No. 853,463. PATENTED MAY 14, 1907.

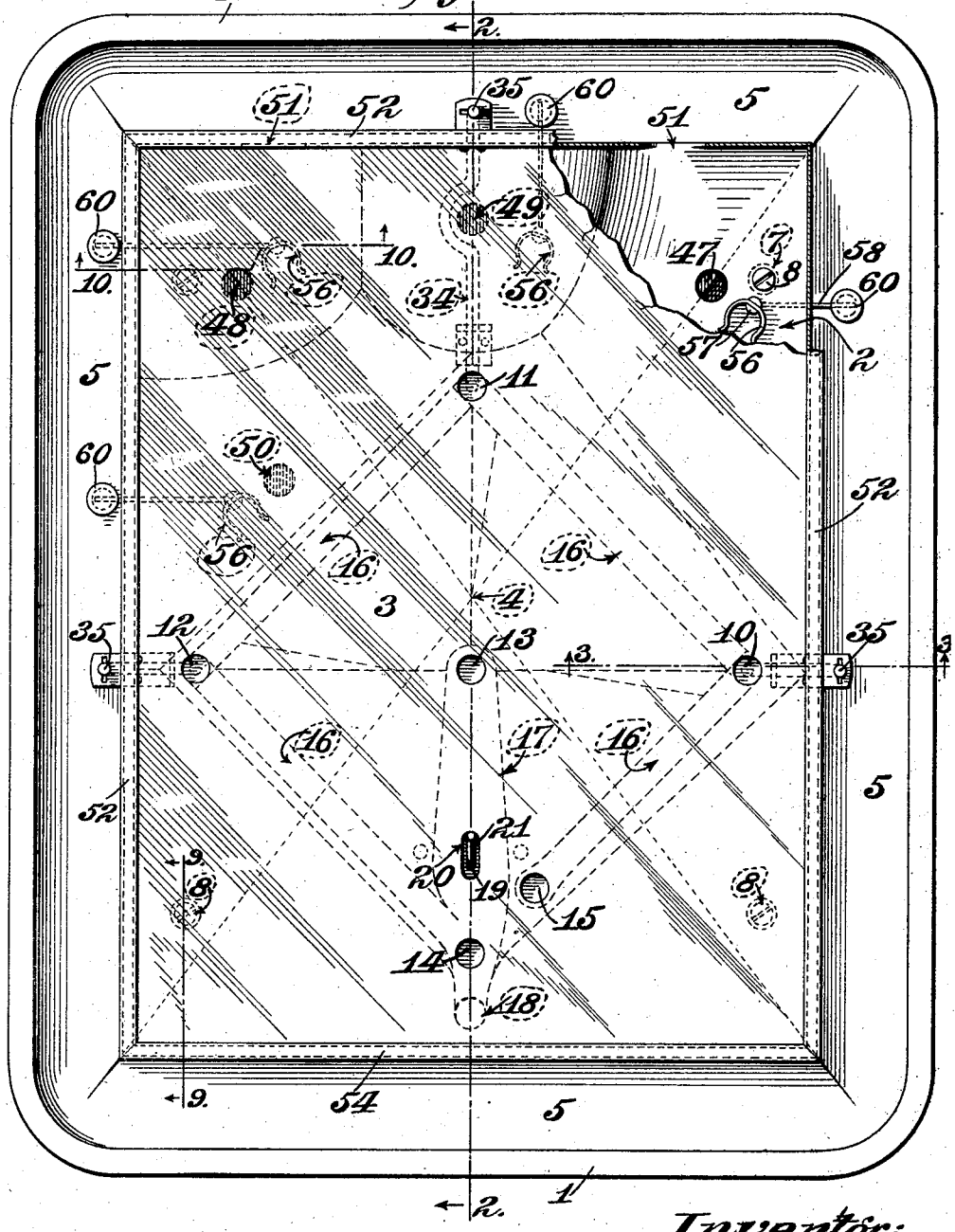
J. S. MATHER.

