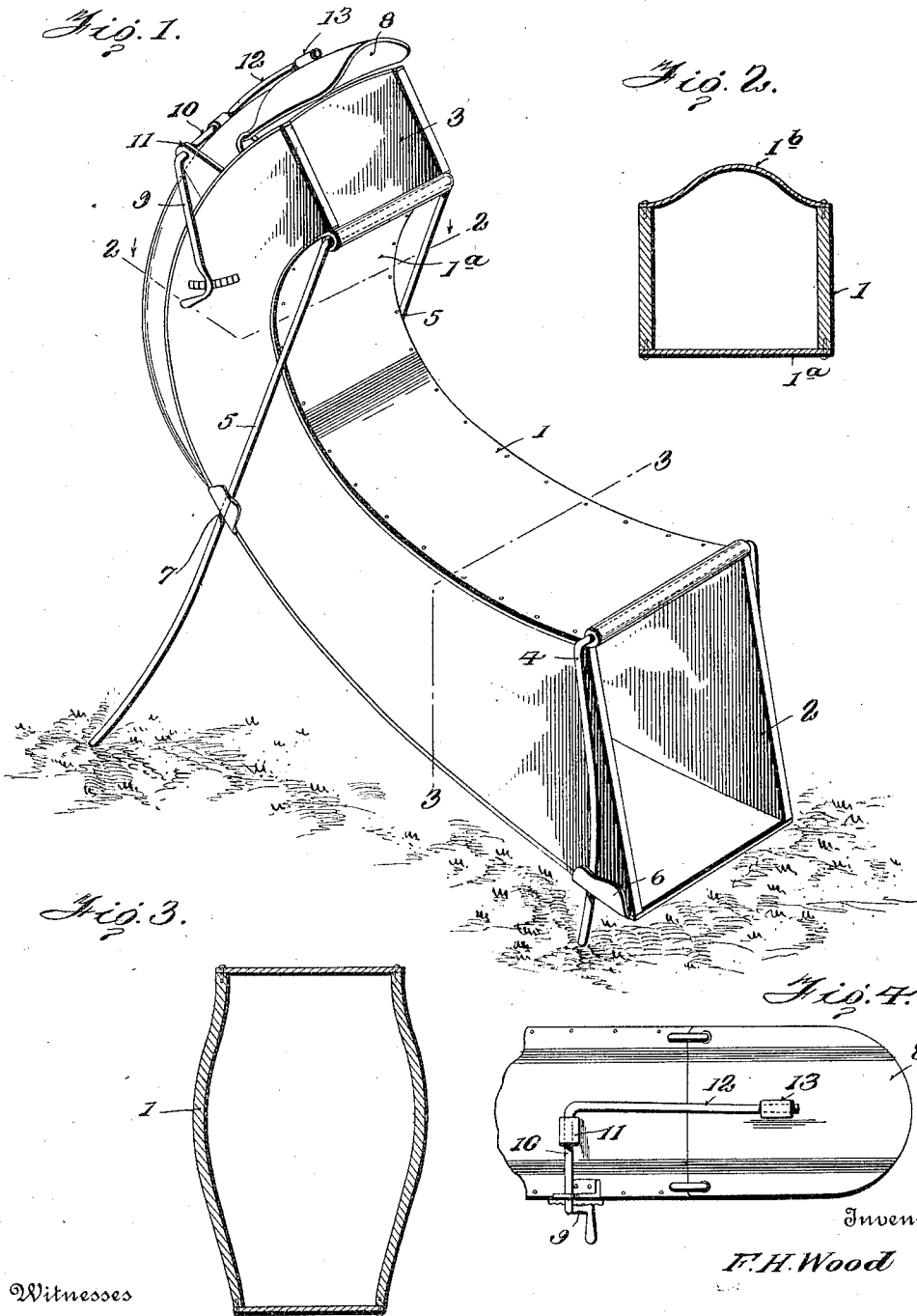


F. H. WOOD.
 BALL RETURNING DEVICE.
 APPLICATION FILED AUG. 8, 1911.

1,030,558.

Patented June 25, 1912.



Witnesses

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FRED H. WOOD, OF ELGIN, NORTH DAKOTA.

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Specification of Letters Patent.

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Application filed August 8, 1911. Serial No. 643,015.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, FRED H. WOOD, citizen of the United States, residing at Elgin, in the county of Morton and State of North Dakota, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Ball-Returning Devices, of which the following is a specification.

The present invention relates to a novel device for receiving a base ball or the like and automatically returning it to the person by whom it was pitched, thereby enabling a pitcher to practise without the aid of a catcher.

One of the objects of the invention is to provide a base ball return which is simple and inexpensive in its construction, which can be readily mounted in position or removed therefrom, and which does not require an attendant.

A still further object of the invention is to provide a base ball return which comprises few and durable parts such as are not liable to get out of repair, and in which provision is made for regulating the angle at which the ball is projected from the device upon its return to the pitcher, thereby enabling the device to be used with equal facility in connection with both slow and fast balls.

With these and other objects in view, the invention consists in certain novel combinations and arrangements of the parts as will more fully appear as the description proceeds, the novel features thereof being pointed out in the appended claims.

For a full understanding of the invention, reference is to be had to the following description and accompanying drawing, in which:—

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a base ball return constructed in accordance with the invention. Fig. 2 is a sectional view through the device on the line 2—2 of Fig. 1. Fig. 3 is a similar view on the line 3—3 of Fig. 1, and Fig. 4 is a top plan view of the hinged flap at the discharge end of the base ball return, the said view showing the mechanism for adjusting the angle of the hinged flap.

