Caps and hats are constructed to focus attention on one of two somehow related but different subjects. A baseball-style cap may have two identical fixed visors or bills positioned opposite to each other, a harlequin type of color scheme (front versus rear) and permanently affixed front and rear indicia that depict two opponents or contenders in a competition. It may also commemorate a competition or game, as by one or more laterally placed event indicia, and it may be adjustable to promote the fitting of different head sizes through the use of stretchable material in the lateral aspects of both the crown and the headband. By a simple front to rear rotation of the cap, the wearer might reverse his or her loyalty as, for example, should the team of preference suffer defeat in the contest.
HATS BEARING RELATED INDICIA

[0001] This application is a continuation-in-part of pending U.S. Ser. No. 10/693,412, filed Oct. 25, 2003, the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The invention relates to hats that carry related indicia and more particularly to such hats that can be worn to focus upon one of such indicia, which indicia, for example, might commemorate a particular sporting event or other competition, designating rivals or contenders through the use of particular combinations of colors and logos.

[0003] Hats serve many purposes and functions. They may be designed to protect the wearer's head, eyes and nape from natural elements, including wind, rain and sun, as well as from trauma of a blunt or sharp nature. One such hat, a baseball-style cap, generally consists of a hemispherical crown or dome portion that fits on the wearer's head plus a single visor or bill that is attached to and projects outwardly from the front region of the crown or dome. The crown is commonly composed of a plurality of substantially triangular fabric or leather sections or panels, called gores, that are joined laterally by seams. A fabric headband is preferably circumferentially attached along the inner base of the crown to provide structural support while facilitating the engagement of the wearer's head. Occasionally, the headband fabric is selected to provide either absorption of forehead and scalp perspiration or elasticity for adjustability of fit or both.

[0004] Such caps are commonly used by athletes in the course of their games and often also by fans or supporters to demonstrate their team loyalties or affiliations as best reflected in the use of team colors and various indicia, usually located on the front of the crown of the cap just above the insertion of the visor element and/or on the upper surface of the visor itself. The economic pressure to reduce marketers' inventory volumes has prompted the evolution of many caps or hats that can be adjusted to fit a plurality of head sizes.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

[0005] For nearly a century, many patents have described the use of caps, hats or visors, with or without nape coverings, to protect wearers from the effects of the sun's glare and radiation. Rochet, U.S. Pat. No. 822,986; Silverstein, U.S. Pat. No. 1,816,346; Lipkin, U.S. Pat. No. 4,622,007; Shedid, U.S. Pat. No. 5,081,717; Shorts, U.S. Pat. No. 5,161,259; and Oates, U.S. Pat. No. 5,091,995 disclosed caps with detachable nape or neck flaps. Klein, U.S. Pat. No. 1,648,551; Leibson, U.S. Pat. No. 1,677,187; and Robinson, U.S. Pat. No. 5,233,364 introduced caps and sun visors with single visors or bills that were movable from the front to the rear of the cap or sun visor. Oates, U.S. Pat. No. 5,001,995 describes a sports cap having an attachable rear brim unit of open mesh material and a partial crown which carries strips of Velcro that engage mating strips interior to the rear of the crown to enable installation of the rear brim unit interior thereof.

