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Saliger

[11] **3,877,702**

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[54] **MARBLE GAME TABLE WITH PERIPHERAL POCKETS AND CUSHIONS**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/125 R;** 273/9; 273/11 C; 273/12

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63d 13/00**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/11 R, 11 C, 118 R, 273/118 A, 118 D, 121 R, 121 D, 122 R, 123 R, 124 R, 125 R, 3 A, 7

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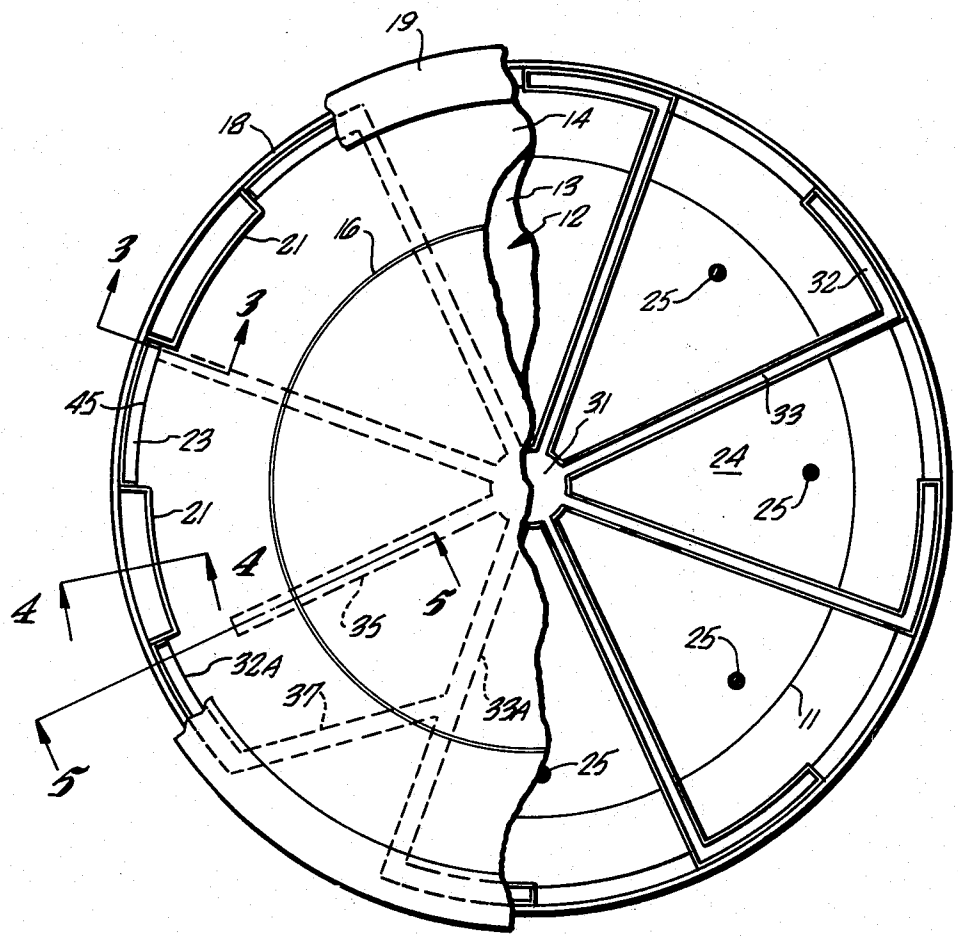
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A base supports a circular playing surface having an upstanding peripheral rim. Pockets or surface apertures and cushions for billiard shots are alternately and equally disposed about the rim. Troughs beneath the playing surface extend from the pockets to a collector. A marble size separator extends toward the peripheral rim from the collector and connects to a pair of discharge chutes each of which extend through a depending portion of the peripheral rim that masks the troughs, collector and separator. The playing surface and marble handling apparatus are supported upon leveling screws secured to the support base. The discharge chutes for the return of marbles which enter the playing surface pockets may be combined with a coin-operated mechanism to require a fee before the marbles are returned to the players.