GAME APPARATUS.

APPLICATION FILED MAY 7, 1906.

3 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

Fig. 1.



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3 SHEETS—SHEET 2.

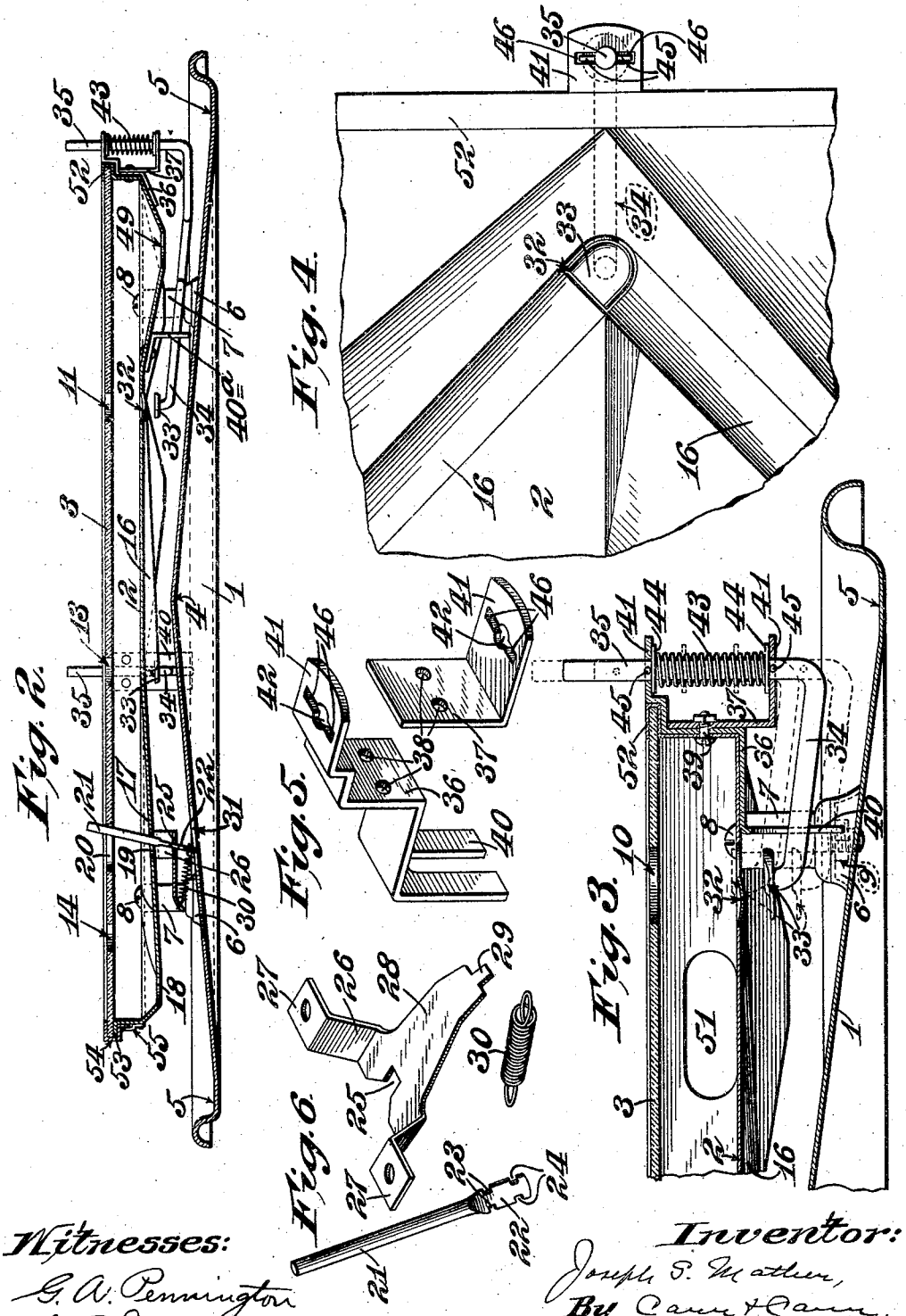


Fig. 2.

