July 29, 1969 J. B. WILSON 3,458,204

GOLF BALL FEEDING MEANS

Filed Jan. 10, 1966 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

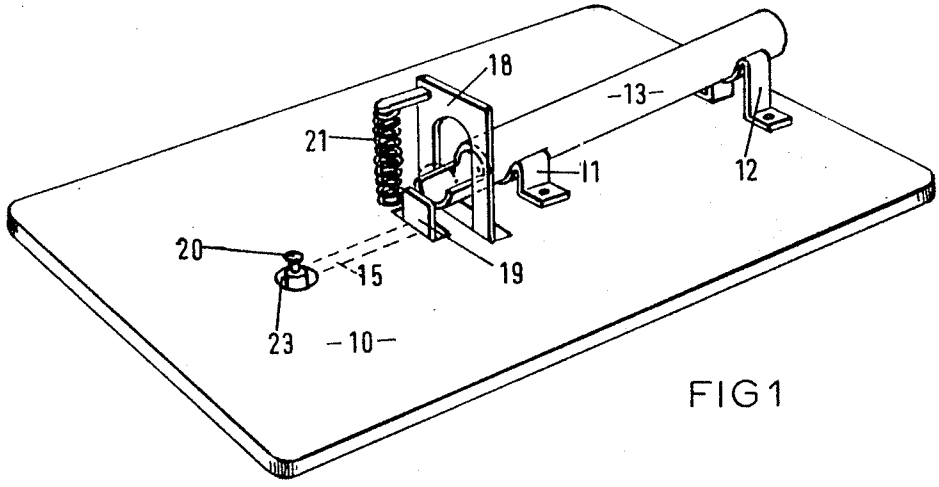



FIG 1

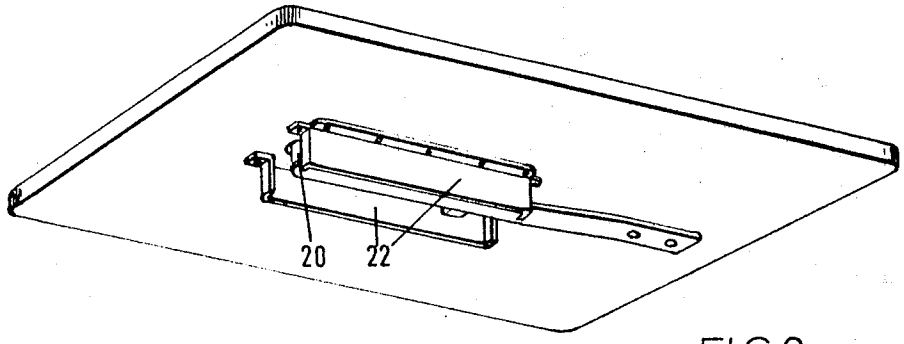



FIG 2

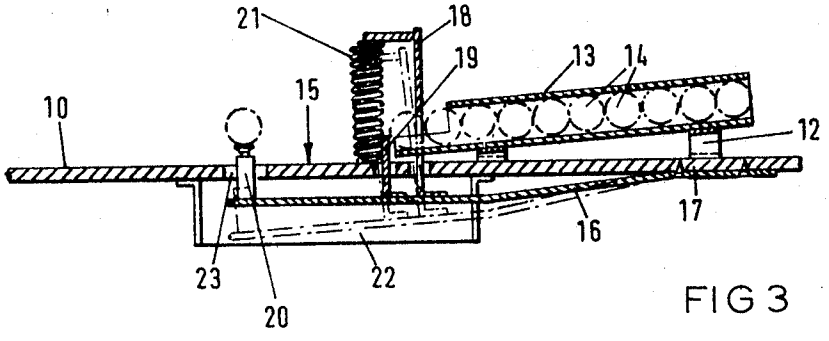



FIG 3

INVENTOR:
JAMES BERNARD WILSON
By Harry Ernest Roberts
ATTORNEY

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GOLF BALL FEEDING MEANS

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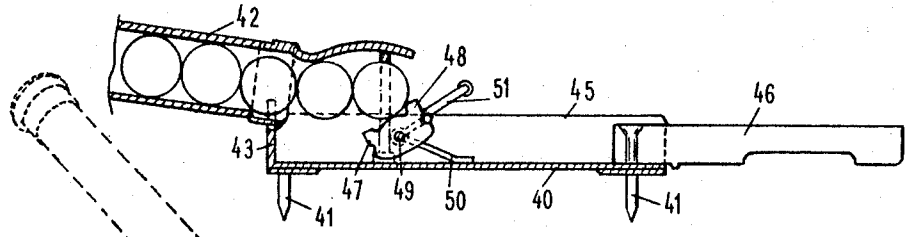