[0006] Recent efforts to achieve cap adjustability have often focused on the use of uni-axially or bi-axially expandable or elastic materials. Lipkin, U.S. Pat. No. 4,662,007; Beckerman, U.S. Pat. No. 5,615,415; Cho, U.S. Pat. No. 5,715,540; and Cunliffe, U.S. Pat. No. 5,966,742 suggested that the rear gores of the crown may consist of a uni-axially stretchable material. Beckerman, U.S. Pat. No. 5,615,415; Cho, U.S. Pat. No. 5,715,540; and Green, U.S. Pat. No. 5,632,046 disclosed headbands with a uni-axially stretchable component, while Cunliffe, U.S. Pat. No. 5,966,742; and Lee, U.S. Pat. No. 6,347,410 described a bi-axially stretchable, sweat-absorbent headband. In all instances, headband elasticity extended circumferentially, but did not include the area at the front of the crown where the visor is attached.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0007] Many cap wearers have chosen caps that are identified with a particular competitive event and/or with a sports team or the like; often such identification is by fabric colors, frequently with team names and/or logos that are painted, embossed or otherwise affixed to the front of the crown or to the upper surface of the visor. To facilitate a wearer's ability to identify with more than one team or more than one occasion, Proctor, U.S. Pat. No. 5,862,523; and Tapia, U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,873,726 and 5,070,545 disclosed the use of detachable indicia or logos on the front crown or visor of a cap, which may also be a part of a modular headwear system. Connelly, U.S. Pat. No. 5,410,761 described the placement of pictorial displays on an insert located in the upper surface of the visor.

[0008] None of the prior art has provided for a cap or hat that is constructed in such a manner so as to allow it to be worn in a manner to focus attention upon either of two related, but different, persons, subjects, objects or events.

[0009] The present invention provides a cap or hat that is designed so that it may be worn to focus attention upon either of two related but different subjects, e.g., persons, subjects, groups, teams, objects, events, etc. For example, it may commemorate a special sporting event, such as the Super Bowl, or other such competition and optionally indicate date (year) and location. It may optionally further identify the two opponents/contenders in such event or competition by their respective color(s), and/or logos, each on one half of the crown of a baseball cap and the particular visor attached to it. For example, it may embody a harlequin or half and half color scheme and permanently mounted logos that depict two opponents or contenders in such a competition, which may also be memorialized by a third, laterally placed event logo, and optionally, a fourth contra-laterally placed event year and location marker. Preferably, the cap or hat adjusts in size to accommodate a plurality of head sizes, wherein the adjustable feature involves the use of stretchable material in the lateral regions of both the crown and the headband.

[0010] In one particular aspect, the invention provides a baseball-style cap or hat for an event that comprises a crown portion, a headband and two visors, with the crown including multiple substantially triangular fabric panels or gores that are sewn together along their lateral edges to form a dome to fit over the wearer’s head. The laterally aligned gores may comprise bi-axially stretchable material. The fabric of the front one half of the crown is in the color(s) of one contender in the event, while the rear half is in the color(s) of the opponent. A non-stretchable fabric headband,
with laterally incorporated segments of a bi-axially stretchable material, is circumferentially attached to the inner lower perimeter surface of the crown. Two substantially identically shaped and sized visors or bills, made of substantially rigid material, are positioned opposite to each other, respectively at the front and at the rear base of the crown. Their respective visor color(s) schemes are the same as those of the respective crown regions to which they are attached. These visors are separated on each lateral side by that portion of the perimeter of the base of the crown that is faced with the stretchable portions of headband. On the crown portion immediately above the front visor, the indicia of the team or contender represented by its respective color(s) is attached, painted, embossed, monogrammed or otherwise non-detachably affixed; by indicia is meant the name, logo, nickname emblem or such other symbol that identifies that team or the like. Indicia representative of the opposing team or contender is similarly affixed to the crown portion above the rear visor. One lateral aspect of the crown portion may optionally have the name and/or symbol of the competition, e.g., the Super Bowl, attached, painted, embossed, monogrammed or non-detachably affixed. On the opposite lateral aspect of the crown portion, the date (year) and/or the location of the competition may be similarly affixed. When stretchable gores are incorporated, the name/symbol/date may be sewn or embroidered with elastic thread.

[0011] In variations of the above, the laterally located gores and/or the laterally incorporated segments of the headband may be made of a uni-axially stretchable material or of non-elastic material. The cap colors and the affixed name and/or logo may represent different related subjects or different aspects of a single team in a particular competition, with or without reference to such particular competitive event.

