

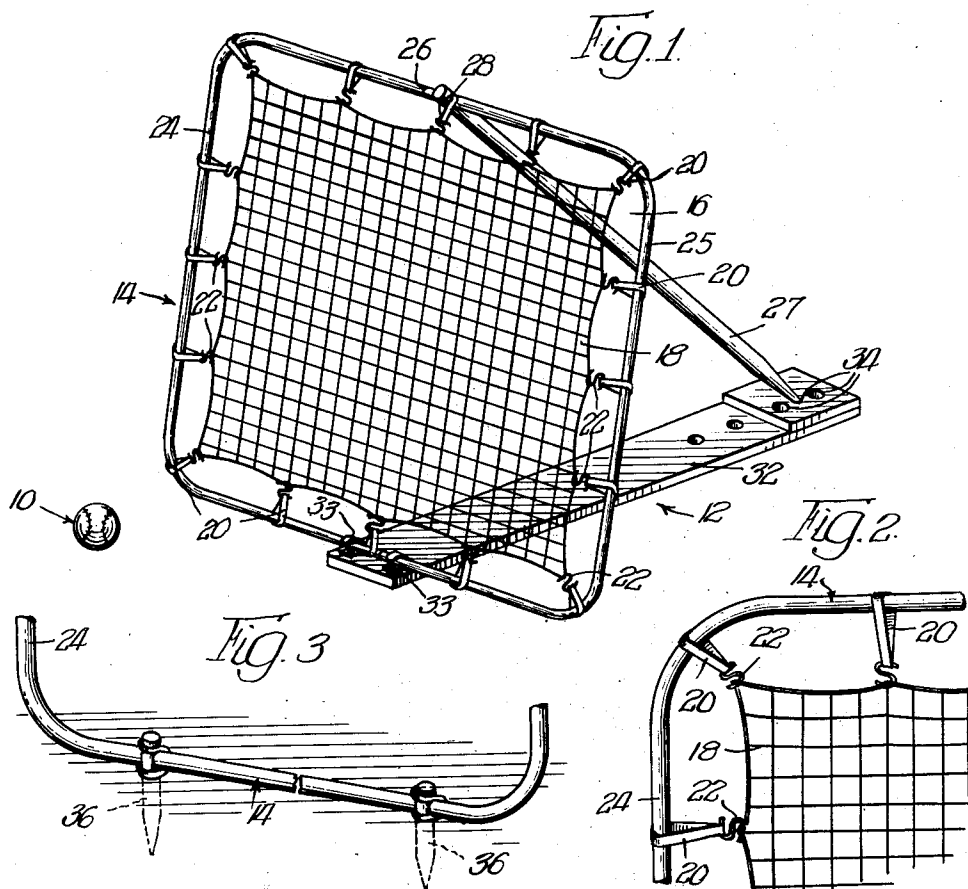
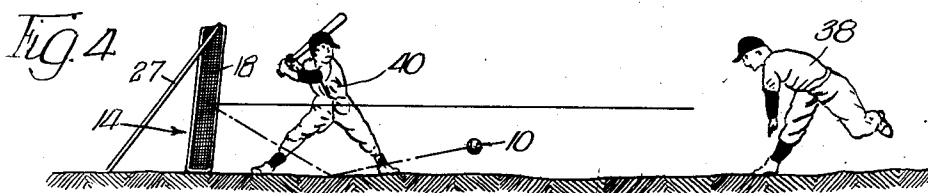
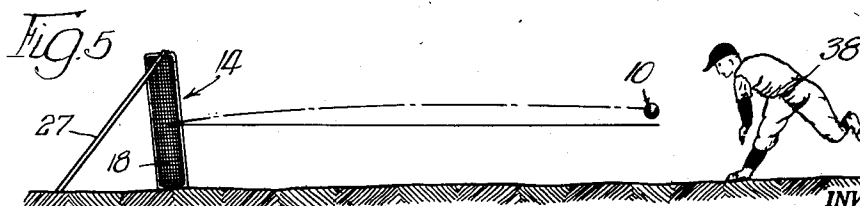
July 12, 1960

J. R. DIXON

2,944,816

RECREATIONAL APPARATUS

Filed March 21, 1960



INVENTOR.
Jack R. Dixon,
BY
Byron, Hunt, Green & Clement.
attys

1

2,944,816

RECREATIONAL APPARATUS

Jack R. Dixon, 685 Beachview Drive,
Fort Walton Beach, Fla.

