United States Patent

Llorens

[15] **3,642,280**

[45] **Feb. 15, 1972**

[54] SIMULATED FOOTBALL GAME APPARATUS

[72] Inventor: **Edouard Llorens**, 69 Boulevard Ornano, Paris, France

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[21] Appl. No.: **842,554**

[30] **Foreign Application Priority Data**

July 18, 1968 France 159737

[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/94 R**, 273/85 C, 273/127 C, 273/128 A

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63f 7/06**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/85, 94 R, 121, 127 C

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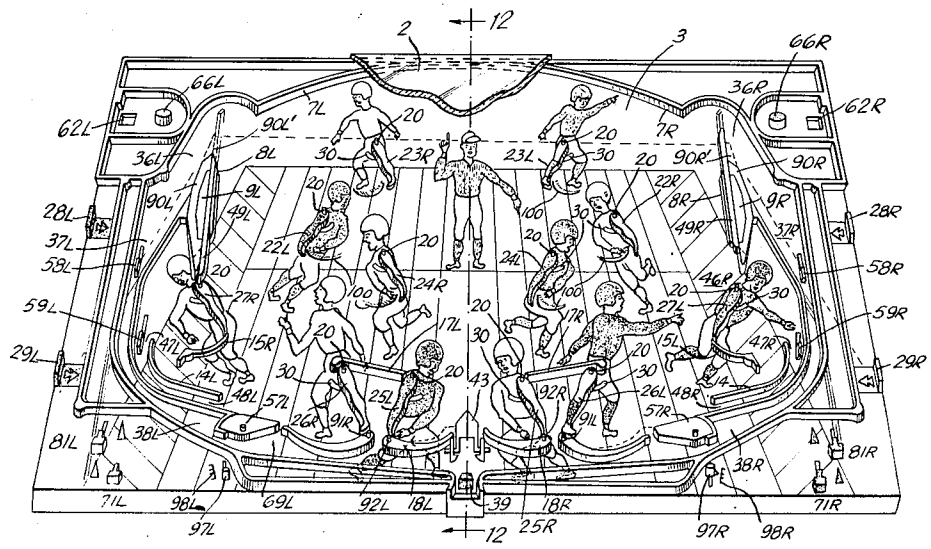
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Primary Examiner—Richard C. Pinkham
Assistant Examiner—Paul E. Shapiro
Attorney—Arnold Robinson

[57] **ABSTRACT**

This invention relates to apparatus for playing a game that will simulate either American football or British rugby. The game is played on a board inclined to the horizontal with a ball free to move by gravity over the board. Curb means are provided for retaining and guiding the ball as are symmetrical propulsion means actuated by two players, for example, to propel the ball towards outlet apertures or goals. Means are provided also for removing the ball and bringing it back into play. According to the invention, there is an upper outlet aperture on the board which leads through a passage along an inclined plane and there is also a lower outlet aperture which opens below the upper aperture and leads through another passage along an inclined plane: furthermore, movable closure means are provided to control access to both these apertures, these closure means being operable by the players to take up one of two alternative positions, i.e. a raised position leaving open the lower outlet aperture and partially closing the upper aperture and a lower position in which the lower aperture is entirely closed while the upper aperture is entirely open.

9 Claims, 15 Drawing Figures



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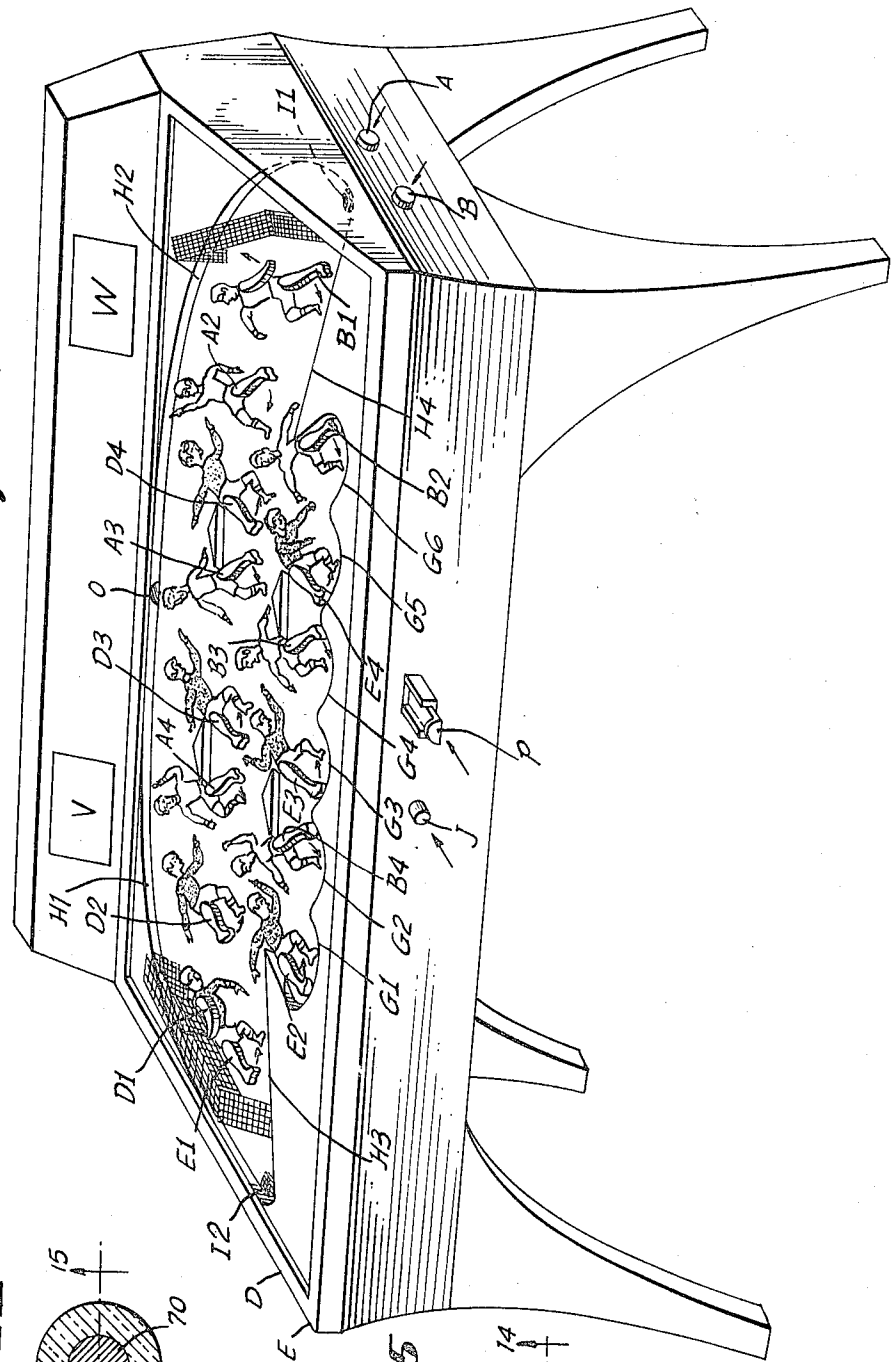


