HAND HOLDER FOOTBALL KICKING TEE

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ABSTRACT

A football kicking tee is disclosed for holding a football in position for place kicking without the assistance of another person. The kicking tee comprises an artificial hand secured to a framework. The artificial hand can be rotated on the framework and bent to simulate the visual experience of a human holder holding a football. The framework is a pivotable assembly comprising an arm assembly and a stand assembly which can be clamped together at substantially a right angle for use, or folded flat for storage or transporting. When the kicking tee is in use holding a football ready to be kicked, the arm is held in an approximately horizontal position, supported on one end by the hand resting on the football and on the other end by the stand which in turn rests on the playing surface.
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CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application discloses the same invention disclosed in provisional patent application 60/936,659. In this application an improved embodiment of the invention is disclosed, but it is apparent that the provisional patent 60/936,659 discloses the embodiments of the invention defined in claims 1 and 2 of this application.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] Not applicable

REFERENCE TO SEQUENCE LISTING, A TABLE, OR A COMPUTER PROGRAM LISTING COMPACT DISC APPENDIX

[0003] Not applicable

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0004] In the game of football, field goals, point after touchdown and kickoffs are place kicks. In place kicks the ball is held in a fixed position on the ground, on a flat block or on a kicking tee. In field goals, extra points and on kickoffs in windy conditions another player called the holder holds the ball in a substantially upright position while the place kicker kicks the ball. It is customary for the holder to hold the ball upright with his left hand when the place kicker is kicking the ball with his right foot, and to hold the ball with his right hand when the place kicker is kicking the ball with his left foot. The invention is a training aid that allows the place kicker to practice without the aid of another person to hold the ball upright.

[0005] In order to excel in the art of place kicking, the kicker will practice hundreds of hours. Like most athletes the kicker will practice individually and in team practices where place kicking situations are simulated. Although simulated game situations are the most beneficial for the place kicker to prepare for the precise timing requirements and defensive pressure encountered in game situations, the players required for this simulation will be available for a limited amount of time. Because of that limitation, it is advantageous for the individual practice to simulate the game situation as closely as possible. Prior art allows the place kicker to practice without the aid of another player to hold the ball upright. However prior art does not simulate the appearance of the ball being held by another player.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] An object of this invention is to provide a kicking tee that allows the place kicker to practice the art of place kicking without the assistance of another person to hold the ball in an upright position.

[0007] Another object of this invention is to provide a kicking tee that simulates the visual experience of place kicking in game situations during individual practice.

[0008] Another object of this invention is to provide a kicking tee that can be easily adjusted into a compact configuration to facilitate transporting and storage.

[0009] Another object of this invention is to provide a kicking tee that is easy to use.

[0010] Another object of this invention is to provide a kicking tee that provides marketing and advertising opportunities when used utilized on the sidelines during games.

[0011] A final object of this invention is to provide a kicking tee that is inexpensive to manufacture.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWING

[0012] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the hand holder kicking tee in use holding a football in an upright position.

[0013] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the hand holder kicking tee in the compact configuration for transporting or storage.

[0014] FIG. 3 is a side view of the hand holder kicking tee configured for use.

[0015] FIG. 4 is a side view of the arm assembly.

[0016] FIG. 5 is a top view of the artificial hand assembly.

[0017] FIG. 6 is a magnified perspective view of the clamp assembly portion of the arm assembly.

[0018] FIG. 7 is a front view of the stand assembly.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0019] The particularly advantageous embodiment of the present invention is disclosed holding a football ready to be kicked in FIG. 1. FIG. 1 illustrates a hand holder kicking tee intended to simulate the holder for a place kicker, who kicks with his right foot. A similar product intended to be used by place kickers who kick with their left foot would be identical, except that the artificial hand would be in the form of a right hand and would be placed on the left side of the ball, from the perspective of the place kicker.

[0020] The hand holder kicking tee advantageously comprises an arm assembly illustrated in FIG. 4 and a stand assembly illustrated in FIG. 7. When the hand holder kicking tee is assembled as shown in FIGS. 1-3, the crossbar 6 of the stand passes through the hole 13 in the tube 3 of the arm assembly.