[0012] In another particular aspect, the invention provides a hat having a non-domed crown portion, a headband and a broad non-rigid circumferential brim where the crown portion consists of a fabric top and side cover, the interior base of which is attached circumferentially to the fabric headband that laterally incorporates segments of uni-axially or bi-axially stretchable material. The exterior base of the crown portion is attached circumferentially to a broad rim comprised of substantially oval or circular shaped fabric that is reinforced by stiffeners which may be attached by concentric rows of stitching. The fabric of the front one half of the non-domed crown and of the broad brim is in a color(s) representative of one contender team, subject, object, etc., while the rear half is in a contrasting color, e.g. that of an opponent or a different but related subject. On the front and rear crown portions immediately above the broad brim, the name and/or logo of the team, subject, object, associated with the respective color(s) is attached, painted, embossed, monogrammed or otherwise non-detachably affixed. Lateral aspects of the crown portion, may optionally carry indicia as set forth above.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0013] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a cap embodying various features of the present invention shown on a model’s head.

[0014] FIG. 2 is a left side elevation view of the cap of FIG. 1, illustrating different logos and shaded and non-shaded regions which represent different colors that distinguish two teams plus a symbol of a subject competitive event.

[0015] FIG. 3 is a bottom view of the cap of FIG. 2 demonstrating the stretchable lateral segment of the headband and the stretchable lateral gores of the crown portion of the adjustable cap.

[0016] FIG. 4 is a top view of the cap shown in FIG. 2.

[0017] FIG. 5a is a front elevation view of the cap of FIG. 2, illustrating the logo and coloring of one team or contender.

[0018] FIG. 5b is a rear elevation view of the cap of FIG. 2, illustrating the logo and coloring of the other team.

[0019] FIG. 6a is a side elevation view of a hat embodying various features of the present invention, illustrating logos and different colors that distinguish the different teams, plus the symbol of the subject event, as generally also shown on the cap in FIG. 1.

[0020] FIG. 6b is a top perspective view of the hat shown in FIG. 6a illustrating the broad circumferential brim.

[0021] FIG. 6c is a bottom perspective view of the hat in FIG. 6a, demonstrating the stretchable lateral segments of the headband.

[0022] FIG. 7 is a front view similar to FIG. 5a, showing another cap embodying various features of the invention.

[0023] FIG. 8 is a right side view of the cap of FIG. 7.

[0024] FIG. 9 is a bottom view of the hat of FIG. 7.

[0025] FIG. 10 is a top view of the cap shown in FIG. 7.

[0026] FIG. 11 is a left side view of the cap of FIG. 7.

[0027] FIG. 12 is a rear view of the cap of FIG. 7.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0028] FIGS. 1 through 5b of the drawings illustrate an adjustable baseball-style, double-billed cap 1 embodying features of one preferred embodiment of the present invention which is sometimes referred to as a competition cap. The cap 1 comprises a crown portion 2 that essentially covers or crowns the top of the wearer’s head, which may be generally hemispheric or of domed shape 8; it is formed by laterally shaping, from apex to base, a plurality of substantially triangular fabric panels or gores 3. The crown, at its base, has a generally round to oval bottom opening along its lower peripheral edge 7 which has both an outer or exterior surface 5 and an inner or interior surface 4. By generally round to oval is meant a shape which is circular, oval, or between circular and oval. The cap fabric is flexible so it can adapt to the shape of the head of the wearer. An elongated fabric strip is circumferentially attached thereto to form an interior headband 21. As seen in FIG. 3, the fabric material of the headband is preferably symmetrically interrupted in its lateral aspect by the insertion of segments 22 of stretchable or elastic material to facilitate the adjustment of the cap 1 to fit a plurality of head sizes. Two lateral gores 11 on each side are also preferably made of a stretchable material that
further contributes to the adjustability of the cap 1; the rear gores 13 and the front gores 12 are made of standard cloth material.