Fig. 1

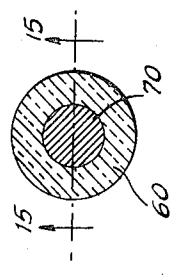


Fig. 1A

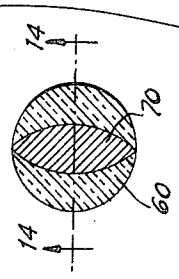


Fig. 1B

INVENTOR.
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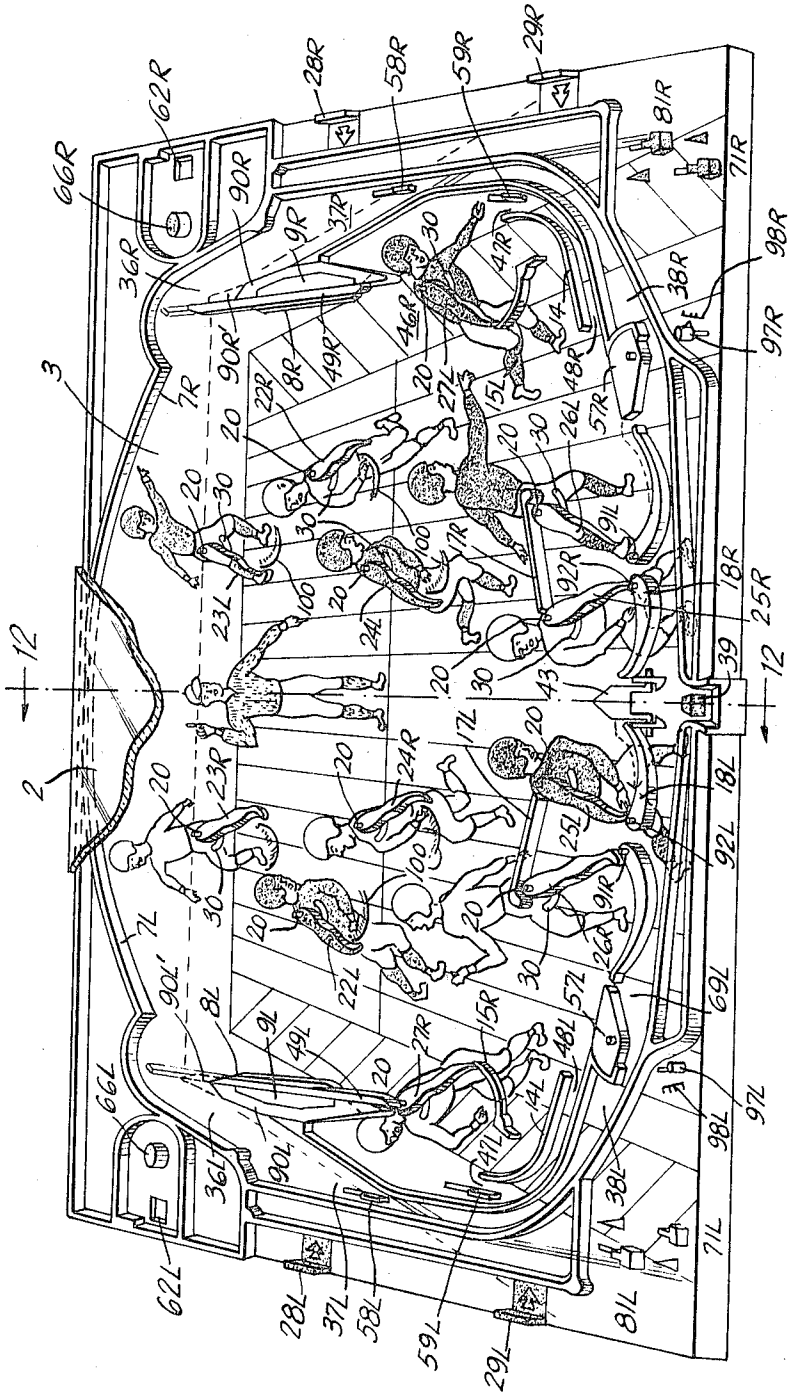


Fig. 2

INVENTOR.

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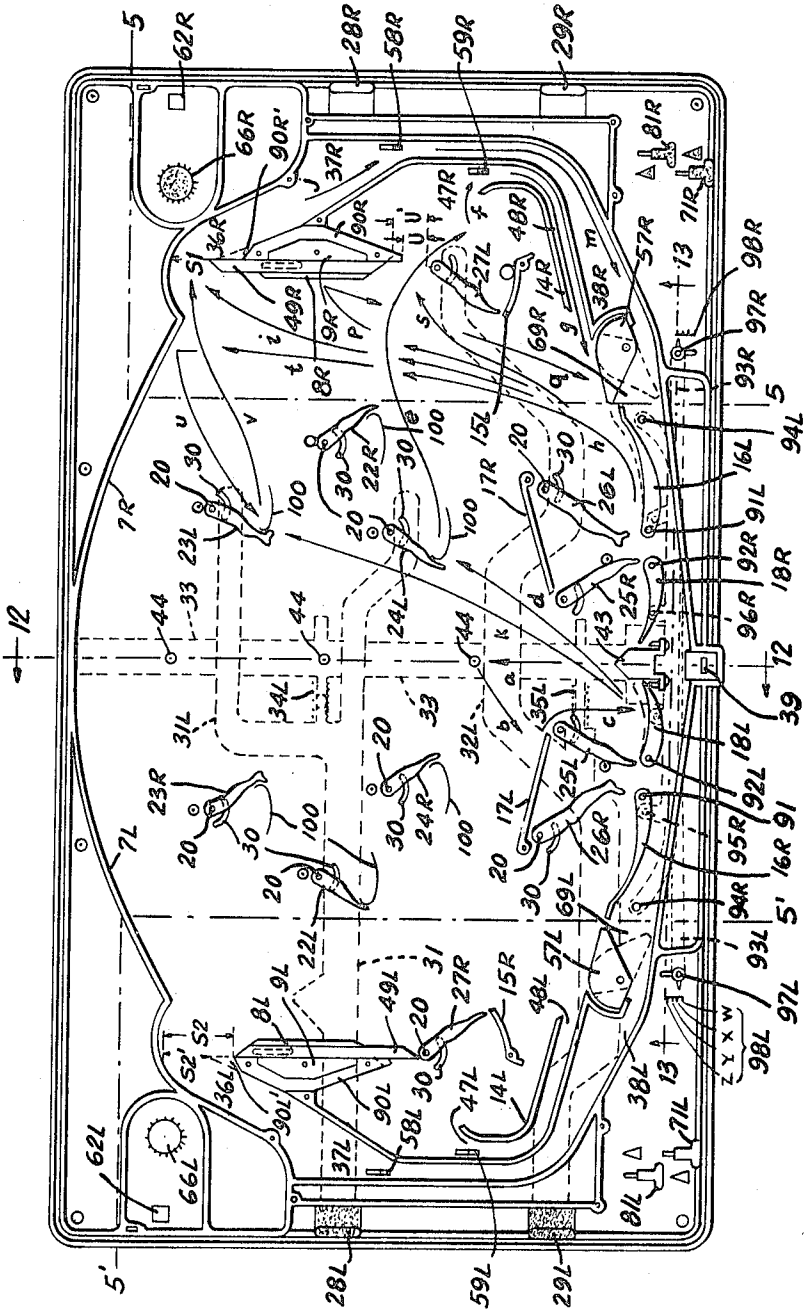


Fig. 3

INVENTOR.