Fig. 4.

Fig. 5.

Fig. 3.

Fig. 6.

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3 SHEETS—SHEET 3.

Fig. 7.

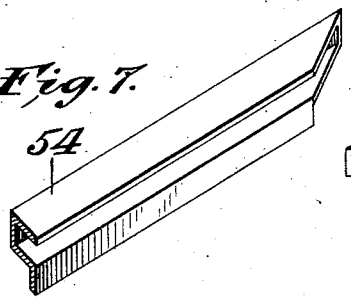


Fig. 8.

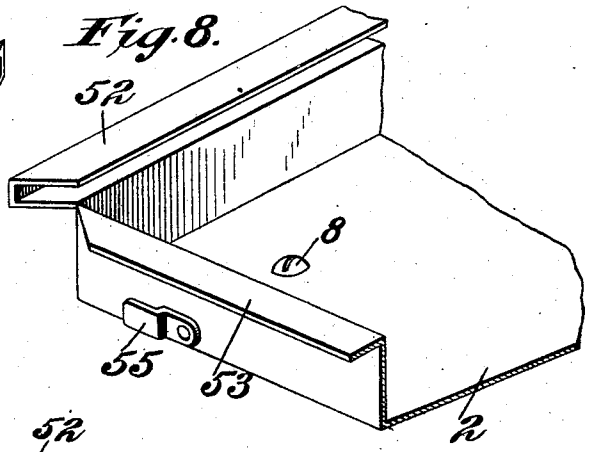


Fig. 9.

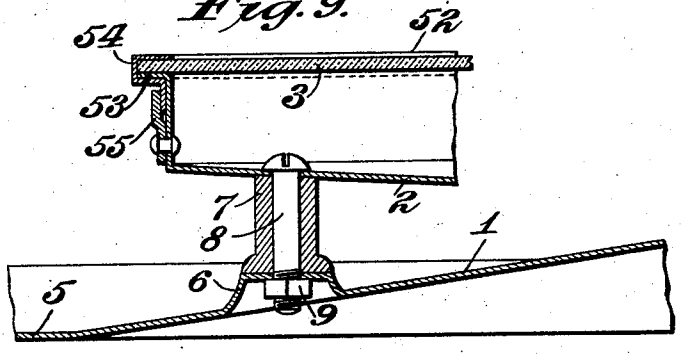
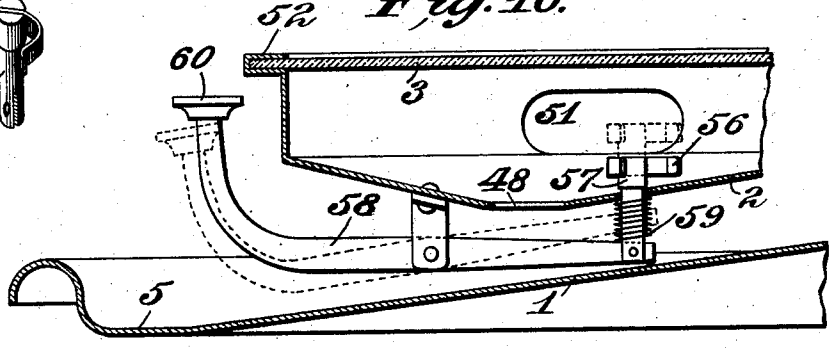


Fig. 11.



Fig. 10.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOSEPH S. MATHER, OF ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, ASSIGNOR TO MATHER GAME COMPANY, OF ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, A CORPORATION OF MISSOURI.

GAME APPARATUS.

No. 853,463. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented May 14, 1907.

Application filed May 7, 1906. Serial No. 315,517.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JOSEPH S. MATHER, a citizen of the United States, and a resident of the city of St. Louis and State of Missouri, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Game Apparatus, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to game apparatus, and has for its principal objects to improve upon the general construction and arrangement of the device disclosed in Letters Patent of the United States, No. 749,872, granted to me on January 19, 1904, for game apparatus for simulating the game of base ball; to improve the mechanism for manipulating and recovering the balls; and to secure other advantages hereinafter more fully appearing.

