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Sims

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[54] **BOARD GAME APPARATUS**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/131 BA**; 273/1 R; 273/95 R

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63f 3/00**

[58] **Field of Search** 273/1, 95, 101, 102.1, 273/130, 131, 134

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS

124,915 3/1872 Rix 273/98

Primary Examiner—Delbert B. Lowe

Attorney, Agent, or Firm—Jackson & Jones

[57] **ABSTRACT**

A method and game apparatus for one or more players is provided. A game board having a coordinate array of sockets is adapted to accommodate a plurality of game pieces having appropriate indicia. Each game piece will comprise a lower base portion adapted to be attached to the game board and an upper head portion connected to the base portion by a resilient shaft. The resilient shaft can be bent or moved relative to the base portion to permit the upper head portion to be aimed at another game piece. At least some of the upper head portions of the game pieces are capable of indicating an impact of one upper head portion by another upper head portion. For example, a section of the upper head portion can be hinged or secured by a flexible cord whereby upon impact the upper head portion will separate. The opponent's game pieces are captured by striking and separating the upper head portions either directly or through a progression of intermediate impacts on other game pieces.

13 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures

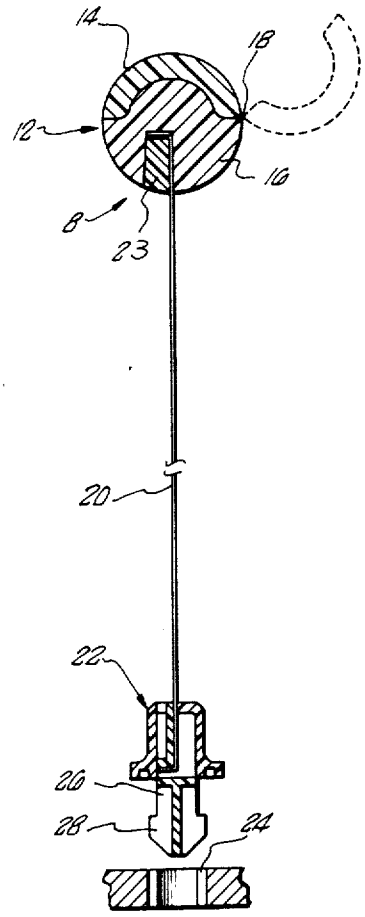
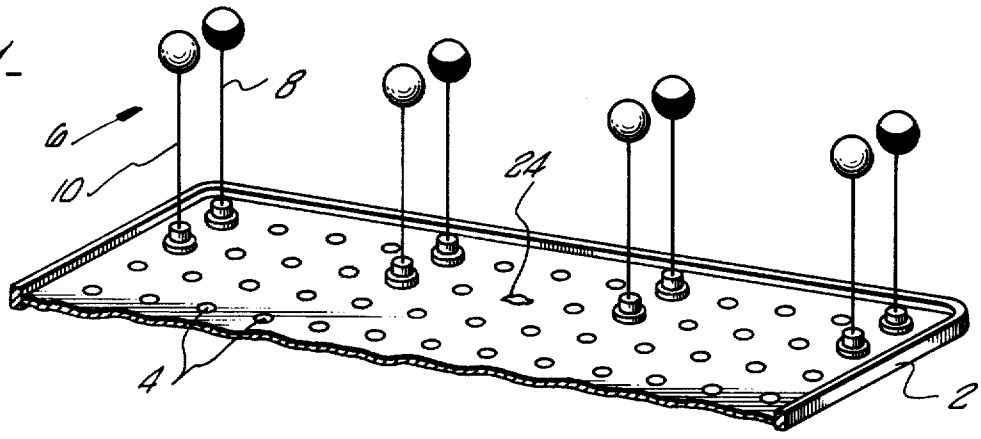