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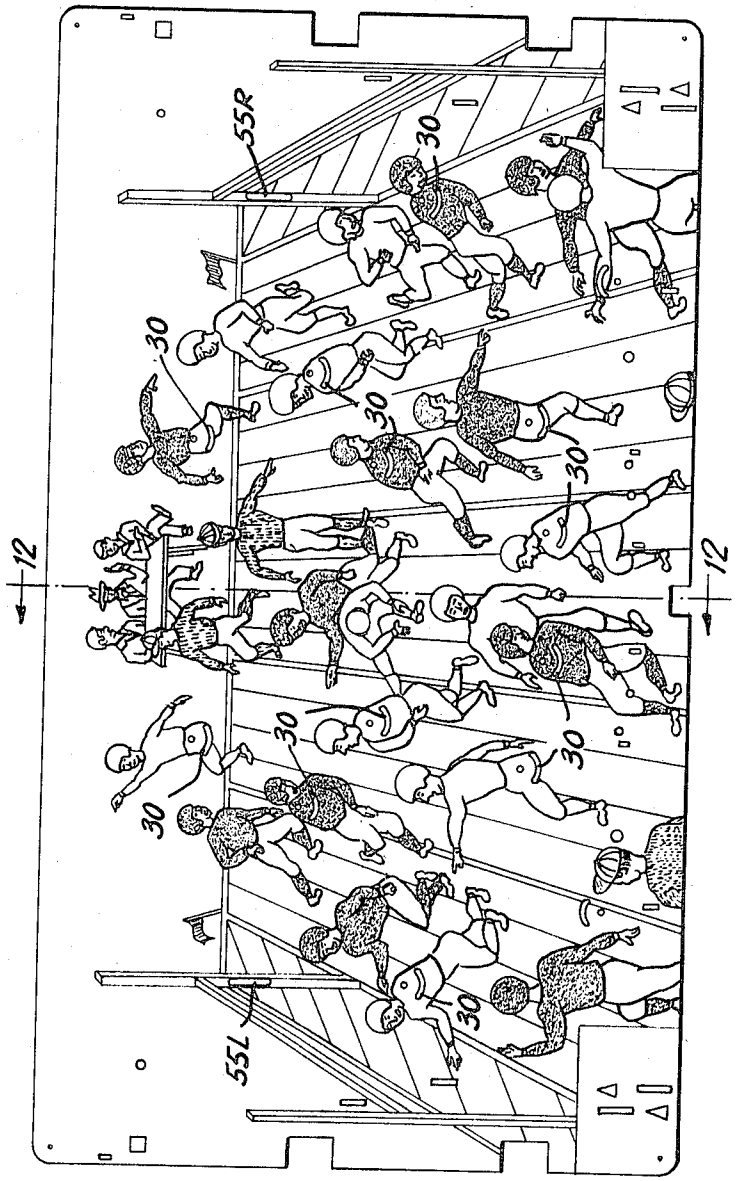


Fig. 4

INVENTOR.
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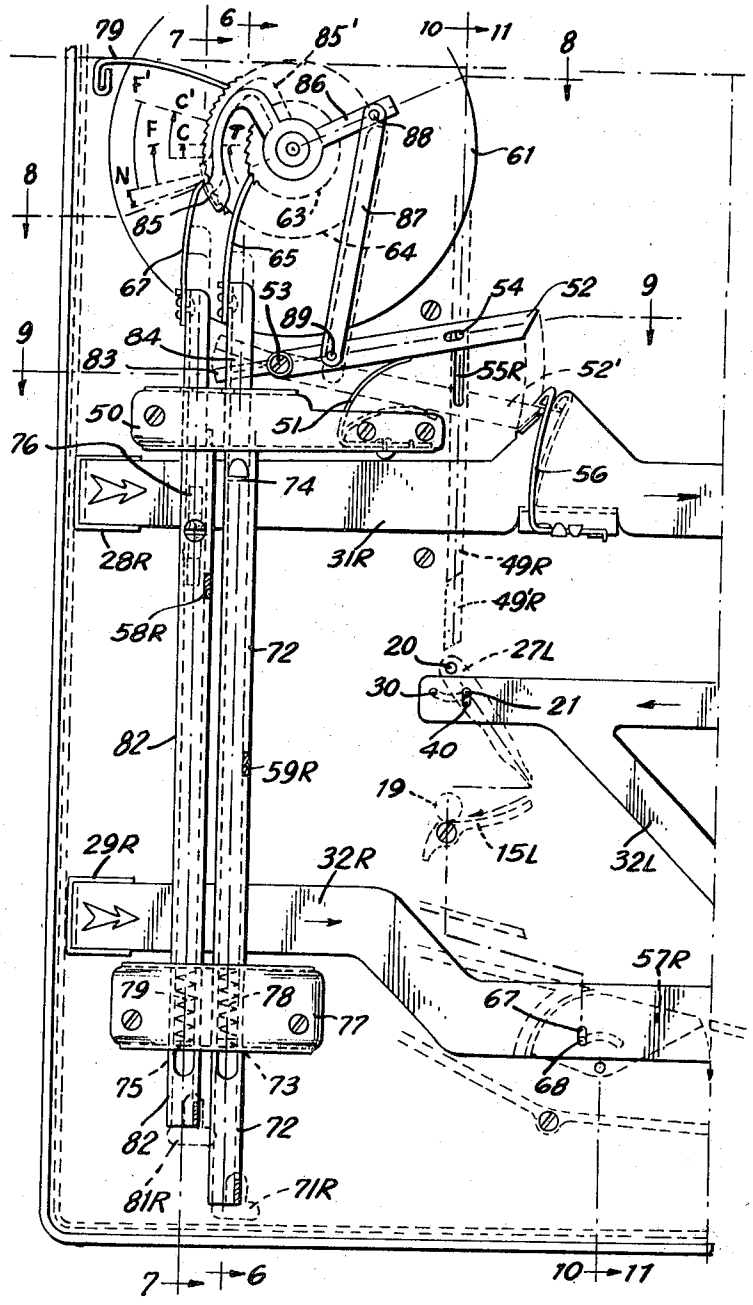


Fig. 5

INVENTOR.