The invention consists in the parts and in the arrangements and combinations of parts hereinafter described and claimed.

In the accompanying drawings which form part of this specification, and wherein like symbols refer to like parts wherever they occur, Figure 1 is a plan view of my game apparatus, certain portions thereof being shown in section; Fig. 2 is a longitudinal section on the line 2—2 of Fig. 1; Fig. 3 is an enlarged detail sectional view on the line 3—3 of Fig. 1; Fig. 4 is a plan view of certain portions shown in Fig. 3; Fig. 5 is a detail view of the disassembled parts of a base-supporting bracket; Fig. 6 is a similar view of the parts of the batting-mechanism; Fig. 7 is a detail perspective view of a portion of the grooved inclosing strip for the transparent cover; Fig. 8 is a detail perspective view of a portion of the false bottom, showing the grooved pocket for the transparent cover and the coöperating parts for the grooved inclosing strip; Fig. 9 is a section on line 9—9 of Fig. 1; Fig. 10 is a section on line 10—10 of Fig. 1; Fig. 11 is a detail perspective of a catcher.

The apparatus comprises a rectangular bottom-board 1, a false-bottom or field-board 2 supported at a slight distance above said bottom-board, and a transparent cover 3, preferably of glass. The bottom 1 is preferably stamped up or shaped from some suitable sheet material. It is raised to a peak 4 near its center, from which point it slopes gradually in each direction toward a gutter 5 near the margin. The outer edges of the bottom are turned upwardly to form a surrounding wall for the gutter and are doubled back to form a stiffening bead.

The bottom 1 is formed with raised surfaces or bosses 6 upon which rest short tubular posts 7 which support the false-bottom 2. Securing screws 8 pass through registering perforations in the false bottom 2, tubular posts 7 and bottom 1, and are provided at their lower ends with locking nuts 9.

In the cover 3 are holes 10, 11 and 12, arranged to correspond to the positions of the first, second and third bases, respectively; a hole 13 over the pitcher's box; and a hole 14 above the home-plate. An additional hole 15 is arranged close to the hole 14 in the direction of the first base.

Upon the false-bottom 2 is laid off a representation of a base ball outfield and diamond. Around the diamond is formed a series of grooves or runways 16 which incline downwardly from base to base. There is also a groove 17 extending in a downward inclination from the pitcher's position to a point a short distance past the home base or catcher's position, said groove being widest at a point corresponding to the batter's position, and terminating at a hole 18.

Resiliently mounted beneath the false-bottom 2, and projecting upwardly through a slot 19 therein and a corresponding slot 20 in the cover 3, is a bat 21. The bat comprises a cylindrical rod having a flattened portion 22 in which are formed notches 23 and 24. The notches 23 are adapted to engage a notched seat 25 formed in a bracket 26. The bracket is provided with perforated ears 27 whereby the same may be riveted or otherwise secured to the false-bottom 2. An extension 28 is formed on the bracket 26 having a projection 29 adapted to receive a loop at one end of a spring 30. The loop at the opposite end of the spring is adapted to be secured in the notches 24 at the lower end of the bat 21. The bat is resiliently held with its upper end in a forwardly inclined position, and can be readily removed from the apparatus when necessary. To permit of access to the bat-supporting mechanism from beneath, an enlarged opening 31 is provided in the bottom 1.

At points corresponding to the positions of first, second and third bases, respectively, below the holes in the cover 3, the false-bot-

tom is provided with holes 32. Directly below these holes 32, on a plane slightly lower than the deepest portion or terminal of the runways 16, are mounted vertically movable base-plates 33. These base-plates are slightly dished, or formed with a retaining flange for the greater portion of their edges, and inclined in the direction of the downward inclination of the runways 16.