FIG. 1



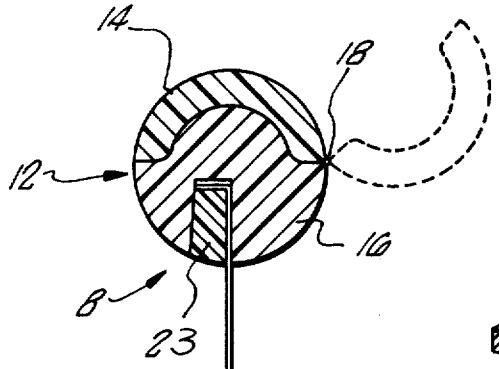


FIG. 5

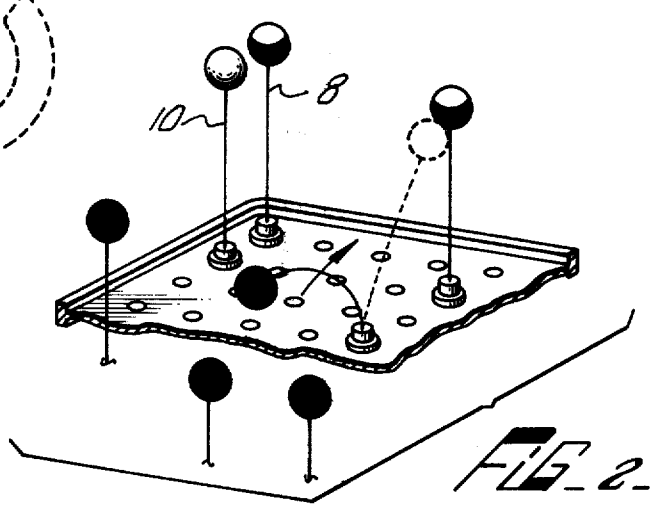
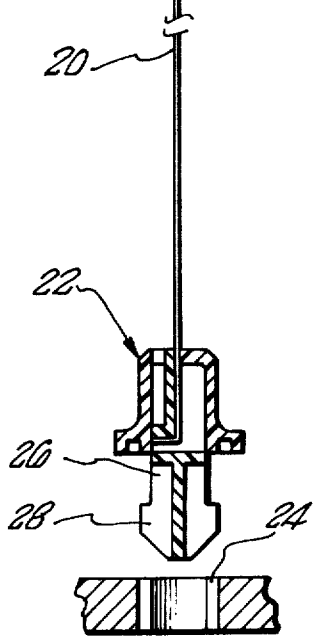


FIG. 2



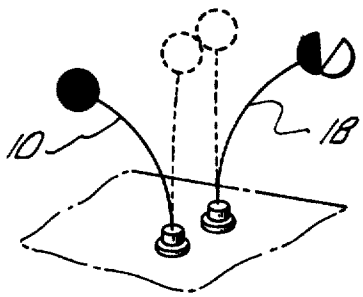


FIG. 3

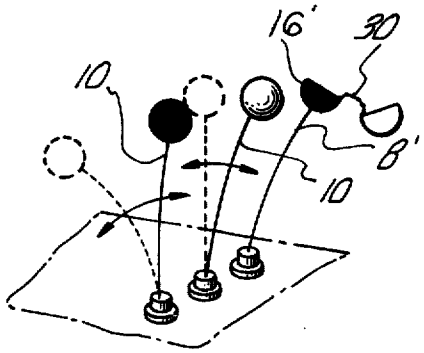


FIG. 4

BOARD GAME APPARATUS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention is directed to a method and toy game apparatus and more particularly to a toy game requiring both skill and manual dexterity on the part of the player in manipulating game pieces on the game board.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Various games have been utilized by people of all ages wherein two or more players attempt to capture their opponent's pieces and optimumly position their own pieces on the game board. For example, both chess and checkers are classic examples of this basic game format.

Usually the game board comprises columns of alternating squares or indicia in a fixed pattern or coordinate array. Initially, the variables of play are somewhat limited in that the respective pieces themself limit the individual game piece movement or degrees of freedom. Frequently the prior art games permit a larger number of variable moves as the game progresses.

The prior art has sought to diversify the player options available by, for example, providing various types of rotating game boards. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 3,685,831 disclosed a rotating game board which increased the elements of chance in the game. Other forms of variable game boards are known, such as the German Pat. No. 397,996 and the French Pat. No. 1,061,036. Generally, the prior art has increased the variables of game play by modifying the game boards.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The prevent invention provides a method and game apparatus in which the variables of game play have been increased along with the elements of chance depending upon the manual dexterity of the game players.

The game apparatus includes a game board having a co-ordinate array of indexed positions. A plurality of movable game pieces are adapted to be positioned on the game board. Generally the movable game pieces will include a striker or cracker game piece and a target game piece. Both types of game pieces have a base portion adapted to be secured to the game board and an upper head portion connected to the base portion by an elongated resilient member. The upper head portion is adapted to be moved by a player relative to the base portion. The target game pieces have upper head portions that are capable of indicating an impact by the upper head portion of another game piece. The players can aim an upper head portion of one game piece at one or a plurality of other game pieces to cause an immediate or subsequent impact of a target upper head portion game piece. This splitting of a target piece effectuates a capture of the game piece.

