SAFETY HAT FOR WATER SKIERS

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This invention relates to headgear for sportsmen and, more particularly, to a hat or cap having warning means thereon and adapted to be used by water skiers.

Since the sport of water skiing becomes more popular every year, lakes and rivers are becoming increasingly crowded with boats and water skiers. As a result of these crowded conditions many accidents occur which result in injuries to water skiers when they are struck by oncoming boats after they have been spilled into the water upon losing control of their water skis and as they are waiting to be picked up by their towboats.

It is sometimes difficult to observe a person in the water when only the head of the person is above the surface of the water. This is especially true when certain reflections from the water almost completely obliterate any objects protruding above the surface. Also, in view of the fact that high speeds of small motor boats it is sometimes difficult to change course in time to avoid striking a person if the person is not observed from a relatively great distance.

Children who water ski are generally oblivious to the dangers of approaching motorboats inasmuch as their attention is distracted for one reason or another while they are in the water waiting to be picked up. A large percentage of the water accidents involving water skiers results in injuries to children who do not take proper precautionary measures to warn boat operators approaching their positions in the water.

In view of the foregoing, a need exists for a warning device for use by water skiers which is simple in construction yet which serves to warn approaching boat drivers of the presence of an individual in the water while the individual is waiting to be picked up or is swimming to shore after being spilled into the water upon loss of control of the water skis. The present invention satisfies this need by providing a safety device for water skiers comprised of a head covering or cap of the conventional type used by bathers and having a mast provided with a warning device thereon so that, when the water skier is in the water, the mast will project upwardly therefrom and the warning device on the mast will signal the presence of the water skier to operators of approaching boats.

It is, therefore, the primary object of the present invention to provide a safety hat for water skiers which can be worn in such a manner that a warning signal will be displayed in a position observable by the operator of an approaching boat when the water skier is in the water with only his head protruding above the surface thereof.

Another object of the present invention is the provision of a hat of the aforesaid character having warnings means thereon which is automatically disposed in an observable position when the wearer of the hat is in the water, whereby the wearer need not take any steps to place the warning device in the position and thus he can turn his attention to other activities such as maintaining the position in the water until help arrives.

Yet another object of the instant invention is the provision of a hat of the aforesaid character having warning means which can be worn in a retracted position but which moves automatically into an extended, operative position by the force of the water thereon as the wearer is spilled into the water, whereby the warning means automatically moves into the operative position and can be readily observed by operators of approaching or passing motor boats from a relatively great distance from the wearer so as to warn such operators of the presence of the wearer in the water.

In the drawings:

FIGURE 1 is one embodiment of the hat made pursuant to the concepts of the present invention and illustrating its use on the head of a wearer thereof.

FIG. 2 is an enlarged, fragmentary, cross-sectional view of the hat illustrating the way in which the warning means thereof is attached thereto;

FIG. 3 is another and preferred embodiment of the hat showing the warning means in a retracted position prior to use thereof;

FIG. 4 is a view similar to FIG. 2 but illustrating the spring clip for maintaining the warning means in a retracted position;

FIG. 5 is an end elevational view of the spring clip; and

FIG. 6 is a top view of the warning means and the base for attaching the same to the hat.

The present invention is directed to a hat having observably warning means thereon for use by water skiers to signal to the operator of an approaching motor boat the presence of the wearer in the water in the vicinity of the path of travel of the boat. The hat comprises a hat member having a crown from which the warning means extends in an upward direction. The warning means includes a base rigidly secured to the crown of the hat, a mast projecting outwardly from the base, and a warning device, such as a pennant, on the outer end of the mast.

The pennant may be of brightly colored material so as to be readily observed from a relatively great distance.

In one embodiment of the invention, the mast is at all times maintained in a position extending outwardly from the crown. In another embodiment, the base is provided with a spring clip for releasably maintaining the mast in a retracted position extending rearwardly from the crown, and, upon contact with the water when the wearer is spilled into the water, the mast will automatically move into an operative, observable position extending upwardly from the crown.

The first embodiment of the hat is denoted by the numeral 10 and includes a hat number 12 having a crown 14 and adapted to be worn on the head in the usual manner. Hat member 12 may be of any construction but preferably it is made in the same manner as conventional bathing caps.