The base-plates 33 are supported upon shanks 34 extending outwardly beyond the false-bottom and formed with an upturned extension 35 slidingly mounted in brackets secured to the false-bottom. The brackets comprise two angular sections 36 and 37 provided with perforations 38 for the passage of securing bolts 39 or other suitable securing means. The bracket-section 36 is formed with a downward bifurcated extension 40 which serves as a guide-way for the shank 34. The horizontal portions 41 of the bracket-sections are provided with perforations 42 which are in vertical alinement when the sections are assembled in position, and through which the extension 35 of the shank is adapted to slide. Surrounding the shank extension 35 is a coiled spring 43 which is interposed between two washers 44. These washers are loosely mounted on said shank extension and normally bear against the two horizontal portions 41 of the bracket and against projecting pins 45 provided therefor on said shank extension. Oppositely disposed slots 46, opening into the perforations 42, are formed in the portions 41 of the bracket to permit the pins 44 to pass freely therethrough. Thus the shank is yieldingly held in normal position and permitted to move both upwardly and downwardly, as desired, the washer 44 becoming, alternately, spring-followers and abutments, as the case may be.

For convenience of location the supporting shank for the second base-plate is mounted with its extension 35 at the end of the false-bottom and formed with an offset portion to avoid the hole 49 in the centerfield. In this instance the bifurcated extension 40 is separated from the bracket section and independently mounted as at 40^a.

The outfield is divided into three depressed sections representing, respectively, right, left and center fields. These depressions incline toward holes 47, 48 and 49 which correspond to the positions of the fielders. A hole 50, also within a depressed section, corresponds to the positions of short-stop. Adjacent to the respective holes are "fielders" 56. These "fielders" are so arranged as not to obstruct the direct paths from the bat toward said holes. They are, however, adapted to catch and hold a ball when struck by the bat. Preferably, the "fielders" comprise catchers in the form of resilient clips curved substantially as shown in Fig. 1. The inside diameter of a clip is greater than the diameter of a ball, but the gap between its free ends is slightly less. The clips are secured in slots in the upper ends of vertically movable stems 57. The stems work in perforations in the false-bottom 2 and are pivotally connected to operating levers 58. Springs 59 surrounding the stems 57, and interposed between the false-bottom 2 and operating lever 58, yieldingly hold said clips in their normal depressed position. Buttons 60 are provided for the outer ends of said operating levers.

A ball driven with sufficient force will pass between or be caught by the free ends of the resilient clip. In order to release a ball when held by one of the clips, the operating lever connected thereto is manipulated to raise said clip, whereupon the ball will roll from beneath, toward the adjacent opening in the false-bottom, and drop therethrough onto the bottom-board and roll into the gutter where it can be recovered.

Beyond the right and left fields, respectively, openings 51 are provided in the rear wall of the false-bottom. These openings may be termed "home-run opening" and a ball batted through either opening is to be considered as having gone "over the fence"; therefore, a home-run is to be scored.

In order to removably mount the transparent cover 3 for the purpose of cleaning the playing-surface of the false-bottom 2, the side and rear walls of the false-bottom are bent outwardly at their upper edges and rebent upwardly and back over said outturned portion, thus forming a surrounding groove or pocket 52 into which the cover can be slid. The front wall is merely flanged outwardly as at 53 and receives a grooved inclosing strip 54 having a depending flange which is adapted to be engaged by locking buttons 55 pivotally mounted on the false-bottom.

The operation of the device is as follows: Assume that there are two players each provided with a set of balls of a distinguishing color or size, one set of balls representing the "inside" team and the other the "outside" team; then the player holding the balls representing the outside team drops a ball through the hole 13 over the pitcher's position and the other player manipulates the bat so as to strike therewith the ball as it rolls down the groove 17. The ball is thus batted out into the field and rolls toward one of the holes corresponding to the fielders' or short-stop's positions, and thence drops through said hole onto the inclined surface of the bottom-board, over which it rolls into the gutter at the border where it may be reached by the "outside" player and placed by him in any of the base holes which the rules of the game suggest. As soon at the batter strikes the ball, he drops one of the balls of the color or size indicating the inside

team, through the hole 15 near the home base and the ball rolls down the groove 16 to the first base where it comes to rest on the base-plate. In order to start the ball from one base to another it is only necessary to raise the base-plate to the level of the starting point of the next groove 16. This is accomplished by manipulating the shank of the base-plate. In this way the several bases may be successively covered by the ball representing a base-runner, provided, of course, it has not been anticipated or "put out" by the batted ball being placed upon a base before it is reached by a base-runner.

