

Dec. 4, 1956

R. F. ANSON
BALL HOLDER

2,772,882

Filed Sept. 28, 1953

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

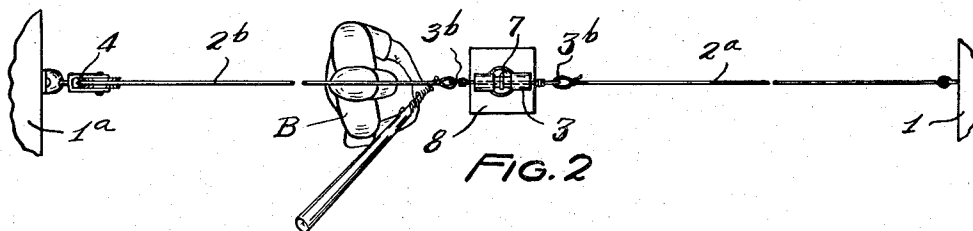
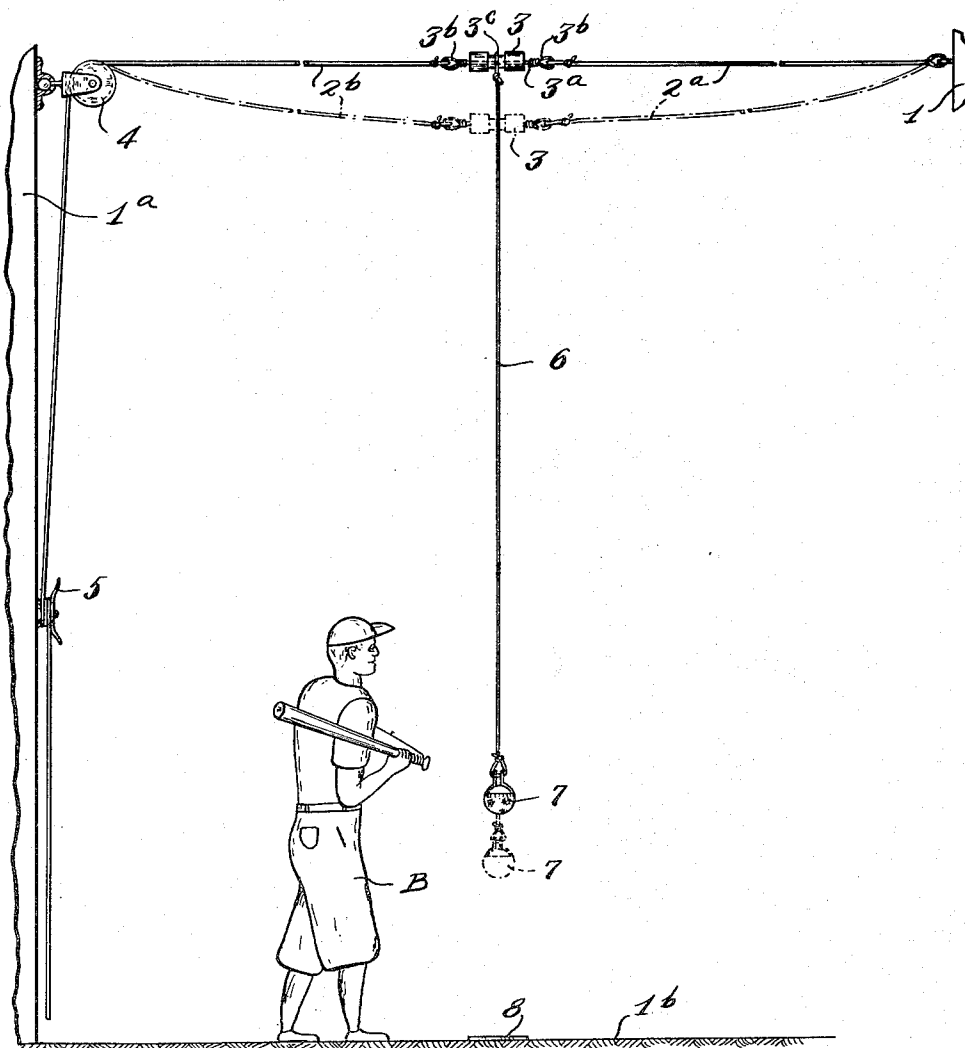


