This invention relates to an interchangeable, adjustable batting and pitching tee.

The purpose of this invention is to provide practice apparatus which may be used in connection with batting and pitching practice in the field of baseball. It may be used for teaching or training purposes, especially when the trainee does not have the benefit of a full complement of players cooperating with him in his practice. The apparatus may also be used to improve the ability and precision of more experienced players. It may be used to correct faults in the practice of both experienced and inexperienced players. It may also be used in commercial establishments similar to golf driving ranges.

An object of the present invention is the provision of a batting and pitching tee which may be used for the practice and training purposes above mentioned and which may interchangeably be employed for either batting or pitching activities.

In one form it is provided with a supporting cup for a ball, and in such case it would be used for batting practice.

An important feature of the invention is the provision of a relatively flexible ball-supporting cup mounted on a relatively flexible supporting element. Should the player, in swinging at the ball, happen to miss the ball and instead strike either the cup or said supporting element, no harm or damage would result.

Interchangeable with said ball support is a rectangular frame which may be used for pitching practice. The frame is supported in vertical position, and a player would throw a ball through it to improve his pitching accuracy.

As in the case of the ball-supporting cup, this pitching frame is mounted on a relatively flexible support to cushion the shock or impact of a ball which strikes it.

An important object of the present invention is the provision of means for adjusting the height of the ball-supporting tee and the pitching frame. They may be adjusted in height for many purposes, for example, to adjust to the height of the player or to influence the manner in which he swings at the ball or to raise or lower his pitching level.

An important feature of the invention is the fact that it may be manufactured for sale in unassembled form, ready for assembly by the ultimate consumer. No special tools or other equipment would be necessary to assist the consumer in his assembly of the device. By the same token, this feature renders the device readily demountable so that the ultimate consumer may take it apart or disassemble it for transportation or storage purposes.

The invention is illustrated in the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a front view, partly broken away and in vertical section, showing a device made in accordance with the present invention, said device being set up as a ball tee for batting purposes.

FIG. 2 is a horizontal section on the line 2—2 of FIG. 1, being also a top view of the base of said device.

FIG. 3 is a fragmentary front view of said device showing a pitching frame substituted thereon in the place and stead of the ball tee.

FIG. 4 is an enlarged fragmentary exploded view showing the connecting elements between the pitching frame and the supporting post.

Referring now to FIGS. 1 and 2 of the drawing, it will be observed that a base 10 is provided in the form of a baseboard made of wood, but this is purely illustrative. Rubber pads 12 are provided on the bottom of said base to support the base on relatively uneven or irregular ground in spaced relation thereto. An opening is formed in the base to receive the lower end of a tubular post 14. Said lower end is threaded to receive a pair of nuts 16 and 18 which may be used to clamp the post to the base.

At the upper end of said tubular post 14 is a collar 20 which carries a thumb screw 22. Slidably or telescopically mounted in said tubular post 14 is an extension tube 24. This extension tube may be positioned at any selected height relative to post 14 and thumb screw 22 may be used to clamp said extension tube in place in said selected position. The extension tube may, of course, be raised or lowered at will to adjust its position, and it may also be removed when it is desired to substitute the pitching frame hereinafter described.

Secured to the upper end of extension tube 24 is a rubber tube 26, which is molded at its upper end to form a ball-supporting cup or tee 28. Said rubber tube 26 may simply be slipped over the upper end of extension tube 24, or it may be cemented thereon, as desired. It will be noted that said rubber tube 26 is relatively long, in the preferred form of the invention, so that should the player's bat miss its mark (the ball) by a wide margin, it would strike said rubber tube rather than the extension tube 24 which supports it. By way of illustration, rubber tube 26 would be approximately 8 inches long, including its cup portion. The dimensions of cup 28 are not critical but it should be adapted to seat a conventional baseball 30 without covering too much of its surface.

Turning now to FIGS. 3 and 4, it will be noted that the same base 10, tubular post 14 and extension tube 24 are used in connection with the pitching frame 40 as are used in connection with the ball-supporting tee 28. It may be found desirable to provide extension tubes of different lengths for these two devices but this is not essential in the practice of the invention. In the preferred form of the invention interchangeable extension tubes are provided, one 18 inches in length for the ball tee and the other 24 inches in length for the pitching frame. The tubular post is approximately 14 inches in length.

It will now be noted that the pitching frame 40 is generally rectangular in shape and made of relatively springy wire. In the preferred form of the invention it is approximately 24 inches high and 18 inches wide. The ends of the wire of which the pitching frame is made are bent downwardly at the center of the lower horizontal component of said frame to form a pair of legs 42 and 44 respectively. These legs may be inserted through a pair of holes 46 and 48 formed in a collar 50 and its hub 52. The center of said collar and hub is tapped to receive a headed screw 54. When the legs 42 and 44 of the pitching frame are inserted through holes 46 and 48, screw 54 may be applied to the collar and hub 50, 52 to clamp said frame to said collar and hub.

A similar collar 56 is provided with both an upper hub 58 and a lower hub 60. The lower hub 60 is adapted to fit into the upper end of extension tube 24, collar 56 resting thereon. It will be noted that holes 62 and 64 are provided, respectively, in hub 60 and the upper end of extension tube 24. These holes may be made to register to accommodate a cotter pin or like fastening member.

A coil spring 70 may be placed on hub 58 and, if desired, suitable fastening means may be provided to secure said spring to said hub. This is not absolutely essential, since a relatively light fit would adequately attach the spring to the hub. Hub 52 may be inserted into the upper end of spring 70 and here, too, conventional fastening means may be provided to lock the two-to
It will now be understood that pitching frame 40 is attached to extension tube 24 by means of said last mentioned collars, hubs and coil spring. By reason of this type of connection, said pitching frame is resiliently supported on said extension tube, and the shock of a ball striking said frame would readily be absorbed both by the coil spring 70 and by the spring nature of the frame itself. It will also be understood from the foregoing that the ball tee and the pitching frame are interchangeably mounted on said extension tube 24, so that either may be used as desired.

The foregoing is illustrative of a preferred form of this invention, and it will be understood that this form may be modified and other forms provided, within the scope of the claim.

I claim:

A pitching tee, comprising a supporting base, a tubular post removably secured to said base, a vertically extensible tube telescopically supported by said post, clamping means on said post engageable with said extensible tube to adjustably secure said tube to said post at selected vertical positions relative thereto, a first fitting removably secured to the upper end of said extensible tube, said first fitting comprising a collar which rests upon said extensible tube, a downwardly extending hub which projects into said extensible tube and an upwardly extending hub integral therewith, fastening means for detachably securing said downwardly extending hub to said extensible tube, a coil spring mounted on said collar, the lower end of said coil spring being fixedly secured to said upwardly extending hub, a second fitting mounted on the coil spring, said second fitting having a collar which rests upon the top of said coil spring and an integral downwardly extending hub which projects into said coil spring and is fixedly secured thereto, said hubs each having a groove to receive the respective ends of said coil spring, and a generally rectangular wire pitching frame supported by said second fitting in a vertical plane and adapted to serve as a baseball pitching tee, the wire of said frame is made being adapted to absorb the impact and shock of a thrown baseball striking the frame, said rectangular pitching frame having a pair of downwardly extending wire legs projecting therefrom and integral therewith, said second fitting having a pair of parallel vertical holes formed therein to receive said legs, and a clamping screw removably clamping said rectangular pitching frame to said second fitting to prevent accidental dislodgment of said legs from said holes.

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