March 19, 1935. H. V. ATKINSON 1,994,936

GAME APPARATUS

Filed May 8, 1934 4 Sheets-Sheet 1

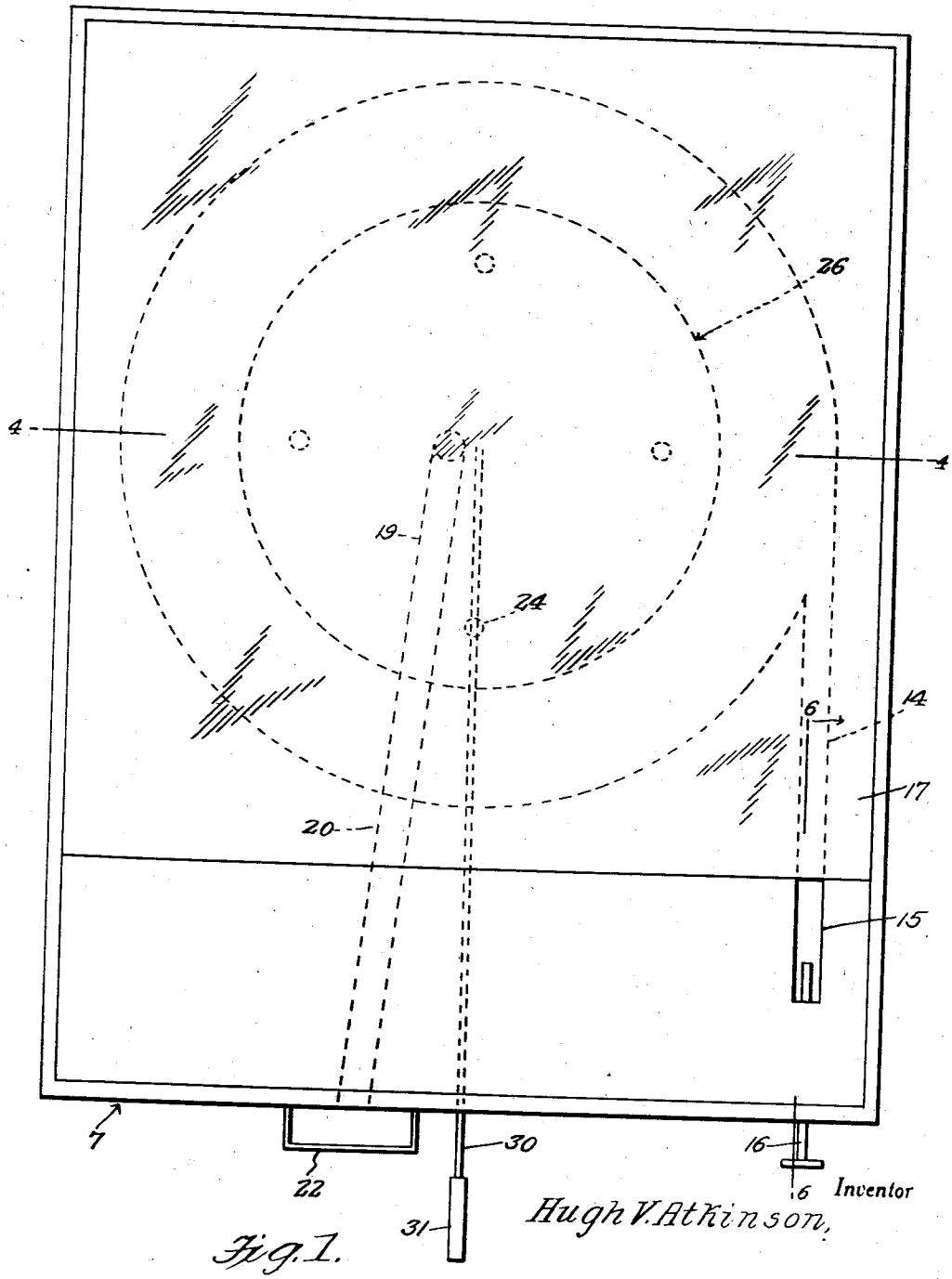


Fig. 1.