Filed Mar. 21, 1960, Ser. No. 16,410

2 Claims. (Cl. 273—26)

This invention pertains to a recreational apparatus. Briefly, the invention may be described as including an object adapted to be thrown, such as a ball, and a means for receiving the object and returning it in the general direction from which it was thrown. More specifically, the means for receiving and returning boardly includes a resiliently mounted net against which the ball is thrown so as to extend the resilient mounting which in turn will cause the ball to be returned.

As is well known, in order for a thrower, such as a baseball pitcher, to practice throwing, it is generally necessary to provide a catcher who can receive and return the ball. In some instances it is possible to throw the ball against a wall which serves as a backstop and which may return the ball in the general direction from which it was thrown. However, the latter possibility is not always feasible, particularly if the ball is constructed of a nonresilient material such as a baseball. Furthermore, obviously, such walls are not always available for throwing practice.

This invention eliminates the necessity of having a catcher or of having a wall when practicing throwing in order to have the ball returned to the thrower. Furthermore, the invention may be used so that the ball is returned on the ground to the thrower or in the air.

A still further feature is that the invention is readily assembled and disassembled and of a lightweight construction so that it is portable and thus may be easily transported to the recreational area and set up for use.

It will also be seen that the apparatus may be used indoors as well as outdoors.

These and other features and objects of the invention will be apparent upon reading the specification with reference to the following drawings.

In the drawings:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the apparatus embodying the invention.

Figures 2 and 3 are fragmentary views in detail of a part of the invention.

Figures 4 and 5 are illustrations of the manner in which the invention may be used.

Referring now to Figure 1, there is shown a perspective view of the apparatus embodying the invention. The apparatus includes an object to be thrown, such as a ball 10 which may be of any suitable construction such as the ordinary baseball or tennis ball or in turn a rubber ball of the conventional type. The ball should be of sufficient size and weight that it may be thrown from a considerable distance by a person having reasonable throwing skill with sufficient force that it will actuate the receiving and returning apparatus which will be described hereinafter.

The receiving and returning apparatus is generally denoted by the numeral 12 and includes the frame member 14. In this instance the frame member 14 is constructed of lightweight tubular members which have been bent to form the rectangular configuration shown in Figure 1. It will be apparent that the rectangular configuration is

2

merely by way of example and that other polygonal configurations as well as circular may be used in the practice of the invention. Furthermore, it will be noted that the frame member 14 may be constructed of elements other than the tubular members which have been mentioned previously.

The frame member 14 defines an opening 16 which is substantially larger in width and length than the largest dimension or diameter of the ball which it is adapted to receive. In particular, the opening 16 should be of sufficient size that a thrower of reasonable skill can expect to hit it with the ball from a considerable distance. By way of example, it has been found that an opening of approximately 3 feet by 3 feet will serve this purpose, although it is apparent that larger and smaller openings may be used in the practice of the invention.

A net 18 is mounted across the frame member 14 in a substantially taut condition. The net 18 may be constructed of any suitable material with openings that are substantially smaller than the object used for throwing. It has been found that nylon nets are particularly adapted for this use, although nets constructed of other synthetic and natural fibers may be used.

The net is secured by means of the elastic members 20 to the frame 14. The elastic members by way of example are rubber bands threaded onto the frame member 14. The other ends of the members 20 are secured to the net 18 by means of the hooks 22 as shown in Figure 2. As can be seen in the drawing, the elastic members 20 are regularly spaced about the frame 14 with one at each corner and three along each side intermediate the corners, or 16 in total. However, the number of elastic members 20 may be varied depending upon the force with which the net is to return the ball. If, for example, the ball is to be returned with little force, then, of course, the number of elastic members 20 should be reduced, and for more force the number should be increased.

In order to permit the frame member 14 to be disassembled into a rather compact package, it may be desirable to construct it from two U-shaped portions 24 and 25. In that event, the ends of one of the U-shaped portions will be swaged to a slightly smaller diameter so that they will fit within the ends of the other U-shaped portions to form the joints 26.

The frame 14 is adapted to be held in a substantially vertical position by means of suitable supporting apparatus. For indoor use the support apparatus may include the brace member 27 which is secured at one end to the upper portion of the frame 14. Specifically, the brace member 27 is provided with an aperture 28 of sufficient diameter to receive the associated portion of the frame 14. When the frame is constructed of the U-shaped halves 24 and 25, the brace member 27 may be removed at the point of juncture 26.