FIG. 1

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2 Sheets-Sheet 2

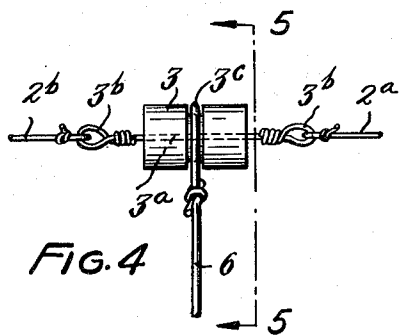


FIG. 4

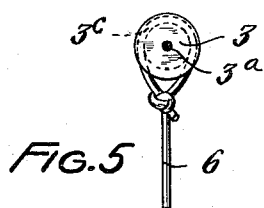


FIG. 5

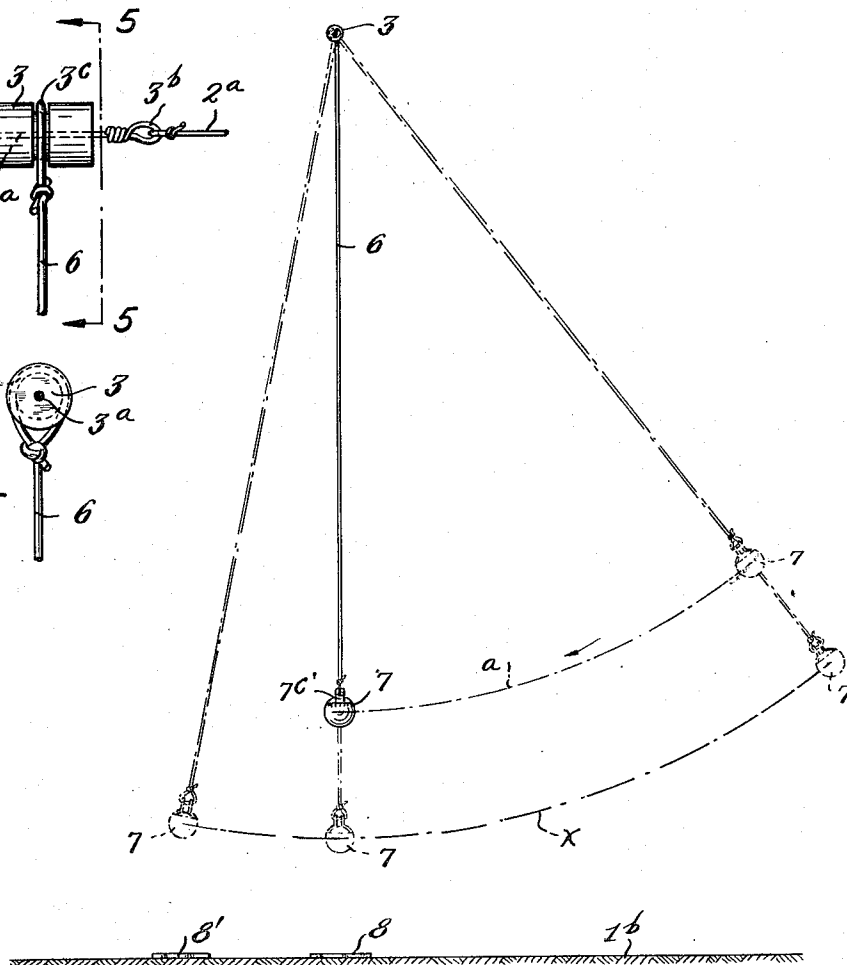


FIG. 3

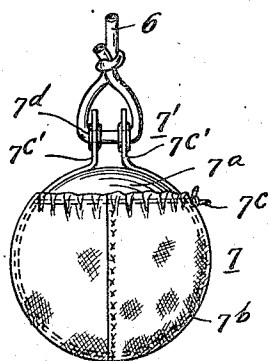


FIG. 6

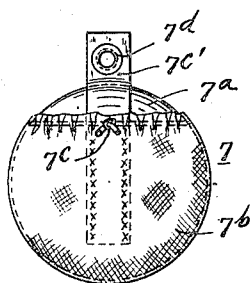


FIG. 7

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BALL HOLDER

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1 Claim. (Cl. 273—26)

This invention relates to a sport apparatus of the type embodying certain devices (balls, bats, tennis rackets, home plates, etc.) essential in a game of baseball or tennis played by competing players and teams. The apparatus when played by one or more persons, affords both amusement and physical recreation, but more particularly training in the art of batting a ball, concentration, and timing, whereby improved efficiency in actual participation in a team in a regular game of baseball or tennis results. The apparatus disclosed herein, in actual use, has proven to provide amusement, recreation and improved batting efficiency among young boys and girls, boys and girls of teen ages, as well as adults. For illustrative purposes, the parts are shown for use in batting balls of the baseball type, but a soft ball may be used. The apparatus may be installed and used indoors or outdoors. When used outdoors in a relatively large area, one or more players may act as fielders and be positioned in selected positions to catch or attempt to catch the ball each time it is batted.

One object of the invention is to provide an improved apparatus of the type referred to for practicing the art of batting a ball.