The features of the present invention which are believed to be novel are set forth with particularity in the appended claims. The present invention, both as to its organization and manner of operation, together with further objects and advantages thereof, may best be understood with reference to the following description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a partial perspective view of the game board and game pieces of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a partial perspective view disclosing the movement of the game pieces;

FIG. 3 is a partial perspective view disclosing one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view disclosing an alternative embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view of a target game piece.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

The present invention adds a new variable to the conventional movement of game pieces on a game board. In addition to the movement of the game pieces on the game board, the player's skill and dexterity in aiming the game piece are tested. This is accomplished by providing a game board **2** having a plurality of indexed positions **4.** The indexed positions **4** form a coordinate array of rows and columns as disclosed in the drawings. The exact alignment of indexed positions **4** can be varied, for example, to form various geometrical configurations. The important feature of the indexed positions **4** is that they must be relatively placed in sufficient proximity to each other to permit an interaction between individual game pieces **6.**

In one form of the present invention, the game pieces **6** will include a target game piece **8** and a cracker or striker game piece **10.** The game pieces **6** can have appropriate indicia in the form of color or surface texture that would permit an easy distinction between the various players' game pieces **6** and also between the target game pieces **8** and cracker game pieces **10.**

Referring to FIG. **5,** a target game piece **8** is disclosed in cross-section. The upper head portion **12** includes a removable section or cap **14** that is capable of being separated from the remainder or base **16** of the upper head portion. The base or lower portion **16** of the head portion **12** can be integrally molded with the cap **14** and interconnected by a hinge **18.** The hinge **18** can be what is known in the molding art as a flexure or living hinge.

An elongated resilient shaft **20** is appropriately fixed to the base **16.** For example, in the embodiment shown, a plug member **23** is fastened by adhesives into an appropriate cavity in the base member **16** for receiving the flexible shaft **20.** Other forms of resilient shafts can be used such as an integrally molded rod. The shaft **20** must have a characteristic of spring resiliency.

A lower base portion **22** is likewise fixed to the flexible shaft **20.** Basically, the lower base portion **22** serves the purpose of securing the game piece **6** to the game board **2.** As can be appreciated, the prime purpose of the base portion **22** is to secure the game piece sufficiently that it will adhere to the board **2** during relative movement of the upper head portion **12.** In this regard, the game board **2** can utilize a socket **24** as an index game position which is capable of cooperating with a fastener **26** on the base portion **22.** Basically, the socket **24** will permit the insertion of the fastener **26** and upon rotation of the fastener **26,** ears **28** on the fastener **26** will lock the game piece **6** to the game board **2.** The cracker game pieces **10** can be manufactured in a similar manner only they have a solid head portion.

In the preferred embodiment, the upper head portion **12** and the lower base portion **22** will be molded from plastic while the flexible shaft **20** can be of a spring

steel wire. Other materials can however be utilized within the invention.

Referring to FIGS. **2, 3** and **4,** the play action of the individual game pieces can be seen. Generally, a cracker game piece **10** will be maneuvered to a position adjacent an opponent's target game piece **8.** When the game pieces are in sufficient proximity and during the player's turn, he can bend or move the upper head portion in such a direction that upon release, the spring energy of the bent flexible shaft **20** will propel the upper head portion **12** in the opposite direction. If the player has skillfully aligned and aimed the upper head portion **12** of the cracker game piece **10,** it will contact the upper head portion of the opponent's target game piece **8.** Upon impact, the kinetic energy will be transferred to the target game piece **8** and it will snap open or relatively displace the cap portion **14** from the base portion. When this occurs, the target game piece **8** has been captured from the opponent and is removed from the game board **2.**

FIG. **4** discloses an alternative embodiment wherein target game piece **8'** has an upper cap or section **14** which is attached to the base **16'** of the upper head portion by means of a flexible cord **30.** Thus, the cap portion **14** will completely separate from the lower base portion **16'** and be supported only by the flexible cord **30.** FIG. **4** also discloses a tandem arrangement of game pieces to effectuate a capturing of a target game piece **8.** As disclosed in FIG. **4,** a player's cracker game piece **10** can be utilized to hit an opponent's cracker game piece which in turn will translate the impact to the target game piece **8.** It is possible to create an entire progression of impacts which would extend across the surface of the game board **2.**

In operation, the players align their game pieces on their respective sides of the game board **2** as shown in FIG. **1.** The four solid or cracker game pieces **10** are aligned in front of the four target game pieces **8.** The object of the game is to move two target game pieces **8** entirely across the board **2** or to eliminate all the opponent's target game pieces **8.** Thus, the winner of the game is the player who maneuvers two of his target pieces **8,** to, for example, colored circles in the opponent's rear row or who has cracked all of his opponent's target pieces. The game pieces can be moved one or two holes in any direction during a player's turn. The game pieces are not permitted to jump over an opponent.