Warning means 16 is coupled with and extends outwardly from crown 14 and comprises a base 18 having a mast 20 integral therewith and extending outwardly from one face 22 thereof. The opposite face 24 of base 18 is in complementary engagement with and bonded to the outer surface of crown 14 in any suitable manner such as by an adhesive. If hat member 12 and base 18 are formed of thermoplastic materials, the same may be fused together upon the application of heat thereto.

A warning device in the nature of a pennant 26 is secured to and extends laterally from the upper end of mast 20. Pennant 26 may be formed of a fabric material or can be rigid as shown in FIG. 1. Moreover, pennant 26 is preferably brightly colored so as to be observed from a relatively great distance therefrom.

In use, mast 20 extends upwardly from crown 14 at all times as hat 10 is worn and, when the wearer is spilled into the water or otherwise is in the water for some reason, mast 20 will extend upwardly from crown 14 and pennant 26 will be observed in substantially all directions.

Another embodiment of the hat is denoted by the numeral 110 and is illustrated in FIGS. 3—6. Hat 110 includes a hat member 112 having a crown 114 and warning means 116 secured to crown 114. Hat member 112 is to be worn in the usual way on the head of the wearer.
Warning means 116 includes an oval base 118 having a mast 120 integral therewith and projecting outwardly from one face 122 thereof adjacent one extremity as shown in FIG. 6. The opposite face 124 of base 118 is in complemental engagement with and is bonded to the outer surface of crown 114. If hat member 112 and base 118 are foight of thermoplastic materials, first interconnection between mast 120 and base 118, when said mast 120 is embedded therewith. Clip 128, however, may be secured in any suitable manner to base 118.

In use, mast 120 is normally in the retracted position shown in FIG. 5 during normal water skiing operations, but if the wearer is spilled into the water upon loss of control of his skis, the force of the water on mast 120 and pennant 126 will move mast 120 out of spring clip 128 and the resilience of mast 120 will cause the same to extend upwardly from base 118 and be maintained in an upright position with respect to crown 114. Thus, pennant 126 may be viewed from substantially all directions and therefore provide a signal to warn approaching or passing boats of the presence of the wearer in the water.

The present invention, therefore, provides a warning device which can be observed from substantially all directions and at relatively large distances from the wearer so as to signal the presence of the wearer in the water. In the embodiment of the invention shown in FIGS. 3-6, the warning means is maintained in a retracted, inoperative position until ready for use and is automatically moved into an operative, observable position when the wearer is spilled into the water.

Having thus described the invention, what is claimed as new and desired to be secured by Letters Patent is:

1. A safety hat for water skiers comprising:
a hat member having a crown section and adapted to be worn over the head of the user thereof;
a resilient mast secured to the hat member and biased toward a location extending upwardly from said crown section, said mast being movable relative to said hat member into a folded position in close, direct overlapping relationship to said crown section;
means on the crown section of the hat member for normally maintaining the mast in said folded position and operable to release said mast to its normal upward position upon impact of the mast against the water when the skier falls; and
means defining a warning device on the upper end of said mast.

2. A safety hat as set forth in claim 1, wherein is provided a base rigidly mounted on the outer surface of the crown, said mast being integral with said base.

3. A safety hat as set forth in claim 1, wherein said hat member is formed from a flexible material, and wherein is provided a base bonded to the outer surface of said crown, said mast being integral with the base.

4. A safety hat as set forth in claim 3, wherein said base has an inner surface computely engaging said outer surface of the crown when said base is secured thereto.

5. A safety hat as set forth in claim 1, wherein said maintaining means includes a spring clip.

6. A safety hat as set forth in claim 6, wherein said maintaining means includes a U-shaped spring clip having a bight and a pair of sides secured to the bight, said bight being coupled with said hat member in spaced relationship to the mast, said mast being disposed between said sides and releasably gripped thereby when said mast in said position.

7. A safety hat as set forth in claim 6, wherein is provided a base bonded to the outer surface of said crown, said mast being integral with said base, said bight being rigidly secured to said base with said sides extending outwardly therefrom.

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