The stretchable materials making up the two laterally inserted segments of the headband 22 and the two laterally positioned gores 11 on each side are preferably bi-axially stretchable, that is, simultaneously stretchable in a diagonal as well as a horizontal direction; however, they may also be uni-axially stretchable. Bi-axial stretchability of the material is achieved when the fabric is woven from perpendicular warp and weft yarns consisting of a variety of polyester and rubber blends. The front 12 and rear 13 gore sections that comprise the front and rear portions of the crown are preferably backed by one or more layers of material to add support and shape to the front and rear sections of the crown portion 2.

Two substantially identically shaped and sized visors or bills 9, 10, made of substantially rigid material, are attached at the lower peripheral edge of the crown 7 at positions exactly opposite to each other, respectively at the front and at the rear of the crown. The visors 9, 10 are separated on each side by the two portions of the lower peripheral edge 7 of the crown 2 that are faced with the stretchable portions 22 of the headband.

The fabric of the exterior surface 5 of the front one-half section of the crown portion 2 and the upper surface of its respective attached visor is in the color(s) 14 of one team or contender, whereas the fabric of the exterior surface 5 of the rear one-half section of the crown portion 2 and its attached visor is in the color(s) 15 of the other team or contender. The color of the fabric covering the undersurface 19 of the front visor 9 and the rear visor 10 may optionally have a light-absorbing or reflecting quality or may be the same as that of the respective upper surface.

On the front section of the crown portion 2, centered above the front visor 9, the name and/or symbol 18 of the competitive event, e.g., the Super Bowl, is attached, painted, embossed, monogrammed or otherwise non-detachably affixed. Reference with respect to left and right is based upon the front view of the cap 1 as shown in FIG. 5a (not to the wearer). On the opposite lateral aspect of the crown portion 2, as seen in FIG. 4, the date (year) 23 of the event and/or the location 24 is similarly affixed.

As previously mentioned, although the laterally located gores 11 are preferably made of bi-axially stretchable material, they may optionally be made of uni-axially stretchable material. Moreover, both the lateral gores 11 and the laterally incorporated segments 22 of the headband may, if desired, be made of uni-axially stretchable material. Furthermore, although such adjustability is preferred, the cap may optionally be made non-adjustable, having all gore panels, 11, 12 and 13, and the entire headband 21 made of non-elastic material.

Although it has been convenient to illustrate the invention by showing a competition cap designed to commemorate the 2003 Super Bowl that was held in San Diego, and the two teams that participated, it should be understood that, although competitive sporting events are certainly one subject for which the invention is extremely well suited, it is by no means restricted to such events. Very generally, the cap or hat is conceptually designed so that it may be worn to focus attention upon either of two related but different subjects, for example persons, groups, teams, subjects, objects, events or the like. By constructing such a cap or hat so that, when worn with the front visor 9 above the face of the wearer, the indicia 16 of that selected subject will be the focus of attention, whereas the indicia and/or color representative of the other different subject will be facing rearward in a manner which indicates at least lack of present interest therefor and perhaps might be viewed as exhibiting disdain, as for example where athletic competition is involved. Thus, the construction of the hat or cap is generally designed so as to allow focus upon one of two different subjects, which are related or contrasting in some fashion. Although they need not be contradictory or competitive, such will often provide constructions of particular interest. For example, the subjects might be different events, entities, brand identities, images, institutions, personalities, places or locations, slogans or the like. For example they might be related personalities, such as a father and son auto racers, athletic teams and a particular team member; a location or an institution and a member thereof (e.g. Disneyland and Mickey Mouse); a city and its athletic team or other attraction; a manufacturer and its product; a sponsor or manufacturer and its spokesman; an event or organization and a winner or champion; a country or company and a leader or executive; current and nostalgic persons, mascots, or logos of sports team; and the like. As can be seen, the list of potential categories of subjects is nearly endless. The design of the cap or hat is unique in that it permits the wearer to alternatively direct his or her focus to one of two somehow related subjects, or depending upon one’s psychological viewpoint, to provide an outward show of support for the one subject, i.e., one competing team, and simultaneous disdain for the competing team. Such focus is believed to be amplified through the employment of contrasting colors for the front and rear halves of the hat or cap, which colors are preferably chosen to be representative of team colors, for example, or of colors that may be indicative of or associated with a particular subject.
portion 26 and of the broad brim 27 is in the color(s) 32, of one contender, while the fabric of the rear one-half of the crown 26 portion and of the attached broad brim 27 is in the color(s) 33 of the opponent. The different colors are represented in FIGS. 6a-6c by shading or stippling and the absence thereof.