FIG. 4

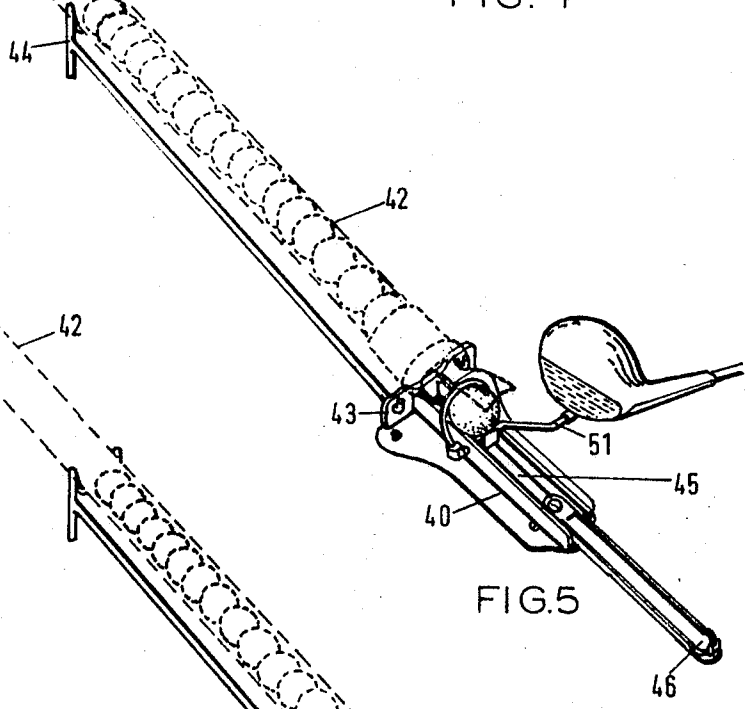



FIG. 5




FIG 7

FIG. 6

INVENTOR:
JAMES BERNARD WILSON
By Harry Ernest Rubens
ATTORNEY

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# GOLF BALL FEEDING MEANS

James B. Wilson, Chesterfield Lodge, Chesterfield, near Shenstone, Lichfield, Staffordshire, England

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## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A golf ball feeding apparatus comprising a storage tube for housing a supply of golf balls, a track for movement of the golf balls from an outlet in the tube, a tee for positioning the golf ball; a support for detachably mounting the storage tube thereto to permit separate use of the tube for retrieving the hit balls, and a manual release for releasing the balls from the tube to the tee one-by-one.

This invention relates to golf ball feeding means adapted for use, for example, in driving ranges, or for driving practice elsewhere.

In accordance with the invention, a golf ball feeding means comprises a storage tube or channel for housing a supply of golf balls and having a track for movement of the golf balls therealong to an outlet from the tube or channel, a tee for locating one golf ball for striking by a club and mounted upon a support means for detachably locating said tube or channel relative to said support, and ball control means located upon said support between the tube or channel outlet and the tee and adapted to be manually operated to release balls to the tee one-by-one.

The invention is more particularly described and illustrated with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a first embodiment;

FIG. 2 is an underside view of the same;

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary sectional elevation of the same;

FIG. 4 is a view similar to FIG. 3 but of a second embodiment; and

FIGS. 5–7 are three perspective views showing the second embodiment in use.

Referring first to FIGS. 1–3, the device shown therein is adapted to be let into the ground at a driving range or the like and with the upper surface **10** of a table or platform flush with the ground above the table. The table carries a pair of brackets **11, 12** which support an inclined tubular guide **13** which houses a supply of balls **14**. If desired catches, straps or the like may be employed to locate and serve the tube, and the latter may alternatively be a channel, or more preferably, a ball storage and "retriever" tube which may be detached from the table and used to pick up balls.