The lower end of the frame 14 is secured to a base member 32 by means of the U-shaped clamps 33 which fix its position with respect to the supporting surface. The base member 32 is provided at its other end with a recess 34 which is adapted to receive the free end of the brace member 27. In this manner the frame 14 is held in a substantially vertical position. As will be seen later on, it may be desirable to provide the base 32 with a series of recesses 34 which permit the frame 14 to be slightly varied from the vertical position.

If it should be desired to utilize the apparatus outdoors rather than indoors, then the lower portion of the frame 14 may be supported by means of the stakes 36. The stakes 36 are driven into the ground with a sufficient portion extending thereabove so that the frame 14 may be lashed thereto. In this instance the base member 32 may be eliminated so that the free end of the brace

member 27 may be inserted into the ground at a distance from the stakes 36 that will provide the desired position of the frame 14.

In Figure 4 the apparatus is shown in use by two players, i.e., a thrower 38 and a batter 40, in which the frame member 14 is positioned so that it may receive and return the ball thrown by the thrower 38 if the same should not be struck by the batter 40. In this instance the frame 14 is mounted so that it tilts slightly forward, thus directing the ball 10 toward the ground but in the general direction towards the thrower 38.

In Figure 5 the frame 14 is tilted slightly away from the thrower 38 so that the ball is directed upwardly and thus is returned in the air.

While the apparatus has been shown as used primarily in conjunction with a thrower, it will be apparent that it may also be used where the ball is being batted or hit into the net. For example, it may be used by a tennis player to practice hitting the ball where a partner is not available to return it. Furthermore, the frame could be positioned so that it will cause the ball to bounce before reaching the player or to be returned in the air for a volley shot. For such use it will probably be necessary to enlarge the framework from the suggested 3 feet square to approximately 10 feet by 5 feet.

It is apparent that the subject invention provides a recreational apparatus that makes it possible for a person to throw or hit a ball and to have it returned to him without having someone to catch or retrieve it. The apparatus is of a lightweight construction that may be readily assembled and disassembled which permits it to be transported to the recreational area where it may be easily set up for use.

Although certain specific terminology has been used in describing the invention, it is to be understood that this is merely by way of example and in no manner to be construed as a limitation. It is contemplated that certain changes may be made within the scope of the claim without departing from the spirit of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. Recreational apparatus for rebounding balls and other projectiles thrown into engagement therewith comprising a rectangular frame, said frame comprising plural U-shaped tubular sections joined together in telescoping relation; a net within said frame of less area than the latter, said net being in spaced relation to said frame

around its periphery; a supporting base; said frame being connected to said supporting base in pivotal relation thereto; said supporting base at positions rearwardly of said frame constituting means for selectively receiving and maintaining a brace in any one of a series of positions; a brace having aperture means at one end, said frame being pivotally received within said aperture means at a position opposite to that at which said frame connects to said supporting base; said brace at its other end being selectively received and maintained in one of said series of positions on said supporting base to sustain said frame at a selected vertical angle to the latter; a plurality of elastic members attached to said frame in uniform, spaced relation therearound, said elastic members being connected to said net around its periphery tautly to suspend said net within said frame.

2. Recreational apparatus for rebounding balls and other projectiles thrown into engagement therewith comprising a rectangular frame, said frame comprising plural U-shaped tubular sections joined together in telescoping relation; a net within said frame of less area than the latter, said net being in spaced relation to said frame around its periphery; a base member connected at one end to said frame and extending rearwardly thereof, said base member having at its other end a series of longitudinally-spaced brace-receiving means; a brace having aperture means at one end, said frame being pivotally received within said aperture means at a position opposite to that at which said frame connects to said base member, said brace at its other end being selectively received in one of said series of brace-receiving means on said base to sustain said frame at a selected vertical angle to the latter; a plurality of elastic members attached to said frame in uniform, spaced relation therearound, said elastic members being connected to said net around its periphery tautly to suspend said net within said frame.

References Cited in the file of this patent

UNITED STATES PATENTS

2,873,969 Ziel Feb. 17, 1959

FOREIGN PATENTS

397,260 Great Britain Aug. 24, 1933