In one form of the game, a crack shot maneuver is successful when a player cracks or breaks open an opponent's target game piece by bending one of his cracker game pieces **10** and hitting one or more intermediate balls, thus breaking a target game piece of his opponent's indirectly. The opponent's cracked target game piece is then removed from the game. The player can either move or shoot and a shot can be tried any time the player feels he can make the shot. There is no penalty for missing a shot. However, the head portion **12** of the cracker game piece **10** must contact another game piece head portion and not the flexible shaft **20.**

In one version of the game, as illustrated in FIGS. **2** and **3,** the player can crack an opponent's target game piece directly. As an alternative game rule, it is possible to force the players to only crack their opponent's target pieces indirectly by hitting intermediate game pieces as disclosed in FIG. **4.** In that case, if a player cracks an opponent's target piece directly, he will forfeit one of his own target pieces. As a further modification of the game, the player can sacrifice one of his own target pieces by hitting an opponent's target piece and if both target pieces crack, they are both removed from the game. Before the cracker or striker game piece is utilized by a player in a "crack shot" it is secured to the game board **2.**

As can be readily appreciated, it is possible to deviate from the above suggested game rules and it will be readily understood by those skilled in the art that the invention is capable of many modifications and improvements within the scope and spirit thereof. Accordingly, it will be understood that the invention is not to be limited by the specific disclosed embodiment but only by the scope and spirit of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A game apparatus to be played by one or more players comprising in combination:

a game board having a coordinate array of indexed positions;

a plurality of movable game pieces adapted to be positioned on the indexed positions of the game board, at least some of the movable pieces having a base portion for contacting the game board, an upper head portion and a resilient member connecting the base portion and upper head portion to permit the upper head portion to move relative to the base portion; and

means on at least some of the upper head portions for indicating the impact of the upper head portion of one movable piece by the upper head of another movable piece.

2. The invention of claim **1** wherein the means for indicating the impact of the upper head portion includes a section of the upper head portion that separates from the base of the upper head portion.

3. The invention of claim **1** wherein the resilient member is an elongated shaft.

4. The invention of claim **1** wherein the base portion further has means for locking it to the indexed position on the game board.

5. The invention of claim **1** wherein the resilient member is a flexible elongated shaft adapted to be bent by a player during the aiming of the upper head portion of one piece at another and the means for indicating the impact of the upper head portion includes a section of the upper head portion that separates from the remainder of the upper head portion.

6. The invention of claim **2** wherein the separable upper head portion is hinged to the base of the upper head portion.

7. The invention of claim **2** wherein the separable upper head portion is attached to the base of the upper head portion by a flexible cord.

8. A method of separating a portion of an upper head section of one game piece from the remainder of the head section, said portion being connected to the head section as to be released therefrom by impact force applied to the head section, the game piece upper head section being one of a number of game pieces on a game board, each game piece having a base portion and a resilient elongated shaft connecting the base portion to its upper head section comprising the steps of:

moving the game pieces on the game board to align at least one striker game piece adjacent the target game piece to be separated;

securing the striker game piece to the game board;

bending the resilient shaft of the striker game piece by displacing its upper head section relative to its base portion in a direction which will permit the transfer of energy to the target game piece; and

releasing the striker game piece whereby its energy is transferred to the target game piece to separate said upper head portion of the target piece.

9. The invention of claim **1** wherein at least some of the upper head portions have a spherical configuration.

10. A game apparatus comprising in combination:

a game board having a coordinate array of indexed positions;

a plurality of movable game pieces adapted to be positioned on the indexed positions of the game board, at least some of the movable pieces having a base portion for contacting the game board, an upper head portion and a member connecting the base portion and the upper head portion to permit the upper head portion to move relative to the base portion; and

means on at least some of the upper head portions for indicating the impact of the upper head portion of one movable piece by the upper head of another movable piece.

11. The invention of claim **10** wherein the means for indicating the impact of the upper head portion includes a section of the upper head portion that separates from the base of the upper head portion.

12. The invention of claim **11** wherein the base portion further has means for locking it to an indexed position on the game board.

13. The method of claim **7** further including the step of positioning at least a second game piece between the striker game piece and the target game piece whereby the striker game piece transfers its energy to the second game piece which in turn transfers the energy to the target game piece.

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