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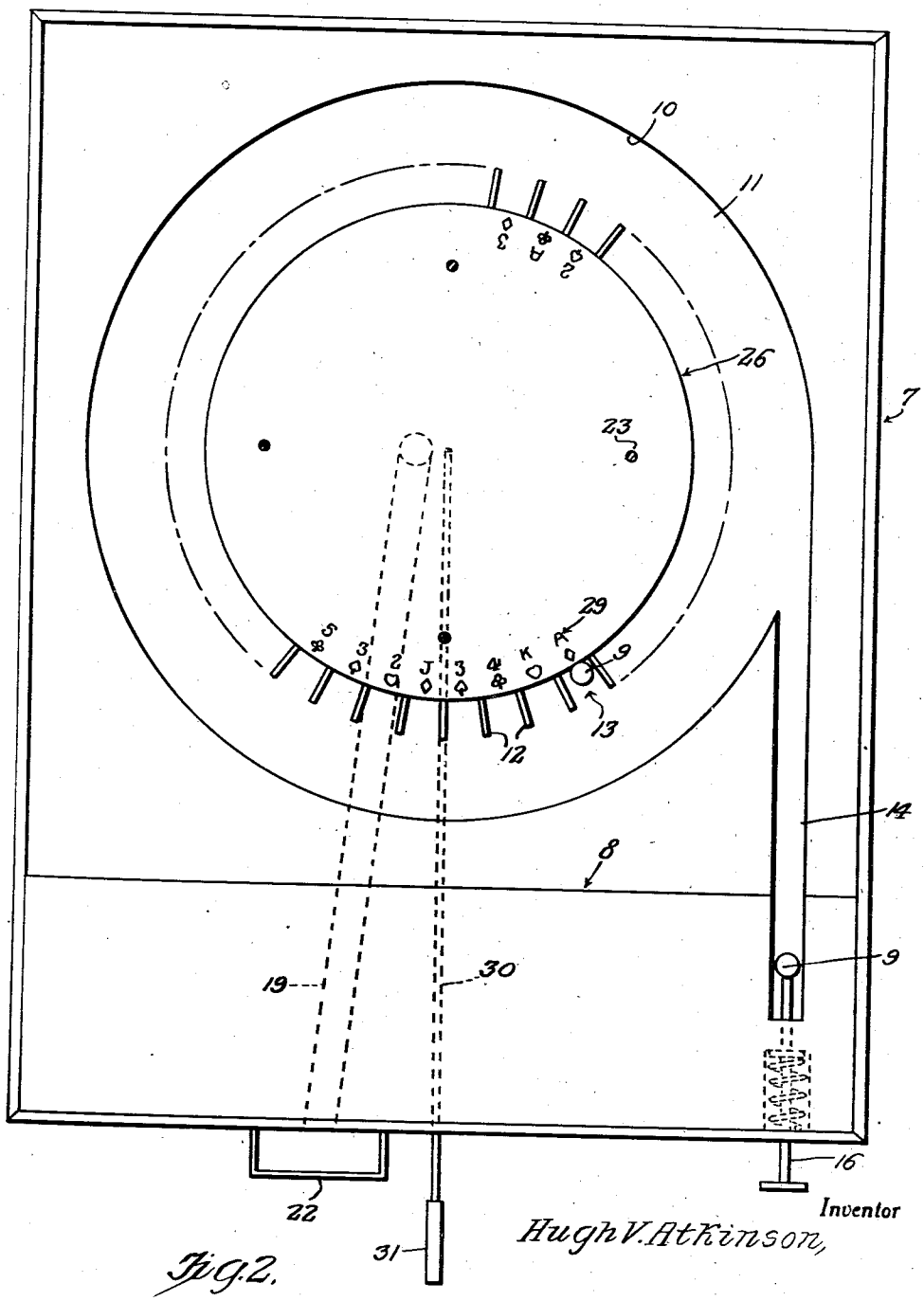


Fig. 2.