When a ball of the outside team occupies a base, it can be recovered by depressing the base-plate, whereupon the ball rolls off upon the inclined surface of the bottom board and into the gutter.

As hereinbefore stated, a ball batted through one of the openings 51 constitutes a home-run and is so recorded. Should a ball started from the pitcher's position pass the bat without being hit, it rolls into the opening 18 and is recorded as a strike. A ball driven into and held by one of the clips 56 when struck by the bat, is considered as caught "on the fly" and the batter is "put out."

With the apparatus herein described the ordinary game of base ball can be closely simulated and practically all of the regulation plays can be made, the results depending upon the skill and control of the operator.

Obviously, the apparatus admits of considerable modification within the scope of my invention, and therefore I do not wish to be limited to the specific construction shown and described.

What I claim as my invention and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. A game apparatus comprising a raised playing surface provided with a series of openings and with downwardly inclined grooves extending from opening to opening, respectively, and movable base-plates resiliently mounted and normally located in alinement with said openings on a plane below said playing surface and in coöperative relation to the lowermost terminal point of the grooves and adapted to be moved upwardly to a plane in coöperative relation to the uppermost starting point of the adjacent grooves.

2. A game apparatus comprising a raised playing surface provided with downwardly inclined grooves terminating and starting, respectively, at an opening in said surface, and a movable base-plate yieldingly mounted in normal coöperative relation to the lowermost terminal point of one groove and adapted to be moved upwardly into coöperative relation to the uppermost starting point of the adjacent groove, and also adapted to be depressed below said normal position.

3. A game apparatus comprising a raised playing surface provided with downwardly inclined grooves terminating and starting, respectively, at an opening in said surface, a base-plate normally located below said opening, in coöperative relation to the lowermost terminal point of one groove, and a yielding support for said base-plate, comprising a shank formed with an upturned portion slidingly mounted in fixed bearings, washers loosely mounted on said upturned shank portion adjacent to said bearings, a spring surrounding said upturned shank portion and interposed between said washers, and projections on said upturned shank portion adapted to engage said washers, whereby said base-plate can be raised into coöperative relation to the uppermost starting point of the adjacent groove, or depressed below said normal position.

4. A game apparatus comprising a raised playing surface provided with downwardly inclined grooves terminating and starting, respectively, at an opening in said surface, a base-plate normally located below said opening, in coöperative relation to the lowermost terminal point of one groove, and a yielding support for said base-plate, comprising a shank formed with an upturned portion, a bracket fixedly mounted with relation to said playing surface and formed with angular extensions having bearings therein for said upturned shank portion, a guide-way for said shank, washers loosely mounted on said upturned shank portion adjacent to said bearings, a spring surrounding said upturned shank portion and interposed between said washers, and projections on said upturned shank portion adapted to engage said washers, whereby said base-plate can be raised into coöperative relation to the uppermost starting point of the adjacent groove, or depressed below said normal position.

5. A game apparatus comprising a raised playing surface having a slot therein, a bracket secured beneath said playing surface, said bracket having a notched seat therein, a bat pivotally and detachably mounted in said seat and projecting upwardly through said slot, and a spring for yieldingly holding said bat to its seat with its upper portion in a normal forward position.

6. A game apparatus comprising a raised playing surface having a slot therein, a bracket mounted beneath said playing surface, said bracket having a body portion formed with a notched seat and a rearward extension, a bat formed with notches in its lower portion adapted to engage said notched seat with its upper portion projecting through said slot, and a spring secured to said bracket extension and the lower end of said bat, whereby said bat is yieldingly held to its seat with its upper portion in a normally forward position.