[0037] On the front of the sidewall of the crown portion 26, immediately above the broad circumferential brim 27, indicia 16, such as the name and/or logo of the team or contender represented by its respective color(s) 32, is attached, painted, embossed, monogrammed or otherwise non-detachably affixed. Similar indicia 17, such as the name and/or logo of the opposing team or contender is similarly affixed to the rear surface of the sidewall 35 of the crown portion 26.

[0038] To provide some adjustability in the hat 25, the lateral segments 29 which are preferably uni-axially stretchable are incorporated in the headband 28. However, if desired, the entire headband 28 may be made of a non-stretchable material, or biaxially stretchable segments might be used.

[0039] To provide an example of another cap where the theme of the related subjects is not one of competition, FIGS. 7 to 12 are included. These figures show a commemorative or souvenir-type cap 40 where two related humans are presented as an example of another situation of potential interest; in this case the well-known NASCAR auto racers, Dale Earnhardt and Dale Earnhardt, Jr. are portrayed in the form of a baseball-style cap having front and rear slightly curved visors 41, 43. The front half 45 of the crown and the associated visor 41 may be in black color, whereas the rear half 47 of the crown and the associated visor is in red. It may have a generally hemispherical button 49 on top, which is preferably color of the front half. The crown has an oval bottom opening 51 (see FIG. 9) at the bottom rim, and a headband/sweatband 53 is affixed to the interior surface thereof along the bottom rim.

[0040] Indicia of the respective persons is appropriately affixed centrally upon the front and rear sections of the cap. In this respect, indicia 55 in the form of the number “3”, the race car number made famous by Dale Earnhardt, is prominently affixed to the front black half 45 of the crown. Similarly, indicia 57 in the form of the number “8”, the race car number of the vehicle currently driven by Dale Earnhardt, Jr., is centrally prominently displayed on the rear half 47 of the crown. Corresponding indicia 55b and 57b are respectively provided on the under or lower surfaces of the front brim 41 and the rear brim 43. As suggestive of such a father-son relationship, the number “3” is shown morphing into the number “8” in indicia 61 carried along the right side whereas, vice versa, the numeral “8” morphs into the numeral “3” in indicia 63 carried along the opposite side. To provide some adjustability of fit, the headband/sweatband 53 is preferably provided with laterally disposed segments of stretchable material as described hereinbefore. Optionally, the laterally located gores could also be provided with stretchability, as discussed with respect to the cap of FIG. 1 to 5b, in which case the lateral indicia 61, 63 would also be made stretchable, as by embroidering with elastic thread, for example. It should be understood that any or all of the elements of construction hereinbefore described with regard to the cap of FIGS. 1 to 5b could be incorporated into the cap 40.

[0041] Although preferred embodiments of the invention have been described with considerable specificity, which constitute the best mode known to the inventor, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that modifications, changes and adaptations may be made to the disclosed embodiments without departing from the scope of the invention which is to be determined by the appended claims and their legal equivalents.

[0042] Although only a single non-competition type of cap/hat has been shown, it should be understood that the list is nearly endless of related subjects that might be incorporated as a part of such a dual focus cap/hat. As previously mentioned, a prominent person and his or her organization may be portrayed, as may an endless number of subjects, for example, cats and dogs.

[0043] The descriptions of the previously mentioned U.S. patents are expressly incorporated herein by reference.

[0044] Particular features of the invention are emphasized in the claims that follow.