The lower end of the tube is aligned with a track **15** so that balls fed out of the tube will roll along the track and towards hole **23**.

Below the table is a plate **16** hinged at **17** (or possibly having a resilient connection at that point) and carrying first and second stop members **18, 19** and a rubber tee **20**. The table is slotted to enable the members to project above the table, or, in the case of the tee only, hole **23** enables the tee to be lowered below the table. Members **18, 19** are spaced apart by a dimension approximately equal to one ball. Member **18** is urged upwardly by spring **21**, or



alternatively a spring may be located below the table for the same purpose. The plate **16** moves in a box-like structure **22**.

As will be seen by a comparison of the full line and dotted line in FIG. 3, the first stop member in its upward (full lines) position offers no obstacle to ball flow along the track in tube **13** and hence out of the tube and along track **15** to the tee. However, in this position the second stop **19** is located in the path of ball movement and prevents the balls leaving the tube **13**.

As and when the plate **16** is deflected, by e.g. a club or foot applied to member **18**, the first stop is moved to intercept the balls in the tube, except the outermost one which lies between the stop members, and the second stop is retracted completely out of the path of the balls to allow the outremost ball to roll along track **15** and drop into the hole **23** so as to rest on the top of the tee **20**.

Consequently, as the foot or club is removed, three actions follow: the ball on the tee is projected upwardly ready to be driven; the stop **18** is retracted to allow the balls to move outwardly of the tube **13**; and stop **19** is returned so that no further ball reaches track **15**. Hence, upon each foot or club operation deflecting plate **16**, one ball is fed.

In some circumstances a golfer may wish to drive a number of balls from one end of a field or fairway, and then drive them back again, and hence may require to transport the feeding means. The embodiment shown in FIGS. 4–7 whilst generally similar to that in FIGS. 1–3 is more apt for this purpose.

Referring now to FIGS. 4–7, the device comprises a base or platform **40** having pegs **41** for embedding in the turf, and a feed tube **42** is supported at its lower end on a bracket **43** integral with the platform, and near its upper end upon a wire bracket **44** which is conveniently hooked to the bracket **43** to allow detachment for storage and transport.

The platform has a track **45** which extends onto a rubber or like resilient material tee **46** shaped to receive and accommodate a ball at its free end.

Ball control means comprise a first stop member **47** and a second stop member **48** pivoted on axis **49** between the stops. The members are fast with a transverse rod **50** having a lateral extension **51** for foot or club **52** deflection (FIGS. 5–6) to retract the second stop out of the ball path, and spring **50** returns the stops to the initial position.

The operation is substantially as in FIGS. 1–3.

I claim:

**1.** Golf ball feeding and ball retriever means comprising an elongated storage tube having an inner diameter not substantially greater than a golf ball for picking up and housing a supply of golf balls and having a track for movement of the golf balls therealong from an outlet of the tube, said tube having at the other end thereof an inlet mouth suitable for engaging and retaining a single golf ball, one at a time, a tee for locating one golf ball for striking by a club and mounted upon a support, having a U-shaped cradle means for supporting by gravity alone said tube relative to said support, and ball control means located upon said support between the tube outlet and the tee and adapted to be manually operated to release the balls to the tee one-by-one, whereby the elongated storage tube may be lifted from the cradle means and ball control means and reloaded by retrieving balls without unfastening any part thereof.

**2.** Means as claimed in claim **1** wherein the said sup-

port is arranged to incline the tube or channel for gravity flow of balls therealong.

3. Means as claimed in claim 1 wherein the ball control means includes a pair of stop members integrally connected and with a common pivot, and arranged so that one stop member lies in the path of movement of golf balls from the track to the tee when the other stop member is out of said path and vice versa.

4. Means as claimed in claim 1 wherein the tee is made of rubber or like resilient and deformable material.

5. Means as claimed in claim 1, wherein the pivot for the stop members is located on the opposite side of the



latter to the tee, and the said tee is also carried by a part carrying the stop members.

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RICHARD C. PINKHAM, Primary Examiner

P. E. SHAPIRO, Assistant Examiner