Another object of the invention is to provide an improved apparatus of the type referred to wherein the ball to be batted may be impelled in a vertical plane, which intersects the home plate, or curved to imitate the different pitching effects of a ball in a game between competing teams, whereby the player's batting practice is varied.

Another object of the invention is to provide an improved sport apparatus wherein the ball to be batted is freely suspended from a single point, so that when batted it traverses a trajectory path dependent on the contact between the ball and bat and force applied by the latter in opposition to the movement of the ball toward or over the home plate.

Another object of the invention is to provide an improved sport apparatus of this type having a flexible elevated line spanned between spaced supports and provided intermediate the latter with a rotatable member from which depends a flexible line for freely suspending at its lower end a ball to be batted.

Another object of the invention is to provide an improved sport apparatus having an overhead line spanned between spaced supports and provided midway the latter with a freely rotatable device from which freely depends a line having a ball attached to its lower end, the device serving to permit all portions of the depending line to freely follow the ball when batted to areas above or below the spanned line without materially affecting its direction and path.

Another object of the invention is to provide an improved simplified sport apparatus consisting of a freely suspended ball adapted to be initially moved to a pitching position and impelled toward the home plate, whereby the ball may be batted.

A further object of the invention is to provide an im-

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proved sport apparatus for use in batting practice consisting of a ball formed of yieldable material and having a diameter and weight substantially equal to a standard ball used in the game of baseball and an enclosure for protecting the outer surface of the ball.

A further object of the invention is to provide an improved sport apparatus employing a freely suspended ball adapted to be batted for recreational and/or batting training and consisting of few parts which may be readily assembled indoors or outdoors for use.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art to which my invention relates from the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, wherein

Fig. 1 is an elevation showing a sport apparatus embodying my invention, the apparatus being shown in position for use;

Fig. 2 is a plan view;

Fig. 3 is a diagram showing the pitching movement of the ball when impelled overhand as in baseball and underhand when impelled as in softball;

Fig. 4 is an enlarged side elevation of the rotatable device from which the ball is suspended;

Fig. 5 is a section on the line 5—5 of Fig. 4;

Fig. 6 is an elevational view of the ball; and

Fig. 7 is an elevational view of the ball taken at 90° to the view of Fig. 6.

In the drawings, 1, 1a, indicate suitable spaced supports, between which a line 2 is spanned or supported, preferably under sufficient tension to maintain it substantially horizontal from end to end. The line 2 may consist of stout cord, rope, flexible wire, but preferably a cord formed of flexible plastic material. The supports 1, 1a, may consist of upright posts mounted on a play area; when the game and batting practice are to take place indoors, the line 2 is supported on the opposed walls of the room. In outdoor use, two trees or a tree and the side of a building may be used where posts are lacking.

The line 2 is formed in sections 2a, 2b, to provide intermediate the supports 1, 1a, a rotatable device 3, to which reference is later made. The sections 2a, 2b, are cut to provide lengths, so as to position the device 3 substantially midway the supports 1, 1a. As shown, the outer end of the section 2a is detachably connected to the support 1, whereas the inner section 2b is extended and reeved over a pulley 4, swivelly mounted on the support 1a, its outer end portion being wrapped around a cleat or other device 5, fixed to the support 1a, with the line sections 2a, 2b, under tension. 6 indicates a line depending from the device 3 and suspending a ball 7 at its lower end. The ball 7 consists of a spherical body 7a and suitable means 7' for connecting the body 7a to the line 6. The spherical body may be a hard ball, such as a standard baseball; however, I prefer to use a spherical body formed of relatively soft, resilient material, preferably rubber or rubber compound. Where a tennis racket is used for batting or for batting practice as in lawn tennis I prefer to use a typical lawn tennis ball. The connecting means 7' preferably consists of a removable enclosure 7b for the spherical body 7a. The enclosure 7b consists of a bag of woven cellulose material (such as canvas), the open end of the bag being drawn into engagement with the upper surfaces of the body 7a being a drawstring 7c. The diametrical sides of the bag 7b are provided with flexible tabs 7c', the outer ends of which are provided with suitable eyelets 7d. The outer end portion of the line 6 is threaded through the eyelets and tied, whereby the ball 7 is detachably connected to the line 6. The enclosure 7b provides a simplified means for connecting the body 7a to the depending line 6,