What is claimed is:

1. An adjustable baseball-style competition cap comprising:

a crown portion that comprises a plurality of laterally seamed, substantially triangular fabric panels including front, rear and lateral panels, only said lateral panels being made of a stretchable material that facilitates the accommodation of a plurality of head sizes,

said crown portion having a dome shape, a lower, generally round to oval rim and inner and outer surfaces;

said crown portion's outer surface being divided into front half and rear half sections, each of which sections represents, by coloration of its fabric, one or the other of the two teams or contenders in the subject competition;

indicia that identify the teams or contenders in the competition being affixed respectively to the front or rear section of the outer surface of the crown, which section is of the representative coloration;

a headband adjacent the inner surface thereof, which is circumferentially attached to the rim of the crown portion, which headband is composed of non-stretchable fabric except for two lateral segments of stretchable material that further facilitate the accommodation of a plurality of head sizes; and

two substantially identically shaped and sized visors of substantially rigid material attached to the rim of the crown portion of the respective front and rear sections, each visor having an upper surface, the color of which depicts the same team color scheme as the section of the crown portion to which it is attached, both visors being separated on each side by a distance about equal to the lengths of the respective stretchable segments of the headband, each visor potentially providing shade for the wearer's eyes or nose while the forward facing visor demonstrates support for the contender identified by the associated indicia and color complex.

2. The cap of claim 1, wherein said lateral segments of the headband comprise uni-axially stretchable material.
3. The cap of claim 2, wherein said lateral panels also comprise uni-axially stretchable material.

4. The cap of claim 1, wherein both said lateral panels and said lateral segments of the headband fabric comprise bi-axially stretchable material.

5. An adjustable competition hat comprising:
   a non-domed crown portion which includes a fabric top, a sidewall portion and a lower rim;
   the outer surface of said crown portion being divided into front half and rear half sections, each of said sections representing, by coloration of its fabric, one or the other of the two contenders in the subject competition;
   indicia that identifies the name of one contender in the competition being affixed to the front section of the crown in its appropriate coloration, indicia that identifies the other contender being similarly affixed to the rear section of the crown portion in its respective coloration;
   a headband composed primarily of a non-stretchable fabric, which incorporates lateral segments of stretchable material, being circumferentially attached to the inner surface of the crown portion at said rim; and
   a broad brim having a substantially round to oval periphery that is reinforced by stiffeners that are attached by concentric rows of stitching, which brim circumferentially surrounds and is attached to said crown portion at said rim, the colors of the upper surface of the front section of said brim having the same coloration as the section of the crown portion to which it is attached, and the color of the upper surface of the rear section of said brim is of the same coloration as the crown portion to which it is attached.

6. The hat of claim 5 wherein the laterally incorporated segments of the headband comprise uni-axially stretchable material.

7. The hat of claim 5 wherein the laterally incorporated segments of the headband comprise bi-axially stretchable material.

8. A cap designed to be worn so as to alternately focus attention upon one of two related but different subjects, which cap comprises:
   a crown portion that includes a plurality of laterally seamed, substantially triangular fabric panels, which extend upward from a lower rim portion of said crown portion which is divided into front half and rear half sections, each said section being of a different color, which coloration of fabric may be normally associated with one of the two subjects;
   indicia representative of one of said two subjects carried on said front half section of said outer surface of said crown portion;
   indicia representative of the other of said two subjects carried on said rear half section of said outer surface of said crown portion;
   a headband circumferentially attached to said crown portion at the interior of said rim; and
   two substantially identically shaped and sized visors of substantially rigid material attached to said rim respectively along the front and rear sections of said crown portion.

9. The cap according to claim 8 wherein said visors are separated from each other on each lateral side along said rim of the crown portion.

10. The cap according to claim 9 wherein said headband includes elastic sections located respectively at the locations of said lateral separations.

11. The cap according to claim 10 wherein laterally located panels adjacent to and above said elastic headband sections are made of elastic fabric.

12. The cap according to claim 11 wherein said elastic headband sections and panels comprise uni-axially stretchable material.

13. The cap according to claim 11 wherein said laterally located elastic panels and said laterally incorporated sections of said headband comprise bi-axially stretchable material.

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