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GAME APPARATUS

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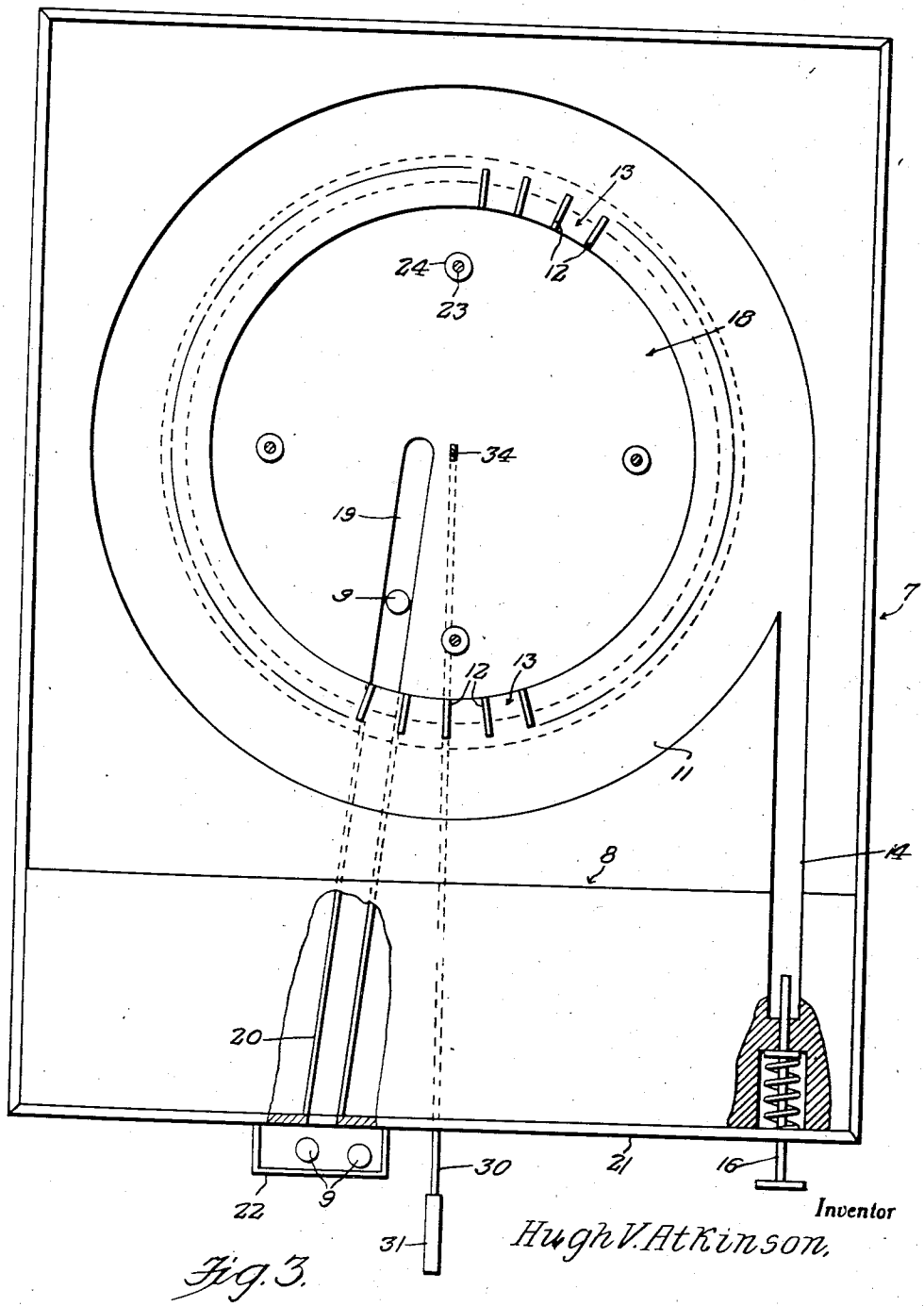


Fig. 3.

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GAME APPARATUS

Filed May 8, 1934 4 Sheets-Sheet 4

Fig. 4.