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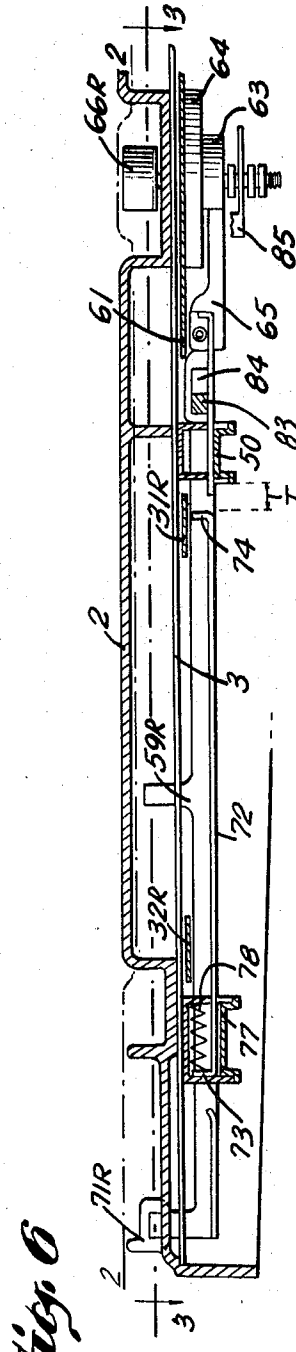


Fig. 6

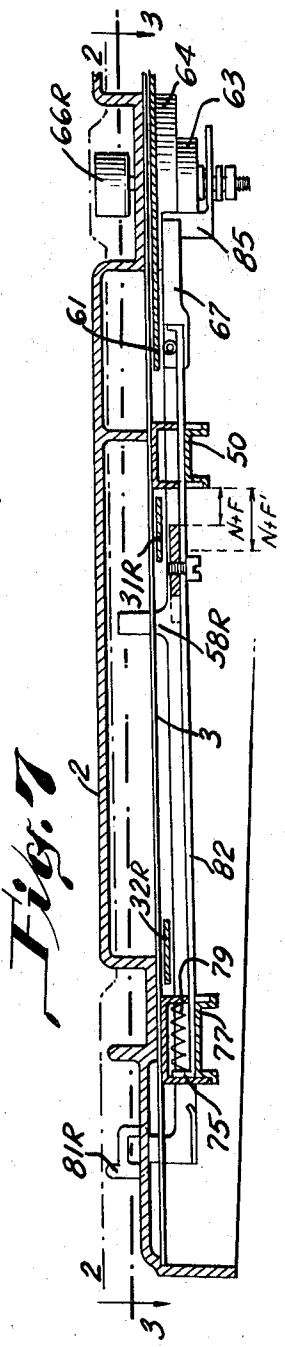


Fig. 7

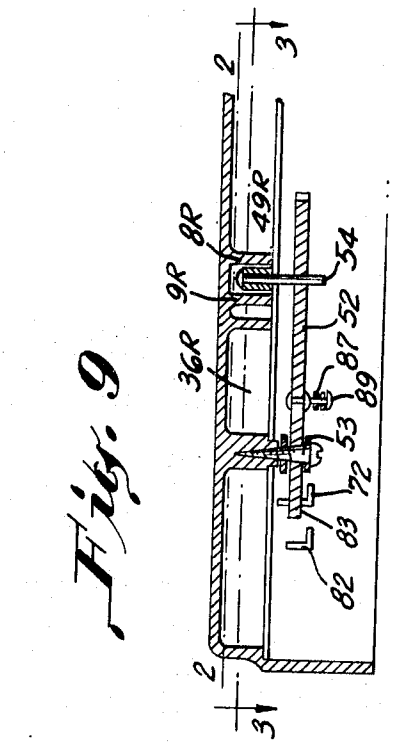


Fig. 9

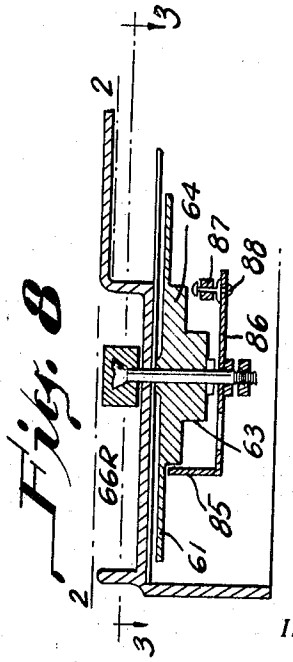


Fig. 8

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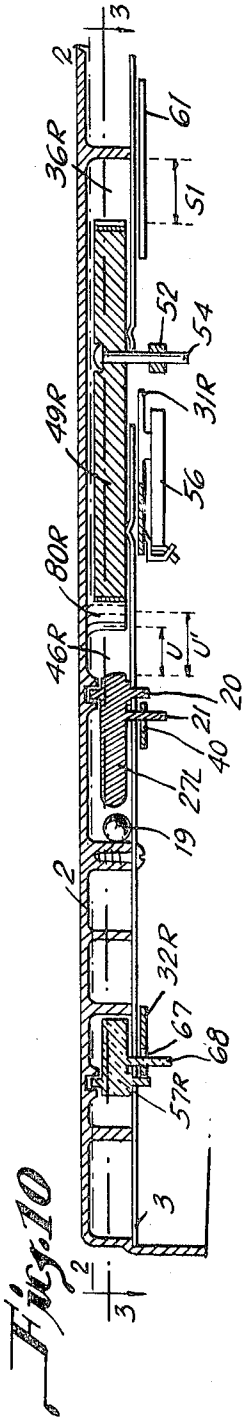