5 Claims, 6 Drawing Figures



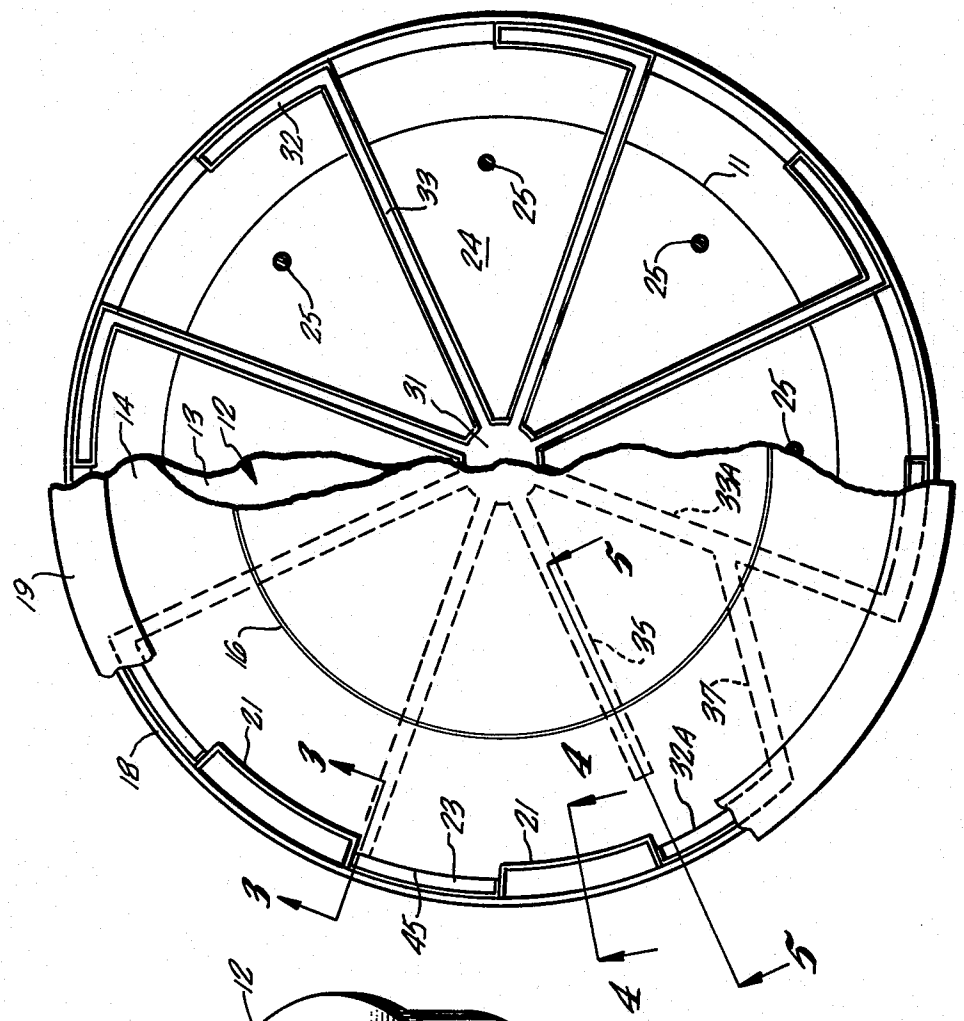

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