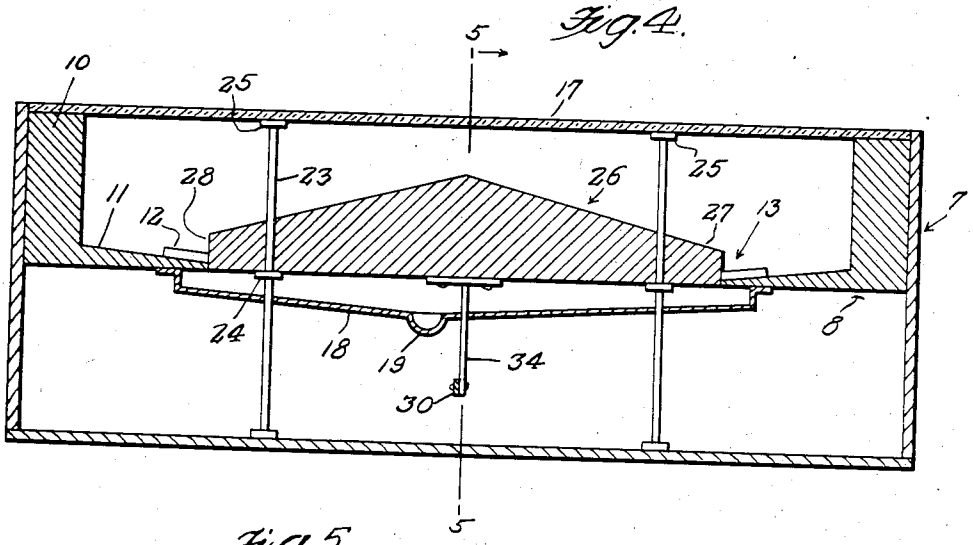
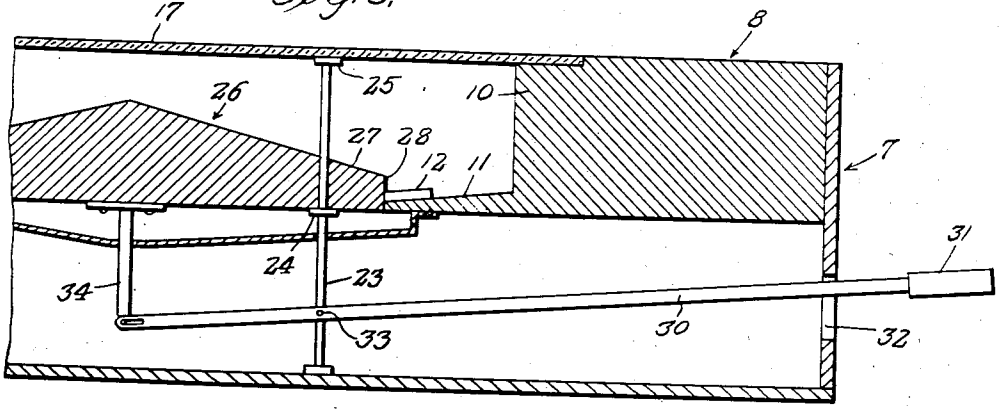


Fig. 5.



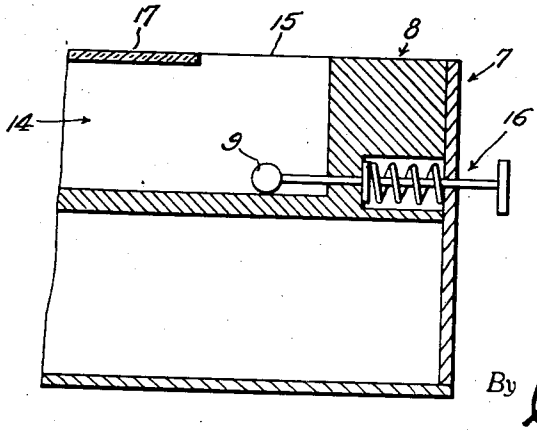


Fig. 6.

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Patented Mar. 19, 1935 1,994,936

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

1,994,936

GAME APPARATUS

Hugh V. Atkinson, Bracketville, Tex.

Application May 8, 1934, Serial No. 724,584

2 Claims. (Cl. 273—121)

This invention relates to a novel and improved game apparatus of the type embodying an appropriately marked or charted projectile or ball receptive enclosure and manually controlled mechanical means for forcibly projecting the balls into said field or enclosure.

Structures of this type are used for domestic amusement and enjoyment and frequently are employed in recreational and pleasure resorts for amusing pastimes.

By way of introduction, I desire to point out that I am already aware of the fact that the prior art to which the invention relates is active and well developed and that it is, therefore, my primary aim to generally improve upon known structures of a similar type by providing a comparatively novel and distinguishable apparatus characterized by features of surpassing merit calculated to promote absorbing pastime, particularly to persons conversant with results obtainable from conventional playing cards.