Corresponding and like parts are referred to in the following description and indicated in all the views of the drawing by the same reference characters.

In carrying out the invention a tubular casing 1 is provided, the lower end of the

casing being inclined downwardly and terminating in a flared and vertically disposed mouth 2, while the opposite end of the casing is curved upwardly and forwardly, as indicated at 1^a, and terminates in an upwardly and forwardly facing discharge mouth 3. The inlet mouth 2 is of such a size that a ball entering the same would ordinarily be considered "a strike", and the ball is deflected upwardly and forwardly by the bottom of the casing 1 so as to be projected through the discharge mouth 3 and thereby returned to the pitcher. The lower end of the casing 1 has only a very slight curvature, the curve gradually becoming more pronounced toward the upper end of the casing, such a construction admitting of the direction of the ball being changed with a minimum loss in the velocity thereof.

Any suitable means may be provided for supporting the casing in proper position, and in the present instance the forward end of the casing is supported by a yoke 4, while the rear end of the casing is supported by a similar, although larger yoke 5. The cross bar of the yoke 4 is secured to the top of the casing immediately over the mouth 2, while the sides of the said yoke are engaged by the ends of a cross bar 6 at the bottom of the casing and extend slightly below the said cross bar so as to hold the casing in an elevated position. The rear yoke 5 has the cross bar thereof secured to the top of the casing at a point immediately under the discharge mouth 3, the sides of the yoke being inclined rearwardly and secured to a cross bar 7 applied to the bottom of the casing at an intermediate point in the length thereof. The two yokes 4 and 5 form a means for rigidly supporting the casing in proper position, although they may be quickly detached when necessary.

The bottom of the casing 1 is formed at the rear end thereof with a longitudinally disposed depression 1^b which serves to receive the ball and impart a proper direction thereto as it is passing through the curved end of the casing preparatory to being ejected through the mouth 3 thereof. A hinged flap or wing 8 which forms a continuation of the side of the casing projects over the top of the discharge mouth 3 and is transversely curved so as to conform to the depression 1^b. This wing 8 may be set at any desired angle, the said wing being

5 moved downwardly for swift balls, and upwardly for slow balls. For the purpose of enabling the wing to be properly adjusted, a lever 9 is provided, the said lever being
 10 integral with a shaft 10 which is journaled within the bearings 11 and is formed with an arm 12 loosely received within an eye 13 projecting from the back of the wing. It will thus be apparent that by properly
 15 manipulating the lever 9 the angle of the wing can be properly regulated for either a swift or a slow ball.

From the foregoing description, it will be apparent that the device may be readily
 20 set up in the field and employed for the practice of a pitcher. The balls entering the mouth 2 would all be within such a radius as to be termed a strike, and these balls would strike against the upwardly inclined bottom of the casing 1 and be thereby
 25 deflected into the curved neck at the upper end of the casing so as to be returned to the pitcher. The specific manner of curving the casing is of very great importance, since it is very essential that the direction of the
 30 ball be gradually changed as it passes through the casing. A further important feature resides in the provision of the flap 8 which enables proper adjustment to be made for both a slow and swift ball.

As indicated more clearly in Fig. 3, the sides of the casing are preferably bulged outwardly adjacent the lower mouth 2 so that a curved ball will not strike so hard
 35 against the casing as to bring about an excessive and unnecessary loss in the speed thereof.

Having thus described the invention, what I claim as new and desire to secure
 40 by Letters Patent, is:—

1. A base ball return including a curved tubular casing provided at opposite ends thereof with inlet and discharge openings respectively, the bottom of the casing having
 45 a longitudinal depression therein leading toward the discharge opening for directing the ball in its passage through the casing.

2. A base ball return including a curved tubular casing provided at opposite ends thereof with inlet and discharge openings, the sides of the casing being bulged outwardly adjacent the inlet opening to make

the necessary provision for laterally curved balls. 55

3. A base ball return including a tubular casing provided at opposite ends thereof with inlet and discharge openings respectively, and means for regulating the angle at which the ball is projected from the discharge opening. 60

4. A base ball return including a tubular casing provided at opposite ends thereof with inlet and discharge openings respectively, and a hinged flap arranged over the discharge opening for regulating the angle at which the ball is projected therefrom. 65

5. A base ball return including a tubular casing arranged in an inclined position, the lower end of the casing being flared and terminating in a substantially vertically disposed inlet opening, while the upper end of the casing is curved upwardly and forwardly and terminates in a discharge opening, and a hinged flap over the discharge opening for regulating the angle at which the ball is projected therefrom. 70 75

6. A base ball return including a tubular casing arranged in an inclined position, the lower end of the casing terminating in an inlet opening while the upper end of the casing is curved upwardly and forwardly, the bottom of the casing having a longitudinal depression therein toward the discharge opening for properly directing the ball in its passage through the casing, and a hinged flap arranged over the discharge opening for regulating the angle at which the ball is projected therefrom. 80 85

7. A base ball return including a curved tubular casing provided at opposite ends thereof with inlet and discharge openings respectively, the bottom of the casing having a longitudinal depression therein leading toward the discharge opening for properly directing the ball in its passage through the casing, while the sides of the casing are bulged outwardly adjacent the inlet opening to make proper provision for laterally curved balls. 90 95 100

In testimony whereof I affix my signature in presence of two witnesses.

FRED H. WOOD.

Witnesses:

ROY N. DAVENPORT,
 L. L. DAHL.