FIG. 2

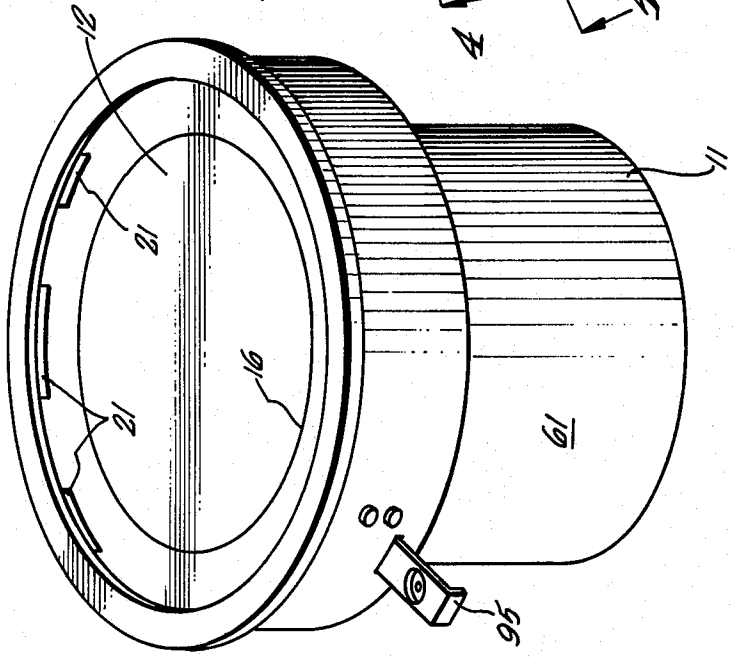
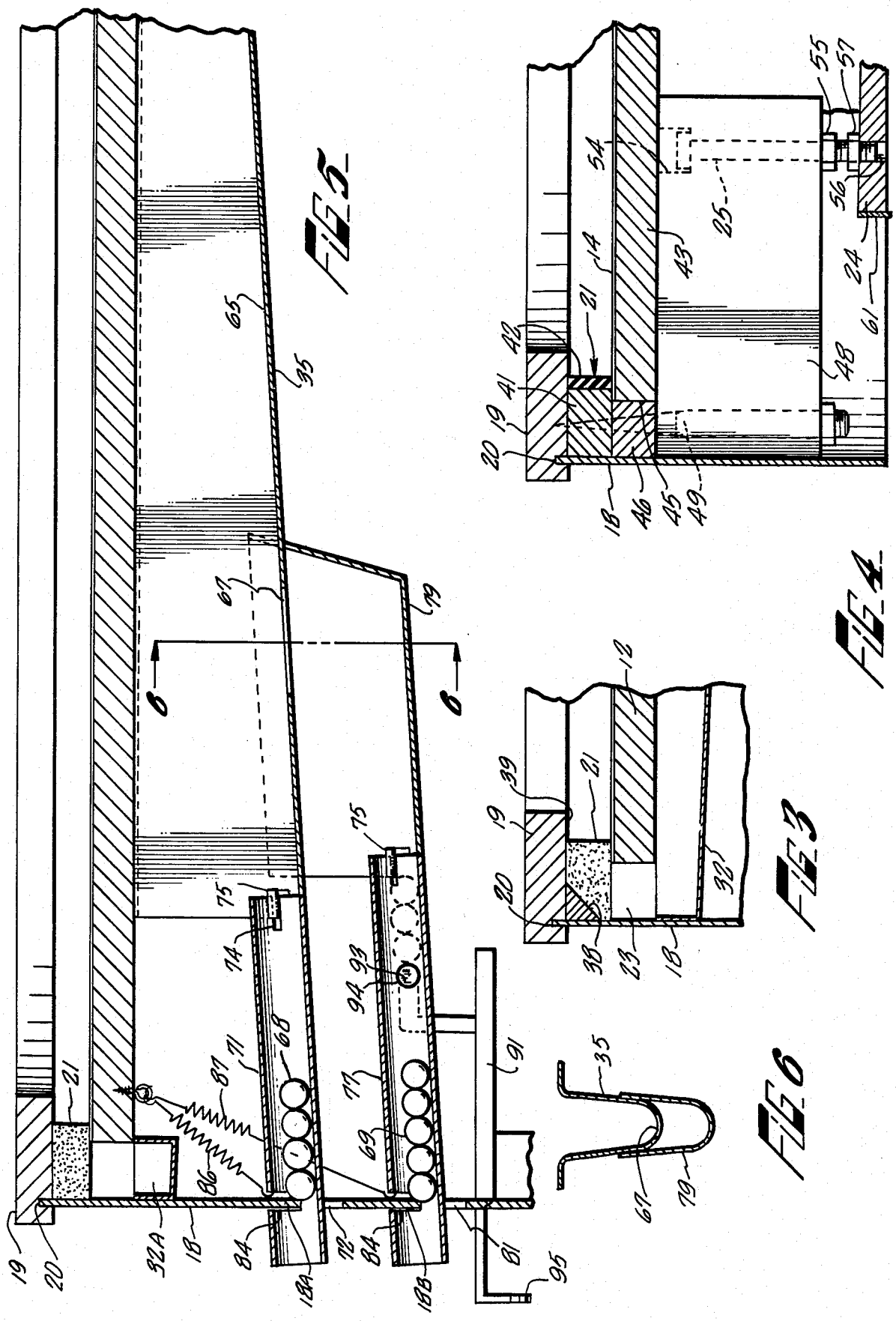