In perfecting the apparatus, I have carefully selected and arranged the details in such order and relationship as to permit the participants to resort to contesting skill in order to obtain winning "hands".

Referring now to the accompanying illustrative drawings wherein corresponding numerals designate like parts throughout the views:

Figure 1 is a top plan view of the preferred embodiment of the invention.

Figure 2 is a similar view with the glass cover plate removed to expose the structural details located therebeneath.

Figure 3 is a view similar to Figure 2, parts being in section showing sufficient of the details eliminated to expose essential parts.

Figure 4 is a transverse vertical section taken approximately on the plane of the line 4—4 of Figure 1.

Figure 5 is a view at right angles to Figure 4, the section occurring substantially on the plane of the line 5—5 of Figure 4.

Figure 6 is an enlarged detail section on the line 6—6 of Figure 1.

In practice, the structure is generally of a portable nature and may, if desired, resemble a table. An essential part thereof comprises a box-like casing 7 here shown as of general rectangular form and fitted into the open top of this casing is an insert 8 of the configuration shown in the drawings. The major portion of this insert is recessed and centrally apertured to define a ball raceway for the projectiles or balls 9. This raceway includes an annular confining wall 10 and a substantially horizontal annular ledge 11 which, as shown in Figures 4 and 5, is beveled to accomplish the desired gravitation and settling of the balls. This ledge may be specifically referred to as a runway and it will be noted that at the tapered edge thereof I provide a plurality of radial circumferentially spaced cleats 12 spaced apart sufficiently to form ball receiving pockets 13. Extending tangentially from a predetermined portion of the ball raceway is a ball delivery or feed groove 14 (see Figures 1 and 2) and at the point 15 the groove is so arranged as to provide an inlet or entrance into which the balls are dropped one by one. At this time I call attention to the numeral 16 which designates a spring pressed, that is, automatically returnable, plunger located to project the balls through the groove or channel 14 in a well known manner. The numeral 17 merely designates a glass cover plate of requisite transparency to permit the playing field to be clearly visualized by the participants.

As shown in Figures 4 and 5, the numerals 18 designate a ball depository pan or receiver which is attached to and suspended from the ledge and underlies the superposed opening in said ledge. This pan is formed with an appropriately arranged gutter 19 in alinement with a ball return trough 20 which leads out through the front panel 21 of the casing to a ball receiving receptacle 22.

I next call attention to the numerals 23 which designate circumferentially spaced fixed posts provided intermediate their ends with stop collars 24 and at their upper ends with suitably cushioned heads 25 on which the glass cover rests. These posts serve as retaining elements and guides for the conical indicator or target 26. This indicator 26 has two definite positions, that is, a normal playing or stationary position, and an elevated position. When in the playing position it rests on the washers or stop collars 24 and when in elevated position (not shown) it is raised sufficiently to clear the adjacent edge portion of the ledge in order to permit the balls to drop out of the pockets 13 into the return pan 18. It will be noted that the thickness of the marginal portion 27 is such as to permit it to rise above the cleats to form a circular or endless abutment 28 against which the balls strike in an indescribable and indefinite manner. Obviously, when the balls are shot into the playing field or enclosure, they whirl around against the walls 10, the runway 11, hop over the cleats 12 and so on. Sometimes the balls strike this abutment 28 and not infrequently the balls ride indiscriminately over the conical indicator or target 26. This

part 26 is a "target" in the sense that it is equipped with appropriate indicia denoted by the numeral 29 in Figure 2 and the players shoot at these markings 29 in an effort to obtain a high score. The indicia preferably employed corresponds to that used on conventional playing cards. In fact the part 26 is so proportioned and the features 29 so arranged that they permit a complete deck of cards (53) to be exemplified. Since the target 26 has a definite fixed position and the features 29 are located in a predetermined manner they are substantially opposite or in alinement with the pockets 13, said pockets being unmarked. Obviously, it is easy to calculate the result of the ball shot according to the positions that they occupy in the various pockets opposite the indicating legends 29.