Fig. 10

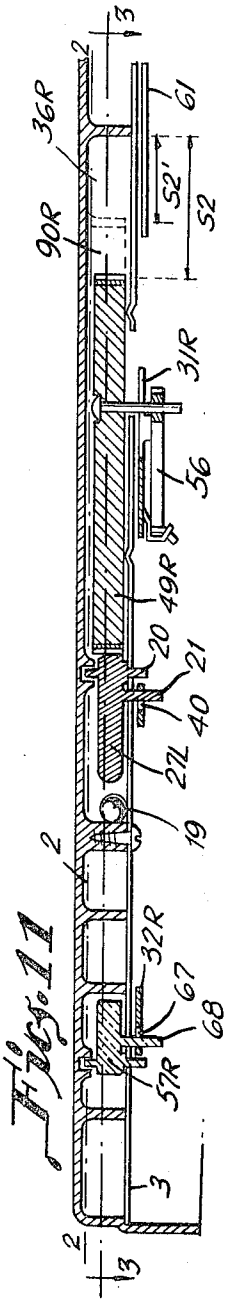


Fig. 11

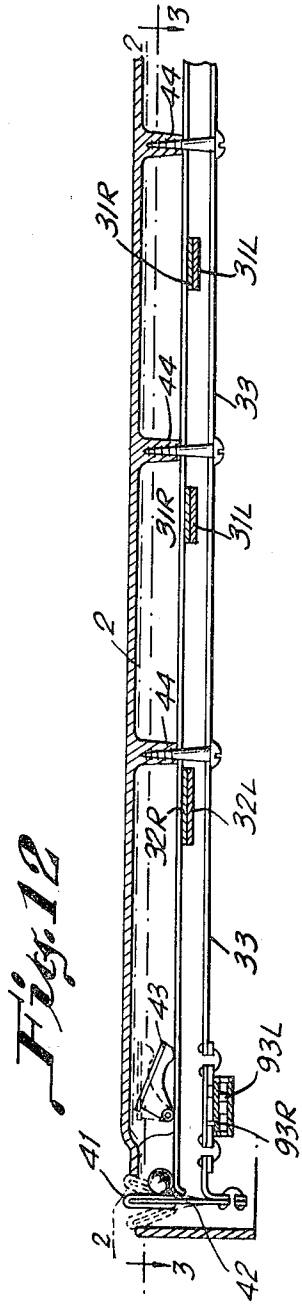


Fig. 12

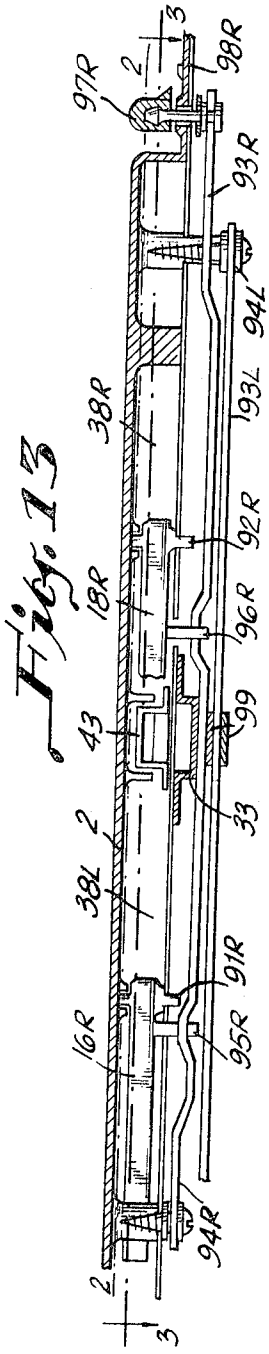


Fig. 13

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SIMULATED FOOTBALL GAME APPARATUS

The present invention relates to improvements in games apparatus for simulating games of skill, particularly those referred to in my British Pat. No. 1,107,449 filed July 13, 1966 and entitled "Improvements in Games Apparatus Simulating Sporting Games."

The game which simulates soccer and constitutes the object of the said British Patent comprises, in a conventional manner, small figures which are articulated and arranged between two parallel planes inclined relatively to the horizontal and between which a ball is moved under the action of the articulated figures which may be moved by the players while remaining subject to gravity.

Since the front plane is transparent, the game described in the said British Patent is particularly characterized in that the rear plane represents a sports ground such as would be seen in perspective by an observer located slightly above but at the side of the pitch so that the various figures located above one another on this inclined plane simulate real players located one behind the other over the width of a real sports pitch.

The patent aforementioned is also characterized in that a number of these figures are provided with a movable limb controlled by a mechanism which is hidden below the inclined plane and in that, below the area swept by each mobile limb, there is located a retention curb so that the ball necessarily comes back under the action of gravity to a position in which it can be propelled by the said movable limb.

Finally, in the device disclosed by the said British Patent, the ball cannot escape from the game except through two holes which constitute the goals, apart from which it can only be brought back into play through a third hole under the action of a manual or automatic control system.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a game apparatus simulating the game of American or rugby football, and to impart appropriate improvements to the apparatus described in the said British Patent which make it possible to carry out more faithfully the various ways of scoring in football (touchdown or try, conversion, field goal) while avoiding the operation of the game becoming complicated. The improvements particularly relate to new arrangements for:

1. selectively putting balls in the end zone out of play;
2. adjusting the travel of the ball propelled by certain figures;
3. adjusting the difficulties associated with scoring by the various methods in inverse ratio to the number of points scored according to the official rules;
4. selectively bringing balls in the end zone back into play;
5. marking up, by a unique system, the points associated with each score;
6. bringing balls back into play simultaneously with the mark up of points;
7. the type of the balls used, taking into account the impossibility of using an oval ball which would run the risk of becoming immobilized during play;
8. the possibility of producing a game which simulates the various types of American football (and also incidentally of British rugby), using the same system, the changes only relating in each particular case to a number of parts of small dimension.

The invention will be better understood from a consideration of the accompanying drawings which show diagrammatically and by way of example an apparatus which combines the essential characteristics of the invention. In the drawing:

FIG. 1 is a reproduction of FIG. 1 of the British Patent referred to above, provided as a remainder,

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the game according to the present invention in which is shown in heavier lines the mechanical members which cooperate during operation. In order to make the arrangement clearer, the front transparent plane has been divided into sections and removed and the number of articulated figures has been limited to six a side,

FIG. 3 is a plan view along the line indicated by the arrows 3—3 in FIGS. 6—13 of the apparatus shown in FIG. 2,

FIG. 4 is a plan view of the picture which decorates the rear panel of the apparatus shown in FIG. 2, this picture being completed by a number of figures which are not provided with a movable limb, so as to make up a number of 11 players per team, four referees and three linesmen,

FIG. 5 is a partial plan view, on an enlarged scale, of the rear surface of the device defined by the plane 5—5 in FIG. 3,

FIG. 6 is a sectional view along the line indicated by the arrows 6—6 in FIG. 5, of the mechanism for making up tries, shown in rest position,

FIG. 7 is a sectional view along the line indicated by the arrows 7—7 in FIG. 5 of the combined conversion and field goal markup system shown in rest position,

FIG. 8 is a sectional view along the line indicated by the arrows 8—8 in FIG. 5 of the numbered disc for the markup of points and of the ratchet wheels,

FIG. 9 is a sectional view along the line indicated by the arrows 9—9 of FIG. 5 of the transmission system connecting the markup mechanism shown in FIG. 7 to the mechanism for adjusting the opening of the goals shown in FIGS. 10 and 11,

FIG. 10 is a sectional view along the line indicated by the arrows 10—10 in FIG. 5 showing the mechanism controlling the opening of goals, this mechanism being shown in the position which corresponds to the scoring (at the choice of players), of a touchdown or try or a field goal. This position is also that shown in the right hand portion of FIG. 3,

FIG. 11 is a view of the mechanism shown in FIG. 10 which is here shown in the position corresponding to the achieving of a conversion after a touchdown or try. This position is also that shown on the left-hand portion of FIG. 3,

FIG. 12 is a sectional view along the line indicated by the arrows 12—12 in FIGS. 2 and 3 of the mechanism for bringing the balls back into play,

FIG. 13 is a sectional view along the line indicated by the arrows 13—13 of FIG. 3 of the device controlling the rocker deflection mechanism which makes it possible to regulate the path of the ball propelled by the movable limbs of the figures located at the bottom of the playing board, and

FIGS. 14 and 15 are views in cross section and longitudinal section respectively of a ball used in the game.

Referring now to the drawings, in FIG. 1, which shows the game of soccer football described in British Pat. No. 1,107,449, are shown buttons A and B which are manipulated by the player to the right of the game in order to actuate the movable limbs A1, A2, A3, A4 and B1, B2, B3, B4, respectively, of the figures shown flat on the inclined board. Symmetrically, the buttons D and E (which are not visible in the drawings) make it possible for the player manipulating them and located at the left-hand side to actuate the movable limbs D1, D2, D3, D4 and E1, E2, E3, E4.

Curved retention curbs G1–G6 are arranged below the area of revolution of certain movable limbs in order to ensure that the ball remains within their reach and to allow it to be propelled towards other figures or towards the goals, the latter being defended by movable limbs or figures representing goalkeepers.