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eliminates the expense of molding some form of connecting device in the material of the body 7a and protects the surface of the latter against damage which would otherwise result by engagement with stones, rocks and other obstructions on the surrounding area. The body 7a being formed of resilient material materially reduces the danger of damage to property when the ball is batted. Where a separate player is positioned in the play area for catching the batted ball, the resiliency of the body 7a serves to eliminate damage to his hands when making a catch or contact with his body. The ball 7 has a diameter and a weight substantially equal to the diameter and weight of a standard baseball. 8 indicates a home plate preferably suitably fixed to the surface or play area 1b in vertical alinement with the device 3, the areas at opposite sides of the plate 8 constituting batters' positions, to accommodate either a left-hand or right-hand batter A. The line 2 may be positioned at a selected level, for example, fifteen to twenty-five feet above the surface 1b and the line 6 may be of a selected length, but preferably having a length to support the ball 7 approximately on a level with the batter's waist, above the home plate 8. As shown, the ball to be batted is freely suspended and when batted it traverses various paths extending above and below the line 2; it is therefore desirable that the line 6 be restricted in weight so that the ball, when batted, may traverse approximately the path of a non-captive ball. The line 6 may be formed of stout flexible cord but preferably a cord formed of flexible plastic material, as already referred to.

The device 3 consists of an elongated round body (which may be formed of wood) loosely rotatably and slidably mounted on an elongated shaft 3a, preferably a section of wire. The opposite ends of the shaft 3a terminate in loops 3b through which the adjacent end portions of the line sections 2a, 2b, are threaded and tied to detachably connect the shaft 3a thereto. The shaft 3a is longer than the device 3 so that the loops 3b are spaced to permit limited endwise movement of the device 3 in either direction. Intermediate the opposite ends of the device 3 it is formed with an annular groove 3c around which the upper end portion of the depending line 6 is loosely looped and tied to detachably connect the line 6 to the device.

In operation, the pitcher (not shown) initially grabs the ball 7 and then moves to a pitching position forward of and remote from the home plate 8 but in line therewith. As it is desirable for the pitcher to be as far as possible from the home plate and as the ball 7 moves away from the surface 1b during movement of the pitcher to the pitching position, the latter, relative to the plate 8 will vary depending on the height of the pitcher; however, the pitcher may use his judgment and occupy a position less remote from the home plate, as well as vary the distance therefrom in successively pitched balls in training a batter in the art of batting. Next, the player pitches the ball to the batter A, that is, in line with plate 8, as indicated by the arrow on dotted line a (Fig. 3). If the batter succeeds in hitting the ball 7, as pitched, the trajectory path thereof and distance of flight (whether the hit is a fly, a grounder or a foul) will depend upon the contact between the ball and the bat B. In this connection, it will be observed that the rotatable device 3 is an important feature of the invention as it permits the line 6 to freely follow the ball 7

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when the latter is batted beyond the line 2 above or below the latter, instead of causing a jerk or retarding force on the line 6 as would result if the line 6 was fixed to the line 2. It will also be observed that the speed of the pitched ball will depend on the initial impelling force applied thereto.

As the construction embodies an arrangement wherein the ball is manually pitched to the batter from selected pitching positions and may be controlled as to speed, curvature and otherwise as in a regular game of baseball, the batter is trained as to timing, speed and concentration. In actual use of the equipment, marked efficiency in batting has been noted in various users or players. By employing a rotatable, slidable connection between the supporting line 2 and the inner end of the ball suspending line 6, the latter is free to swing over or under the supporting line when the ball travels beyond the latter and therefore tends to prevent entanglement with the supporting line.

To position the ball 7 at selective heights relative to the home plate 8, the line section 2b is detached from the cleat 5 and payed out to position that portion of the line 2 between the supports 1, 1a, as shown in dotted lines in Fig. 1.

Where the ball is batted over and beyond the line 2 and difficulty is encountered in returning the ball to the pitcher, the line section 2b may be detached from the cleat 5 and payed out so that the line 2, between the supports will gravitate downwardly within reach of a player and thus enable the line 6 and ball 7 to be obtained and the ball returned to the pitcher.

In making pitches with a ball of the baseball type, as above set forth, the pitches are made by overhand movements, whereas in making pitches with a soft ball the pitches are made by underhand movements, as indicated by the line x (Fig. 3).

Where the batting or batting practice consists in using a tennis racket, the line 2 between the supports 1, 1a, is supported on a level equal to that of the upper end of a tennis net.

As shown in Fig. 3, a separate home plate 8' is provided on the surface 1b to represent the approximate location of the batter when a soft ball is used for batting, the ball being shown at the batting position in dotted lines.

What I claim is:

For use in sports apparatus, a ball holder comprising a bag having an open upper end permitting ingress and egress of a ball, a drawstring carried by an upper part of said bag selectively reducing the size of said open upper end to retain a ball in said bag, opposed straps secured to said bag and projecting upwardly from said upper part as a continuation thereof, and aligned eyes in the ends of said straps for receiving an attaching member.

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