At this time I call attention to the mechanically manually operated means for bodily lifting the indicator 26 on the guide posts 23, this being accomplished by using a lever 30 (see Figure 5). The outer end of the lever is formed with a suitable hand grip 31 and extends through a clearance slot 32 into the interior where it is pivoted intermediate its ends at 33 on an adjacent post. The extreme inner end thereof has pin and slot connection with a thrust or lifting member 34.

Manifestly, by pushing down on the hand grip 31, the lever 30 is rocked in a manner to lift the indicator 26 bodily upwardly to a plane sufficiently to clear the ball runway 11 whereby to let the balls roll from the pockets 13 into the return pan 18. Obviously, the balls roll from the pan through the trough 20 into the ball receiving receptacle at 22. It is apparent that this is the only reason why the part 26 is made movable for it is otherwise "stationary" in the sense that it has a definite position so far as the relationship of the indicia 29 and pockets 13 is concerned.

It is probably unimportant, though desirable, to mention that coin controlled means (not shown) may be employed for locking the lever 30, particularly when the structure is employed in places of public amusement.

The gist of the invention is in the provision of a box-like casing or equivalent body equipped with a filler or insert block 8 fashioned to define a ball raceway characterized by the confining wall 10, the inclined annular runway 11, and the elevated abutment surface 28. These features cooperating with the cleats 12, and the conical shape of the part 26 provides a ball receptive enclosure requiring unusual skill of performance in order to secure a high or valuable "hand" when playing.

As before stated, the game is played in such a manner as to permit the participants (two or more) to match their ability in attempting to accomplish results similar to those sought after in playing certain games of cards, for which reason the card indicia 29 is chosen for charting or marking the indicator or target 26. In practice, the players are generally provided with five balls each. In fact, it is intended that the balls be of corresponding colors, for example, five red balls and five green balls, each player choosing the color that he desires for purposes of distinction between the results to be calculated after the play of a complete set of ten balls is finished.

As before pointed out, the balls roll about seemingly in an aimless and indeterminable manner and gradually come to rest in one of the pockets 13 and by proper co-related computations using the card indicia 29 the value of the respective "hands" of the players may be determined in order to ascertain the winner. So far as the principle of shooting the ball by a spring pressed plunger from a delivery channel is concerned, this is common in games of this type. Likewise it is not new to employ a playing field having marked obstructions, etc. It is believed, however, that applicant's selection and arrangement of the special ball runway, liftable marked target 26 and so on is specifically new as an appreciable and worthy contribution to the art and trade.

It is thought that persons skilled in the art to which the invention relates will be able to obtain a clear understanding of the invention after considering the description in connection with the drawings. Therefore, a more lengthly description is regarded as unnecessary.

Minor changes in shape, size, and rearrangement of details coming within the field of invention claimed may be resorted to in actual practice, if desired.

What is claimed is:

1. A game apparatus of the class described comprising a box-like casing provided with a filler, said filler having a predetermined portion thereof recessed to provide an annular peripheral wall and a centrally apertured horizontally disposed ledge, said ledge being of tapered cross section and provided at its tapered end with a plurality of radial circumferentially spaced pocket forming cleats, a slidably mounted conical indicating target located in the aperture defined by said ledge and adapted to be raised and lowered, said indicator being of such vertical thickness as to project above the plane of the ledge, the marginal edge portion of said indicator rising above said cleats, and said marginal portion being provided with playing card indicia for the purpose described, means for forcibly shooting the balls into said raceway and means for raising said conical indicating target.

2. A game apparatus of the class described comprising a casing embodying a portion recessed to define a circular ball receptive raceway, said raceway including an outer annular perpendicular wall, a horizontal bottom tapered to define a gravitation ledge and ball runway, said runway being of annular form, a ball collection and return pan secured to the underside of said ledge, a plurality of radial circumferential spaced pocket forming cleats secured to the upper face of said ledge around the free edge portion of the ledge, a plurality of fixed guide posts mounted in said casing, a disk-like conical indicator slidably mounted on said posts, said indicator having appropriate indicia and being of such vertical thickness as to provide an annular abutment rising above said cleats, and a manually actuated mechanical means for lifting the indicator clear of said cleats to allow the balls to roll from the pockets into said pan, a ball return trough in communication with the pan, and a ball receiving receptacle in communication with said trough, together with means for ejecting the balls into said raceway.

HUGH V. ATKINSON.