Other curbs H1–H4, which prevent the ball from going out of play other than through the holes I1 and I2, are provided to form goals. An internal lifting mechanism actuated by the button J makes it possible to bring the ball back into play through the hole O. As in the case of conventional automatic games, the operation of the apparatus may be made dependent upon the insertion of a coin set in the slot P. Similarly, the electric counters V and W register the points gained by each team by means of internal contacts actuated by the ball itself after it passes through the goal.

The apparatus may, of course, also be made in the form of a children's game which renders superfluous the electrical apparatus, the money slot and possibly also the table legs, since a toy may be located on any type of table.

This is, moreover, the embodiment of the game of the invention which is illustrated by way of example.

Referring to FIGS. 2 to 15, the board 3 represents an American football pitch shown in perspective from a point located on this side of the side lines (not shown in the drawings) and in vertical plane passing through the center line of the pitch 12—12, the latter constituting the plane of symmetry of the apparatus as a whole.

The means used by the players in competition are arranged symmetrically. Because of this symmetry and in order to make the arrangement clearer, the pieces fulfilling the same function in each team are hereinafter referred to by the same number, with the addition of the letter L for left or R for right in order to distinguish the means available to 2 players such as LEWIS (playing on the left) and Ralph (playing on the right).

Once this has been explained, the drawings show respectively on the left L and on the right R of the board, curbs 7, 8, 9 and 14–18 (FIG. 2), the function of which is to keep in play and guide the ball 19, as also means of propulsion 22–27 which pivot on their axis 20 and are provided with a crank pin 21 which passes through the board by means of the apertures 30. This arrangement makes it possible for the slide members 40 with which the rods 31 and 32 located beneath the game are provided, to act on the crankpins 21 so as to cause a pivoting movement of the movable limbs 22–27 when the players act on the push buttons 28 and 29. A center strip 33 permits sliding of the rods 31 and 32 which are returned to rest position by helical springs 34 and 35 which act under compression (shown in dotted lines).

In order to ensure the removability and return to play of the ball, each team is provided with similar means described hereinafter with reference to FIG. 3.

First of all a passage 36 towards an upper outlet hole 37 leads from the top of the board through a passage on an inclined plane 38 to a propulsion system 39 known as the intoplay return system (here common to both teams) which return the ball into play. In this case it takes the form of a catapult constituted by a plate 41 arranged on a leaf spring 42 (FIG. 12). A nonreturn valve 43 prevents the ball from returning to the catapult while the studs 44 serve as deflectors and assembly means.

A passage 46 leads towards a lower outlet hole 47 from below the passage 36 and leads through another passage on an inclined plane 48 to propulsion means 26 arranged opposite the goals, i.e., the movable leg of the figure located, according to the perspective view, in one of the positions which should be occupied in a real game in order to effect a conversion, i.e., to send the ball in the direction of the passage 36.

Finally, a movable closure member constituted by a flap 49 sliding between the fixed curbs 8 and 9 may be held in one of two alternative positions, viz, a "raised" position (FIG. 10) which leaves open the lower passage 46 and partly closes the upper passage 36, and a "lowered" position (FIG. 11) which fully closes the passage 46 and fully opens the passage 36.

By means of this device the movements which the players are caused to make in order to propel the ball towards the goals are carried out in the same manner as in a real game. Moreover, a movable barrier 90 arrangement behind the blade or flap 49 cooperates therewith in order to control the relative opening of the goals in inverse ratio to the number of points marked up for each means of scoring. A barrier 90' replaces the barrier 90 in the case of games simulating rugby using a team of 15.

Means of scoring	Touchdown or try	Field goal	Conversion
(a) Number of points	6	3	1
(b) Theoretical ratio of relative difficulty	$\frac{6}{10}$	$\frac{3}{10}$	$\frac{1}{10}$
(c) Relative opening of the goals should be in inverse proportion to the above ratio	$\frac{10}{6}$	$\frac{10}{3}$ or $\frac{20}{6}$	$\frac{60}{6}$
That is in the relative ratio	1	2	6

Thus if we use B to indicate the diameter of the ball and K to represent an arbitrary coefficient corresponding to the minimum value of the opening, the ratio of the degrees of aperture of the various goals are respectively:

a. lower hole U = K+B
b. upper hole partially open S1=2K+B
c. upper hole is fully open S2=6K+B

In the embodiment described in this application the following values have been adopted by way of example:

B = 3 lines

K = 2 lines

Obviously the closure 49 may be of a different shape without departing from the scope of the invention. In the same way it could be so arranged as to be operated directly by the players, for example, by means of a button which passes through an opening in the glass 2. In this case, as well as in the case of semiautomatic operation described below, it is important that in order to reduce by half the number of necessary operations, means be provided to ensure a system of returning the said flap towards its raised position.

As shown in FIG. 5, this system comprises, attached to the fixed bearing 50, a spring 51 which pushes upward the handle 52 which rotates on its pivot 53. This handle carries a pin 54 which passes through the playing board, specifically through a slot or hole 55 and draws with it the flap 49 located thereabove. In addition, a stop catch 56 mounted on the rod 31 holds the handle 52 when this has been lowered to 52'. It is thus sufficient to push the button 28 in order to release the handle 52' of the catch 56 and raise the flap 49' to 49.

In addition, a rocker flat 57 is actuated by a button 29 in the same manner as the propulsion means 25, 26, 27, i.e., (FIG. 10) by means of a sliding member 67 on the rod 32, the said sliding member acting on a crank pin 68 of the flap 57. This flap opens in front of the propulsion means 26 (of the opposite team) in order to ensure that the ball is put out of play or "into touch" through the hole 69 known as the "out of play hole" (FIG. 2).

This operation is necessary if the ball, caused to move by a propulsion means 26, misses the passage 36 in the course of an attempted conversion. Of course, the player pushing the button 29 does not have the right to play while his adversary is attempting the said conversion, so that the flap 57 remains closed.

Moreover, (as shown in FIGS. 5–9) closure flaps 58 and 59 are arranged relatively to the entrance to passages 38 and 48 in order to stop the ball there. Naturally, the opening of these flaps may be controlled independently by the players by means, for example, of pushbuttons which act against the pertinent retaining springs. However, the main function of these flaps consists in controlling the passage of the ball in one or other of the passages 38 and 48 dependently of the obligatory marking up of the exact number of points accorded by the rules. This is why the invention provides for the control of these flaps to be subject to the marking-up mechanism.

In fact, each team is provided with a points counting system comprising a numbered disc 61 which shows one of its numbers through a hole 62 provided with a magnifying glass. This disc is made integral with or rigidly secured to two concentric ratchet wheels 63 and 64, the teeth on which are acted upon by the two movable pawls 65 and 67. At the beginning of each game, the button 66 keyed to the shaft of the disc 61 makes it possible for this to be brought back to zero position, while a fixed pawl 79 prevents any return movement.

In the drawings it is assumed, for purposes of simplification, that the disc 61 advances two points forward each time that the ratchet wheel 63 advances by one tooth and by a single point each time that the ratchet wheel 64 advances one tooth, the wheel 64 having a diameter exactly double that of the wheel 63.

In the mechanism shown in FIGS. 5–9, a first pushbutton 71 allows the players to act upon a first sliding rod 72, the movement of which is limited by stop members 73 and 74, the said movement being effected in opposition to the retaining spring 78.