7. A game apparatus comprising a raised

false-bottom having side and end walls, and formed with a hole in its end wall, and with holes arranged in depressions in its upper face, in proximity to said end wall, and with downwardly inclined grooves, in the form of a diamond, in its upper face, said false-bottom also having holes at the corners of said diamond, vertically movable bases below said holes, means for manipulating said bases, a transparent cover having holes above said bases and a hole corresponding to the home-base, a resiliently mounted bat, means whereby a ball may be moved to the bat, and a bottom board having inclined faces and a gutter at its border.

8. A game apparatus comprising a bottom-board, a raised false-bottom forming a playing surface and having holes therein, said false bottom also having side and end walls, the side and one end wall being formed with elongated grooves, a transparent cover slidably engaging said grooves and having a slot and base-locating openings therein, and a removably mounted bat having its upper end portion projected above said cover through the slot therein.

9. A game apparatus comprising a bottom-board provided with inclined surfaces and a gutter at its border, a false-bottom supported above said bottom-board, said false-bottom being formed with surrounding walls and having its upper surface grooved and formed with holes arranged in inclined depressions and with a hole in its end wall, a bat, and means whereby a ball may be moved toward said bat.

10. A game apparatus comprising a bottom-board provided with inclined surfaces and a gutter at its border, a false-bottom supported above said bottom-board, said false bottom being formed with surrounding walls and having its upper surface grooved and formed with holes arranged in inclined depressions and with a hole in its end wall, a bat, and means whereby a ball may be moved toward said bat, said means comprising a downwardly inclined groove gradually widening from its starting point to a point in proximity to said bat.

11. A game-apparatus comprising a bottom-board provided with an inclined surface and a gutter at its border, a false-bottom supported above said bottom-board, said false-bottom forming a playing surface and having a hole therein, and a catcher adjacent to said hole.

12. A game-apparatus comprising a bottom-board provided with an inclined surface and a gutter at its border, a false-bottom supported above said bottom-board, said false bottom forming a playing surface and having a hole therein, a catcher adjacent to said hole, and means for manipulating said catcher.

13. A ball game apparatus comprising a playing surface, means for manipulating and forcibly moving a ball upon said playing surface and a catcher adapted to receive said ball, said catcher comprising a resilient clip having a gap between its free ends of a width less than the diameter of the ball.

14. A ball game apparatus comprising a playing surface, means for manipulating and forcibly moving a ball upon said playing surface, a catcher adapted to receive said ball, said catcher comprising a resilient clip, and means for manipulating said clip to release the ball.

15. A ball game apparatus comprising a playing surface having a hole therein, means for manipulating and forcibly moving a ball upon said playing surface, and a vertically movable catcher mounted above said playing surface near said hole and adapted to receive said ball.

16. A ball game apparatus comprising a playing surface having a hole therein, means for manipulating and forcibly moving a ball upon said playing surface, a vertically movable catcher mounted above said playing surface near said hole and adapted to receive said ball, and means for manipulating said catcher to release said ball.

17. A ball game-apparatus comprising a playing surface having a hole therein, means for manipulating and forcibly moving a ball upon said playing surface, a vertically movable catcher yieldingly held in normal position above said playing surface near said hole and adapted to receive said ball, and means for moving said catcher from normal position to release said ball.

18. A ball game apparatus comprising a playing surface, means for manipulating and forcibly moving a ball upon said playing surface, a vertically movable catcher adapted to receive said ball, said catcher comprising a resilient clip mounted upon a vertically movable stem, an operating lever connected to said stem, and a spring for holding said parts in normal position.

In testimony whereof, I have signed my name to this specification in the presence of two subscribing witnesses at Canton, Ohio, this 1 day of May, 1906.

JOSEPH S. MATHER.

Witnesses:
JAMES J. GRANT,
ROBERT C. MCKEIGHAN.