12
11
21
21
16
61
95

FIG. 1


FIG 5
FIG 4
FIG 3
FIG 6
6
6

MARBLE GAME TABLE WITH PERIPHERAL POCKETS AND CUSHIONS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to a playing table for the traditional game of marbles and more particular to such playing tables wherein the playing pieces, such as marbles, are collected when and if they leave the playing surface. Known prior patents in the field include the following:

2,621,931	Kennon	2,943,858	Slater
2,636,740	MacNeal	3,315,960	Frigo
2,639,151	Kennon	3,526,404	Wiggins

Previous playing surfaces for marble games have included complicated gating apparatus and scoring arrangements which did not necessarily enhance the amusement value of the games. An object of the invention is to provide a marble game table wherein alternating pockets and cushions surround the playing surface to allow a new variation of the traditional game of marbles in that it provides the players with an opportunity to use their skill in shooting marbles by utilizing appropriate billiard shots off the cushions at the risk of losing the shooter into the pockets, thus making the game more challenging for the player. An additional object of the invention is to provide a marble return system through a collector system of troughs such that the marbles are returned to a common discharge point for retrieval. The components of the marble game table can be adapted to fine furniture design such that the marble game table is a desirable furnishing in any room of the house.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention contemplates a marble game table which comprises a base with a playing surface on the base and a peripheral rim about the playing surface. A plurality of spaced billiard cushions are adjacent the playing surface about the rim. A like plurality of playing surface apertures or pockets are adjacent the rim and a trough from each aperture extends to a central collector. A marble separator extends from the collector to a pair of return chutes which extend through an annular rim portion depending from the playing surface. Closure means releasably retain the marbles in each of the return chutes.

The chutes are preferably arranged such that a coinoperated stop may intervene in the path of the marbles within the chutes to preclude their discharge from the chutes until a fee is paid.

The marble game table of the invention is simple to fabricate and easy to level for playing. It affords a marble game more stimulating and challenging than normal games utilizing a marble shooter and target marbles but requires little physical or mental adjustment for the players to utilize the apparatus afforded. These and other advantages of the invention are apparent from the following detailed description and drawing.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

FIG. 1 is a perspective plan view of a marble game table in accordance with the invention;

FIG. 2 is a plan view, partly broken away, of the embodiment of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary sectional elevational taken along line 3—3 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary sectional elevation taken along line 4—4 of FIG. 2;

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary sectional elevation taken along line 5—5 of FIG. 2 and showing the separator and discharge chutes; and

FIG. 6 is a fragmentary sectional elevation taken along line 6—6 of FIG. 5.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

In FIGS. 1 and 2 a cylindrical base **11**, which may be hollow, supports a circular playing surface **12** comprised of a solid laminate **13** such as plywood and a cover **14** which may be of billiard felt. A shooting ring **16** is marked on the felt and has a diameter slightly less than the diameter of an upstanding rim **18** fixed to the laminate **13.**