At the same time, a second pushbutton 81 makes it possible for the players to act on a second sliding rod 82, the movement of which is limited by stop members 75 and 76, this

movement being effected in opposition to the retaining spring **79**.

The drawings show that the rods **72** and **82** are provided respectively with pawls **65** and **67** and the closure flaps **59** and **58**. In addition, the movement of the closure flap **49** by means of the handle **52** is ensured by a crank pin **83** acted upon by a sliding block **84** provided in the rod **72**.

A rocker catch **85** controlled by the handle **86** is inserted between the driving pawl **67** and the ratchet wheel **64**. A pin **87** which connects the handles **86** and **53** by means of crank pins **88** and **86** makes it possible to raise the catch **85** into position **85'** when the handle **52** and the flap **49** have been lowered to **52'** and **49'**. According to the drawings, the raising of the catch **85** and **85'** reduces by two units the number of points registered by the advance of the pawl **67**.

Moreover, as shown in FIGS. **3** and **13**, the retention curbs **16** and **18** which limit the lower periphery of the area of revolution of the propulsion means **26** and **25** are rockably mounted on pins **91** and **92**. A rod **93** which pivots about a pin **94** acts by means of the appropriate sliding members on the crank pins **95** and **96** of the retention curbs **16** and **18** so as to allow the players to regulate the inclination of these curbs by means of the button **97** which is provided with a position indicator **98**. The catches **99** make it possible for the rods **93R** and **93L** to be held and to move freely against the strip **33**.

By way of example, the four positions *w*, *x*, *y* and *z* of the position indicator **98** L correspond approximately to the paths *kt*, *hi*, *hp* and *hs* shown in FIG. **3**, which may be covered by the ball during play.

Operation of the apparatus will be described hereinafter in reference to an imaginary or simulated game of football between two players, one of whom controls the figures in dark jerseys from the left-hand side (lewis) while the other controls the figures wearing light jerseys from the right-hand side (Ralph) and operate respectively the handles **28L–29L** and **28R–29R** shown in FIG. **3**.

The ball, which is thrown by means of the catapult **39** in the direction of arrow *a*, passes through the valve **43** and ricochets against the member **44** (arrow *b*), rolls along the barrier **17** L (arrow *c*) and stops in the hollow of the curb **18** L. By pressing the button **29** L, Lewis acts upon the propelling arm **25** L and causes the ball to be projected towards the right (arrow *d*). Caught in midflight by the arm **24** L which is actuated by the button **28** L, the ball passes into the passage **46** R (arrow *e*) and, guided by the arm **27** L, rolls towards the hole **47** R, arrow *f* where it stops.

By pressing the button **71** R (FIGS. **5** and **6**), Ralph causes the rod **72** to slide upwards along a distance T which is equivalent to an angular distance equal to 3 teeth of the ratchet wheel **63**, thus causing the counter disc **61** to advance six points.

At the same time, the rod **72** acts, through the sliding member **84**, on the handle **52** which rocks on its pivot **53** towards position **52'**. This handle simultaneously causes the lowering of the sliding flap **49** R to position **49'R** and the pivoting of the catch **85** to **85'**.

In the same way, as a result of the reciprocating movement of the flap **59R**, the ball is released from the hole **47R** and then propelled into the passage along the inclined plane **48** R which conveys it to the hollow in the curb **16** L.

Since the lower hole **47** R is not accessible because of the closure of the passage **46** R by the barrier **49'R** and the existence of the fixed curve **15** L beneath the propelling arm **27** L, Lewis is allowed to attempt a conversion, i.e., to maneuver the movable leg **26** L by means of the movable leg **26** L by means of the button **27** L in order to project the ball in the direction of arrow *h* across the barrier **49'R** in the direction of the arrow I through the passage **36** R which is fully open (i.e., as shown in the left-hand side of FIG. **3**).

If he succeeds, the ball passes, under the action of gravity, in the direction of the arrow *j* towards the upper hole **37** R where it stops.

Then, by pushing the button **81** R (FIGS. **5** and **7**), Ralph causes the rod **82** to slide upwards over a length F + N (F representing a useful angular distance equal to 3 teeth of the ratchet wheel **64** and N being the length along which the catch **67** can slide on the catch **85** to rest position).

However, by reason of the rocking movement of the catch **85** to **85'**, the ratchet wheel **64** has only been moved over a useful angular distance C equal to a single tooth on the said ratchet wheel. Consequently, the disc **61** only advances a single point.

At the same time, because of the reciprocating movement of the flap **58** R, the ball is released through the hole **37** R and then propelled in the passage along the inclined plane **38** R which guides it in the direction of the arrow *m* towards the catapult **39**. Naturally, Ralph is allowed, once the ball has been brought back into play, to push the button **28** R which pushes back the catch **56**, thus returning the handle **52'** to **52** and consequently causing the flap **49'** to be raised to **49** and the pivoting of the catch **85'** to position **85**.

If, on the other hand, Lewis is not successful in his conversion, and if the ball riccochets in the direction of the arrow *p* against the barrier **8** R and drops down again in the direction of the arrow *q*, Ralph is immediately allowed not only to push the button **28** R as described above but also to press the button **29** R, which causes the rocking movement of the into touch outlet flap **57** R in a downward direction (that is to say, as shown in dotted lines in FIG. **3**) and thus to cause the ball to be put out of play by means of the passage **38** R. If this maneuver is not successful and if the ball returns to the hollow or recess in the curb **16** L, Lewis is now entitled to attempt a new try by using the passage **46** R (arrow *s*) after adjusting the travelling member **97** L towards *w*, or to attempt a field goal using the passage **36** R in the direction of the arrow *i* after adjusting the traveller **97L** towards *y*.

If we assume that, as a result of the adjustment of the traveller **98L** at *z*, the ball passes along another path in the direction of the arrow *t* and riccochets in the direction of the arrow *u* against the barrier **7** R so as to come into a position in front of the movable leg **23** L which is that on the Figure most suitably placed to gain a field goal, Lewis may succeed in directly projecting this ball in the direction of the arrow *v* through the passage **36** R which again leaves it in the direction of the arrow *j* to **37** R.

By pressing the button **81** R (FIGS. **5** and **7**) Ralph causes an upward sliding movement of the rod **82** which causes a forward movement of the catch **65** along the length F + N as described above. However, the catch **85** has not yet been raised into position **85'**, so that the ratchet wheel **64** is this time drawn over a useful angular distance equal to 3 teeth and the disc **61** advances 3 points. The operation of the game described above gives rise to the following remarks.

First of all, it will be seen that if the movable members or limbs **22**, **23**, **24** located towards the top of the playing board are provided with curbs of the type **15**, **16**, **18**, the ball propelled by the said movable limbs located therebelow along paths *d* or *k* will be stopped by the said curbs. Consequently, the curbs are advantageously replaced on the drawings FIGS. **2** and **3** by slight concave recesses **100** obtained by a stamping process during production of the playing board.

