GOLF BAG WITH INTEGRATED ACCESSORY BAG

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A golf bag (1) is provided that includes a main bag portion, and an accessory bag portion (3). The accessory bag portion may be either placed within a socket portion of the main bag portion such that the main portion and the accessory bag portion are integrated (4) to form a golf bag, or removed from the socket portion to provide access to an accessory bag that is smaller than the golf bag. The accessory bag portion includes a handle (15); and the golf bag includes a lock mechanism (24) that is operable to automatically lock the accessory bag portion in place relative to the main bag portion, when the accessory bag portion is inserted into the socket portion, wherein once locked in the socket portion, the locking mechanism enables a user to lift the golf bag using the handle. The accessory bag includes an activation mechanism (16) operable, based on user initiation of an activation button, to actuate two or more support legs (11) from a first retracted position, to a second splayed out position operable to enable the accessory bag to achieve a self-supporting upright position. The activation mechanism includes a slider, a pivoting shoulder for each supporting leg, and a spring means connecting each pivoting shoulder to the slider, such that the user initiation of the activation button moves the supporting legs to the second splayed out position.
GOLF BAG WITH INTEGRATED ACCESSORY BAG

FIELD OF INVENTION

[0001] The invention relates to golf bags. This invention relates more particularly to golf bags with a removable bag portion.

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

[0002] Golf bags generally consist of a single unit used to hold and carry a full set of golf clubs. Golf bags are often transported in a cart, or pulled in a trolley. Other golfers carry their golf bag. Golfers may need their entire set of golf clubs at some point during a golf game. However, for a number of shots only a subset of their golf clubs may be needed or desired. Most golfers remove a subset of their golf clubs for these occasions to limit unnecessary carrying of the full complement of golf clubs. But if the clubs are removed from the golf bag to be carried, they generally will be placed on the grass, and the golf club grips may become wet, and there is a risk of losing one or more clubs in the process.

[0003] It should be noted that especially where golf clubs are carried in a cart, and the cart is shared with one or more other players, the golf cart may be some distance from where a particular player’s golf ball is located, which may require a walk of some distance to return to the golf cart to retrieve the desired or required golf club.

[0004] For this reason, a number of golf bags were developed that include a smaller ancillary bag that may be removed from the main bag.

[0005] Ideally an accessory golf bag is built into the main bag and therefore, does not take extra room to carry. Also, the accessory bag should not add very much weight to the main bag. Furthermore, since the accessory bag will be removed multiple times during a round of golf it should be easy to remove and reattach to the main bag and when attached it should be well secured so that it does not move or become detached from the main bag as the golf cart is moving or if the main bag is carried during a round.

[0006] For example, PCT Patent Application No. WO91/18650 discloses a two part golf bag, where the accessory bag held together by clips. A disadvantage with this type of split bag is the difficulty in detaching the accessory bag from the main bag, and re-attaching the accessory bag to the main bag. U.S. Pat. No. 2,837,346 has similar disadvantages.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 5,358,109 also discloses a two part bag where the main bag is shaped to provide an opening that receives an auxiliary bag for removal of the auxiliary bag from the main bag and insertion of the auxiliary bag into the main bag.

[0008] United States Patent Application 2008/0296185 discloses a golf bag and accessory bag structure including a coupling structure for enabling the accessory bag to be attached to the main bag, and also for manual manipulation thereof to remove the accessory bag from the main bag. One disadvantage of this prior art solution is that the removal of the accessory bag from the main bag is relatively difficult and or awkward.

[0009] There is a need for dual golf bag structure that addresses the aforesaid disadvantages.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0010] In a first aspect of the invention, a golf bag is provided comprising a main bag portion, and an accessory bag portion, wherein the accessory bag portion may be either placed within a socket portion of the main bag portion such that the main portion and the accessory bag portion are integrated to form a golf bag, or removed from the socket portion to provide access to an accessory bag that is smaller than the golf bag, characterized in that:

[0011] (a) the accessory bag portion includes a handle; and

[0012] (b) the golf bag includes a lock mechanism that is operable to automatically lock the accessory bag portion in place relative to the main bag portion, when the accessory bag portion is inserted into the socket portion;

[0013] wherein once locked in the socket portion, the locking mechanism enables a user to lift the golf bag using the handle.

[0014] In a further aspect of the golf bag of the present invention, the lock mechanism comprises a pin and a receiver which inter-engage when the accessory bag slides into the socket.

[0015] In another aspect of the invention, the receiver includes a biased catch for snap-fitting engagement of the accessory bag portion to the main bag portion.