[0021] In the preferred embodiment, the clamp assembly portion of the arm assembly illustrated in FIG. 6 is comprised of a PVC pipe 3 with a horizontal hole 13 drilled through the side on a diameter of the clamp assembly end. A PVC block 7 is glued to the arm assembly tube 3. A hole is drilled in the center of the top of the PVC block 7 to accept a carriage bolt 8. A horizontal axial cut 15 is made in the arm tube 3 through the center of the block 7 through the axis of the hole 13. The carriage bolt 8 is inserted through the hole in the block 7 and the wing nut 11 is installed on the carriage bolt 8 from the bottom.

[0022] When the wing nut 11 is loosened on the carriage bolt 8 of the clamp assembly portion of the arm assembly, the stand is free to rotate about the axis of the crossbar 6. When the desired position of the stand relative to the arm assembly is attained, the relative position can be secured by tightening the wing nut 11 on the carriage bolt 8.

[0023] The artificial hand assembly illustrated in FIG. 5 is advantageously comprised of a cylindrical hard plastic base 14 with five ductile wires 12 embedded parallel to the axis of the cylindrical base 14. The cylindrical base 14 has an outside diameter that is a slip fit inside the inside diameter of the PVC pipe 3 the arm assembly. The wires 12 are bent into 14 positions that follow the centerlines of the fingers and thumb of a mold of a human hand. The wires 12 are inserted into the human hand mold with the cylindrical base 14 adjacent to the wrist.
portion of the mold. The hand is cast with an elastomer in a manner well known by a person with ordinary skill in the art of rubber molding. The wires 12 make the artificial hand 2 bendable, so that it can be formed into the position similar to that used by the human holder in game situations. The elastomer of the artificial hand 2 simulates the compliant nature of a human hand and enhances its adhesion to the football.

The artificial hand assembly is attached to the arm assembly by inserting the cylindrical base 14 of the artificial hand into the end of the PVC pipe 3 of the arm assembly and securing it with a screw 16. A plurality of radial holes are drilled into the cylindrical base 14 of the artificial hand assembly to accept the screw 16, allowing the artificial hand assembly to be secured at an angle that simulates the position the human holder customarily holds his hand when holding the ball.

The artificial hand 2 can be optionally covered with a glove to more closely simulate the game situation or to provide a marketing opportunity when used on the sidelines during games. Similarly the arm tube 3 can be completely or partially covered with decals, stickers or other promotional material.

The stand illustrated in FIG. 7 is comprised of two PVC legs 4 and 10 attached to a PVC crossbar 6 with two identical 90 degree fittings 5 and 9 in the form of three sides of a rectangle. It will be apparent to a person skilled in the art, that the crossbar 6 must be inserted through the hole 13 in the PVC pipe 3 of the arm assembly before the second of the 90 degree fittings 5 and 9 is glued to the crossbar 6. The legs 4 and 10 of the stand assembly have end caps 17 and 18 secured to one end and may optionally be filled with a dense material such as mortar to improve the stability of the hand holder kicking tee.

It will be apparent that various changes and modifications can be made without departing from the scope of the invention as defined in the claims.

1. A football kicking tee for holding a football upright, for kicking, comprising:
   a) an artificial human hand; and
   b) a supporting framework.

2. A football kicking tee as in claim 1, wherein:
   a) said artificial hand is secured to said framework;
   b) a portion of said framework rests on the playing surface; and
   c) said artificial hand rests on the top of the football which in turn rests on the playing surface, holding the football in an upright position.

3. A football kicking tee as in claim 1, wherein:
   a) said artificial hand comprising a hard cylindrical base, five ductile wires and an elastomer molding in the shape of a human hand;
   b) said ductile metal wires have one end embedded in said cylindrical base, parallel to the axis of the cylinder, evenly spaced along a diameter of said cylindrical base with the other end of said wires protruding from said cylindrical base;
   c) said ductile wires are bent to lie on the centerlines of the fingers and thumb of the mold of a human hand, extending from said finger and thumb tips to said cylindrical base positioned at the wrist of said mold while said artificial hand is molded with an elastomer;
   d) said cylindrical base has a plurality of radial holes, one of which accepts a screw to secure said hand to said supporting framework; and
   e) said artificial hand can be in the form of either a human right hand or a human left hand to simulate a human holder using his right or left hand to hold the football.