The rim is fitted into an overlying ring **19** in a groove **20** therein (see FIG. **4**) such that the rim and the ring are substantially unitary. A plurality of rail segments or cushions **21** are spaced about the periphery of the playing surface and back against the rim **18.** The cushions are preferably of a resilient material such that marbles impinging upon them bounce back with substantially the same velocity as they arrive at the cushion. Between each of the cushions **21** is a pocket defined by an aperture **23** in the edge of playing surface **12.** Preferably the circumferential extent of the pocket is approximately equal to the extent of a cushion such that the circumference of the playing surface is equally divided between pockets and cushions.

Laminate **13** is supported from a base top **24** by a plurality of leveling screws **25** whose locations are indicated in FIG. **2.** The leveling screws are discussed in detail later with respect to FIG. **4.**

As can be seen from FIG. **2,** L-shaped troughs extend from each pocket defined by the playing surface apertures to a central collector **31.** Each trough has a circumferential leg **32** which is coextensive with the playing surface aperture to which it is adjacent. From each circumferential leg a radial leg **33** extends to the collector **31.**

The number of apertures and cushions may vary with a consequent increase or decrease in the number of troughs required. However, in the illustrative embodiment where a playing surface diameter of approximately 4 feet is assumed, a circumferential division into eight pockets and eight cushions is desirable for a challenging marble game. Therefore, there are shown eight troughs each extending from a pocket to a central collector **31.**

A separator assembly **35,** shown in dotted lines in FIG. **2,** extends from the collector at approximately the point where the eighth trough would intercept the collector. Therefore, trough leg **32A** has a second chord leg **37** extending from an end of the leg **32A** to adjacent radial leg **33A** shown in dotted lines. The troughs, collector and separator may be integrally molded from a suitable material, such as polyethylene plastic, and secured in suitable fashion to either the rim **18** or the underside of the playing surface laminate **13.**

It can be seen that the overlying ring **19** inhibits the inadvertent loss of marbles from the playing surface by overhanging the billiard cushions such that careless shots do not escape the table.

The general arrangement of the ring **19** with respect to the cushions or rails **21** is shown in section in FIG. **3** wherein the apertures **23** are seen to intervene arcuately between the rails **21** and lie beneath an angular buffer **38** and above the troughs **32.** The overhanging underside **39** of ring **19,** as stated before, inhibits marbles striking the cushion from leaving the table.

As can be seen from FIG. **4,** the cushions may each comprise a back-up rail **41** of wood or other suitable material surrounded by a resilient cover or coating **42** of a suitable material such as rubber or neoprene. Referring back to FIG. **2,** it can be seen that the coating extends not only circumferentially but radially at each end of each rail block **41.**

To simplify fabrication the playing surface may terminate in a circumferential edge **45** and the apertures be defined by the circumferential edge **45** and arcuate blocks, such as the blocks **46,** underlying each of the rails and defining the ends of the pockets. An annular block **48** reinforces the outer edge of the playing surface and may be secured by a recessed screw **49** at several points about its periphery to the blocks **46** and the back-up rail blocks **41.** The screw may extend into the ring **19** to unify the structure.

Again referring to FIG. **4,** it can be seen that a bolt plurality, such as the bolt **25,** mentioned with respect to FIG. **2** may each be secured in the annular block **48** between a bolt head **54** and a nut **55** and extend into an aperture **56** in the bearing top of the base **24** to locate the playing surface with respect to the base. Leveling may be achieved by a stop nut **57** adjustable along the bolt to regulate the extent of the bolt and therefore the playing surface height above the bearing top **24.** A cosmetic cylindrical surround **61** is suitably secured to the base top **24** and may rest upon the floor or other support surface for the marble game table.

It is to be understood that these details of construction are for the purpose of illustration only and that the invention does not preclude other support means for the playing surface.

