to rotation in one direction,
a flexible elongate element connecting the reel and the tee,
a brake acting when applied to prevent the reel from rotating in the said one direction, and
a manual release for the brake
whereby the tee may be withdrawn from the casing to rotate the reel against the spring by unwinding the flexible element from the reel, and may be returned towards the casing by spring biassed rotation of the reel upon release of the brake winding

the flexible element onto the reel, and at least its stem received in the said portion of the casing.

2. An article as claimed in claim 1 wherein the manual release for the brake includes

a non-rotatable stem extending into the casing,

a hollow portion of said stem exposed to the outside of the casing,

a push button having a head portion and a projecting nose portion,

the projecting nose portion being a push fit within the hollow portion of the stem with the head portion exposed outside the casing.

3. An article as claimed in claim 1 wherein the casing includes

an axially elongate and radially narrow first generally cylindrical portion

an axially short and radially wide second generally cylindrical portion

the axes of the two said portions being mutually perpendicular

the second said portion housing the reel

the first said portion being for receiving at least the stem portion of the tee,

and an aperture placing the two said portions in communication,

the flexible elongate element passing through the said aperture.

4. An article as claimed in claim 3 wherein the flexible elongate element is secured to the head portion of the tee to connect it to the reel and means are provided for retaining the said element along part of the length of the stem portion of the tee.

5. An article as claimed in claim 3 wherein a spring clip embraces the first said portion outside the casing, and a retaining leg lying generally parallel to the axis of the first said portion fast with the clip and resiliently urged towards said portion,

whereby a clothes clip is provided for retaining the article in a pocket of a golfer's wear, the said retaining leg being adapted to hold the free edge of a pocket between itself and the first said portion.

6. An article as claimed in claim 1 wherein the brake is a unidirectional releasable brake comprising

a set of teeth on the reel,

a set of coacting and enmeshing teeth on a brake element,

means holding the element against rotation relative to the casing,

spring means bearing on the casing and biassing the element to hold the sets of teeth in contact

the teeth being ratchet teeth

and manual control means for overriding the spring means and bringing the sets of teeth out of engagement

whereby when the sets of teeth are in engagement there is unequal resistance to rotation of the reel in respective directions, the direction of rotation in which resistance is greater being the said one direction.

7. An article according to claim 6 wherein the brake element is a disc mounted for movements along the direction of the axis of rotation of the reel, the said sets of teeth being on a face of the disc and on a face of an end plate of the reel respectively, the reel being mounted for rotation on and about a post of the casing, the post having a hollow centre, the manual control means extending through and along the hollow centre of the post, and including a push button outside the casing.

8. An article as claimed in claim 7 wherein the manual control means include a stem extending into the hollow centre of the post, a key engaging the stem non-rotatably but axially movable to the post, the disc being fast with the stem, the push button having a nose forming a releasable push fit with a central recess in the stem.

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