On the other hand, in the embodiment described, the points gained by the team playing on the left hand side are registered by the maneuvers effected by the players located at the right-hand side and vice versa. This arrangement might be reversed by mechanical transmission means similar to the rods **93** for example. However, since the release of the ball through the holes representing the goals is subjected to the marking up of the exact number of points provided by each method of scoring, an incomplete movement may, in fact, result in the recording of a lower number of points, but in this case the ball is not removed through the passage which brings it into play and the player at fault is obliged once more to maneuver the device, thus causing an additional number of points to be marked up for his opponent. Consequently, it is to the advantage of each player correctly to operate the point markup device and consequently the transposition of the controls is not absolutely necessary, a fact which makes possible a fairly substantial simplification of the mechanism. Moreover, since each player acts in full view of the opposing players, any incor-

rect markup may easily be noted and, where necessary, be adjusted using the button **66**.

Moreover, since a game of British rugby is in this miniature game identical to the game of American football, the device described above may also be used for a game simulating British rugby with the following changes:

a. the use of a playing board representing rugby players on a suitable pitch;

b. the replacement of the movable barriers **90** by barriers **90'** (shown in chain-dotted lines);

c. the turning of the movable stop member **76** into the position shown in chain-dotted lines in FIG. **7**;

d. the replacing of the numbered strip stuck to the disc **61** by another strip carrying exactly twice less the number of numbered gradations or a gradation by twos as described above.

As a result of these modifications, each counter will register points in accordance with the rules of Rugby Union for example (FIG. **5**):

a. 3 for a try or T/2

b. 2 points for a conversion or C'

c. 3 points for a field goal or F'.

In the same way, due to the provision of the movable barrier **90'**, the relative opening of the goals U, **S1** and **S2** become respectively U', **S1** (unchanged) and **S2'**, this being effected in inverse ratio to the points provided for each means of scoring in accordance with the rules of Rugby Union.

In what concerns the shape of the ball, experience has shown that an oval ball often remains stationary at the corners of the board. In order to obviate this disadvantage, it is proposed that use be made, as shown in FIGS. **14** and **15**, of a ball obtained by bonding or moulding a spherical envelope of transparent plastics material **60** about an oval core of opaque material **70**.

This causes the ball to appear oval although it is actually spherical. However, the use of a round ball of the conventional type has no disadvantage in the practical order in a miniature game simulating American football or British rugby.

Finally, the embodiment described and shown by way of example particularly applies to the manufacture of toys for children. Nonetheless, in the case of a game to be used for the amusement of the general public, the operations may be carried out by conventional electromagnetic means actuated by means of interrupters operated by the players and contacts actuated by weight, impact or the conductivity of the ball.

I claim:

1. In apparatus for playing a game of skill simulating a game such as American football, of the kind comprising a board inclined relatively to the horizontal, a ball capable of moving under the effect of gravity over the said board, curb means for retaining and guiding the ball and symmetrical means of propulsion actuated by players in order to convey the said ball towards outlet apertures which represent the goals, means for removing the ball and bringing it back into play, the improvement which consists in that said board has:

a. an upper outlet aperture which opens towards the top of the playing board and leads, through a passage along an inclined plane, to a propulsion means located at the center of the lower edge of said board in order to enable the players to return the ball to play;

b. a lower aperture which opens below said upper outlet aperture and leads, through another passage along an inclined plane to a second propulsion means located on the area of play so as to allow opposing players to propel the ball towards said upper outlet aperture;

c. movable closure means controlling access to both said outlet apertures, said closure means being movable between two alternative positions, the first position being a raised position wherein said lower outlet aperture is open and said upper outlet aperture is partially closed, and the second position being a lowered position wherein said lower outlet aperture is entirely closed and said upper outlet aperture is fully open.

2. Apparatus according to claim **1**, wherein the means for adjusting the relative aperture of said lower outlet opening, of said upper outlet aperture when partially open and of said upper outlet aperture when fully open, does so in inverse ratio to the number of points marked up respectively for a try, or touchdown, a field goal or a conversion.

3. Apparatus according to claim **1**, wherein the device comprises two identical symmetrical devices each of which includes:

a. a curved curb which defines the lower periphery of the area of revolution of said second propulsion means, said curb being pivotable about an axis perpendicular to the playing area without affecting the operation of the said propulsion means;

b. a means of control for pivoting said curb to control the path of the ball when projected by said second propulsion means.

4. Apparatus according to claim **1**, wherein two identical symmetrical devices are combined, each of which comprises:

a. a flexible retaining means for permanently drawing said movable closure means towards its raised position;

b. a flexible blocking means for holding said closure means once it has been brought into closure position; and

c. a means for subjecting said closure means to the control mechanism of at least one of said propulsion means actuatable by the players in order to direct the path of the ball, this control holding the closure means in its lower position when the said control mechanism is held in rest position by flexible retaining means pertinent thereto or releasing said closure means to return to its raised position when actuated by one of the players in opposition to the retaining means.

5. Apparatus according to claim **1**, wherein two identical symmetrical devices are combined each of which comprises:

a. a third outlet aperture directly in front of said second propulsion means, said third outlet aperture giving access to a passage which conveys the ball to said first propulsion means;

b. means for retaining said third outlet aperture either in a closed position in which the ball is directed towards said propulsion means or in an open position in which the ball is directed towards the said propulsion means; and

c. means for connecting said means for retaining to the means controlling one of said propulsion means actuatable by the players for controlling the movement of the ball and means for biasing said controlling means comprising an elastic retainer, said control mechanism being held in a rest position by said elastic retainer said third outlet being closed whereby when the said control mechanism is actuated by one of the players in opposition to said flexible retaining means said third outlet aperture is opened.

6. Apparatus according to claim **1**, wherein the devices are composed of two identical symmetrical arrangements comprising in combination:

a. a first movable closure member arranged in the passage leading from said lower outlet aperture, flexible retainer means biasing said first movable closure member to a first passage blocking position and actuable against the bias of said flexible retaining means; and

b. a second movable closure member located in the passage leading from said upper outlet aperture, second flexible retainer means biasing said second movable closure member to a first passage blocking position and being actuatable against the bias of said second flexible retaining means position to a second passage opening position.

7. Apparatus according to claim **1**, wherein the device comprises two identical symmetrical devices each of which includes a point-counting mechanism and means for engaging the said mechanism to cause it to register a number of points proportional to the effective amount of the movement of said engagement means, each of the said devices further comprising in combination:

a. two control means, the first control means moving said engagement means to an amount sufficient for recording the number of points provided for a try, or touchdown, said second control means moving said engagement means an amount sufficient for recording the number of points provided for a field goal;

b. a release means to restrict the amount of movement of said engagement means to an amount sufficient for recording the number of points provided for a conversion; and

c. means for subjecting said release mechanism to the mechanism which controls the closure means of claim 1 for holding said release mechanism in a working position when said closure means of claim 1 is secured in its lower position; and for holding said release mechanism in a non-working position when said closure means is in the raised position.

8. Apparatus according to claim 7, comprising a flat rigid plate forming the playing board and a hood of moulded transparent plastics material forming both the casing and the fixed curbs retaining the ball, wherein the device comprises, a movable gauge secured in front of the goal and cooperating with the movable closure means of claim 1 to regulate the opening of the goals and a movable stop member which regulates the movement of the engaging means of claim 7.

9. Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the ball comprises an opaque oval core lodged in a transparent spherical envelope.

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