FIG. **5** shows in cross section the elements for returning the different-sized playing pieces, such as marbles, to the player after they have entered the pockets from the playing surface. Normally one or more large shooters are used with a plurality of smaller target marbles. The separator **35** has a sloping floor **65** which extends from collector **31** toward rim **18.** Midway between the collector and the rim the separator has a central slot **67** which is smaller in width than the shooter marbles **68** shown in FIG. **5** but wider than the target marbles **69** shown in that FIGURE The larger shooter marbles therefore span the slot and continue along the slot into an upper discharge tube **71** which extends through an aperture **72** of rim **18.** The inner end of discharge chute **71** is slotted at **74** on either side of its end to engage cut-outs **75** in the collector wall. A second discharge tube **77** for the target marbles is similarly engaged with the lower floor **79** of the separator and passes through an aperture **81** in the rim **18.**

Each discharge chute has an upwardly opening transverse slot **84** coinciding with the extent of the rim **18** about apertures **72** and **81** respectively. An extension spring **86** biases chute **71** upwardly such that the rim portion **18A** extending into slot **84** precludes the passage of shooter marbles **68** past the rim. Similarly, an extension spring **87** biases discharge chute **77** upwardly such that rim portion **18B** extends into slot **84** to preclude passage of the target marble **69** from the discharge chute until desired.

A player wishing to retrieve either shooter or target marbles need only depress the outer ends of either discharge chute against the bias of their respective extension springs to move the chutes downwardly in their apertures **72** and **81,** respectively, and thus displace the chute with respect to the rim portion such that the marbles roll easily from the discharge chutes into the hands of the user.

If desired, a coin-operated lever mechanism **91** of conventional design may be combined with the other elements of the illustrative embodiment to collect a fee before marbles are returned to the user for replay. As can be seen with respect to chute **77,** a transverse pin **93** may extend through a transverse aperture **94** to block passage of marbles along chute **77.** Inward thrust of the coin-containing operating handle **95** of the coin mechanism **91** results in withdrawal of transverse pin **93** from the chute interior such that marbles may roll to the discharge point. Such coin-operated mechanisms are in common usage and divers arrangements may be employed for linking such mechanisms to the transverse pins and the assembly is therefore not further described. Similarly, a transverse blocking pin may be used in conjunction with chute **71** and the two pins linked so that a single coin makes both discharge chutes operable to supply the user with playing marbles.

The illustrative embodiment does not exhaust the scope of the invention. Alternatives in addition to those suggested herein will occur to those skilled in this particular art. It is therefore desired that the scope of the invention be measured by the appended claims rather than the purely illustrative embodiment shown and described herein.

I claim:

1. A marble game table comprising, in combination: a base, a playing surface on the base, a peripheral rim about the playing surface, a plurality of spaced billiard cushions adjacent to the playing surface about the rim, a plurality of playing surface apertures adjacent the rim, a respective opening leading from the playing surface into each respective aperture, the circumferential extent of all billiard cushions equalling the circumferential extent of all playing surface openings, a marble collector, a trough from each aperture to a collector, a marble size separator extending from the collector, a pair of return chutes connecting to the separator remote from the collector, and manipulatable means for releasably retaining marbles in each return chute.

2. A marble game in accordance with claim **1** wherein the billiard cushions and the apertures alternate along the playing surface periphery.

3. A marble game in accordance with claim **1** further comprising level adjusting means supporting the playing surface above the base.

4. A marble game in accordance with claim **1** further comprising a rim annulus below the playing surface, said annulus supporting the discharge ends of said marble return chutes.

5. A marble game in accordance with claim **4** wherein the means for releasably retaining marbles in each return chute comprises a rim annulus wall portion receiving each chute, an annulus wall tab extending into each chute so as to block a marble in said chute, spring means retaining said chute and tab in blocking position, said annulus wall portion defining a chute aperture greater in the line of spring loading than the like outer dimension of the chute such that the chute and wall tab may be separated when the spring means force is overcome.

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