4. A framework for a football kicking tee comprising:
   a) an arm having first end and second end portions; and
   b) a stand comprising first and second vertical legs and a horizontal crossbar.

5. A framework for a football kicking tee as in claim 4, wherein:
   a) said artificial hand is secured to said first end portion of said arm; and
   b) said second end portion of said arm comprises a clamp assembly that pivotally secures said stand to said arm.

6. A framework for a football kicking tee as in claim 4, wherein:
   a) said legs of said stand are tubes having first and second end portions;
   b) said crossbar of said stand is a tube with first and second end portions;
   c) said stand has first and second end caps; and
   d) said stand has first and second right angle fittings.

7. A framework for a football kicking tee as in claim 4, wherein:
   a) said arm is a tube wherein the inside diameter of said first end portion of said arm is a slip fit over said cylindrical base of said artificial hand and has a hole in said first end portion for a screw to secure said cylindrical base of said artificial hand to said arm tube;
   b) said second end portion of said arm is secured to a rectangular block which has a square cross section with sides somewhat larger than the outside diameter of said arm tube when viewed along the axis of said arm tube;
   c) said block has a thickness along the axis of said arm tube somewhat less than the diameter of said arm tube;
   d) the top face of said block lies in a horizontal plane;
   e) a vertical hole to accommodate a carriage bolt is drilled through the center of said top face of said block perpendicular to said top face;
   f) said second end portion of said arm has a horizontal hole drilled on a horizontal diameter of said arm tube;
   g) the diameter of said hole in said second end portion of said arm is a slip fit for said crossbar of said stand;
   h) a horizontal slot is cut through said block and said second end portion of said arm tube from the horizontal centerline of said block to the axis of said hole drilled to accommodate said crossbar in said second end portion of said arm tube; and
   i) a carriage bolt is inserted from the top through said vertical hole in said rectangular block and a wing nut is threaded onto the end of said carriage bolt which protrudes through the bottom face of said rectangular block.

8. A framework for a football kicking tee as in claim 6, wherein:
   a) said first end cap is secured to first end portion of said first leg tube;
   b) said second end cap is secured to first end portion of said second leg tube;
   c) said capped leg tubes are filled with wet mortar through the second end and are allowed to cure;
   d) said first right angle fitting is secured to the second end of said first capped and filled leg tube;
   e) said second right angle fitting is secured to the second end of said second capped and filled leg tube;
1) said crossbar of said stand is inserted through the hole in said second end portion of said arm tube;  
g) the free end of said first right angle fitting is secured to said first end portion of said cross bar; and  
h) the free end of the said second right angle fitting is secured to said second end portion of said crossbar positioned so that said legs, and crossbar are arranged in the form of three sides of a rectangle.  
9. A framework for a football kicking tee as in claim 8 wherein:  
a) said stand is free to rotate about the axis of the said crossbar when said wing nut in the second end portion of said arm is loosened; and  
b) said stand is held fixed relative to said arm when said wing nut is tightened.  
10. A framework for a football kicking tee as in claim 7, wherein:  
a) said arm tube is a PVC pipe; and  
b) said rectangular block is PVC.  
11. A framework for a football kicking tee as in claim 6, wherein:  
a) said first and second legs are PVC pipes;  
b) said crossbar is a PVC pipe;  
c) said first and second end caps are PVC pipe caps; and  
d) said first and second right angle fittings are PVC ninety degree elbows.  
12. A football kicking tee as in claim 1, wherein:  
a) said artificial hand is is outfitted with a glove; and  
b) said glove serves as a substrate for marketing and advertising markings.  
13. A framework for a football kicking tee as in claim 4 wherein:  
a) said arm serves a substrate for marketing and advertising markings.