[0016] In a still further aspect of the invention, the biased catch includes an aperture in a biased and sliding receiver plate which is movable in one direction by a user engageable locking/unlocking button, and is biased in the opposite direction.

[0017] In yet another aspect of the invention, the receiver plate is connected to the locking/unlocking button for sliding in one direction against the bias, and for sliding in the opposite direction under the bias to engage a notch in the pin.

[0018] In a still other aspect of the invention, the accessory bag includes an activation mechanism operable, based on user initiation of an activation button, to actuate two or more support legs from a first retracted position, to a second splayed out position operable to enable the accessory bag to achieve a self-supporting upright position.

[0019] In another aspect of the invention, the activation mechanism includes a slider, a pivoting shoulder for each supporting leg, and a spring means connecting each pivoting shoulder to the slider, such that the user initiation of the activation button moves the supporting legs to the second splayed out position.

[0020] In a still other aspect of the invention, the golf bag includes a handle, and either adjacent to the handle or integrated with the handle is (a) a button that enables the release of the locking mechanism so as to permit the accessory bag portion to be removed from the main bag portion, and (b) an activation button that enables the activation of two or more support legs to achieve a splayed out position that enables a self-supporting position.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0021] A detailed description of the preferred embodiment (s) is provided herein below by way of example only and with reference to the following drawings, in which:

[0022] FIGS. 1a, 1b, and 1c show the golf bag of the present invention with the accessory bag at different stages of removal from the main bag.
[0023] FIG. 2 is a further view of golf bag of the present invention from a front end thereof.
[0024] FIGS. 3a, 3b, 3c, and 3d show views of the back end of the accessory bag.
[0025] FIGS. 4a, 4b, and 4c show further view of the back end of the accessory bag, in which the accessory bag achieves its self-supporting, tripod-like configuration.
[0026] FIGS. 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, 5f, and 5g show the function of the accessory bag whereby when the accessory bag is in its self-supporting configuration, initiation of the release button results in the accessory bag support legs being pulled back into their resting position, where the support legs are flush with the accessory bag body.
[0027] FIG. 6 is a further view of the accessory bag in its self-supporting configuration.
[0028] FIGS. 7a, 7b, and 7c show further views of activation mechanism of the golf bag of the present invention.
[0029] FIGS. 8a and 8b consist of cross-sectional views show the locking/release mechanism of the present invention.
[0030] FIGS. 9a, 9b and 9c show a variety of cross-sectional view illustrating a particular embodiment of the locking/release mechanism.
[0031] In the drawings, preferred embodiments of the invention are illustrated by way of example. It is to be expressly understood that the description and drawings are only for the purpose of illustration and as an aid to understanding, and are not intended as a definition of the limits of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0032] The present invention consists of an improved two-part golf bag. The first portion is the main bag. The second portion is the accessory bag or accessory bag portion which is removable from a cavity formed by the main bag to receive the accessory bag. The accessory bag can also be re-inserted into the cavity. The main bag and the accessory bag together are formed such that when the accessory bag rests in the cavity, the golf bag has the appearance of a conventional golf bag, and also functions (other than the presence of the accessory bag, and the ability to remove same from the main bag as described above) in the same way as a conventional golf bag. For example the handle 15 functions in the same way as a conventional golf bag.

[0033] As detailed below, the auxiliary bag (also referred to as an "accessory bag" in this disclosure) is designed to receive a plurality of golf clubs, but a lesser number of golf clubs than the total number of golf clubs that fit within the golf bag as a whole.

[0034] Significantly, the auxiliary bag rests within the cavity in a locked position. The mechanism for the lock is detailed below. Also, preferably the mechanism is operable to provide locking of the auxiliary bag to the main bag, within the cavity, with a force that is sufficient to maintain locked position during normal operation of the golf bag, e.g. use of the handle 15 to lift the golf bag.

[0035] In a further aspect of the invention, the lock mechanism is further designed to enable the golf bag user to release the mechanism easily, as detailed below. This is important to enable the accessory bag to be easily and quickly removed from the main bag, so as to enable the quick removal of the accessory bag for a shot using the subset of the golf clubs, and then after the shot the rapid re-insertion of the accessory bag within its cavity.

[0036] As a further aspect of the invention, the accessory bag includes a plurality of support legs that are connected to the body of the accessory bag such that the support legs and bottom portion of the accessory bag are operable to achieve a position in which the accessory bag is self-supporting. The self-supporting features is useful in that it enables the user to carry the accessory bag to the place of his/her next shot, place the accessory bag on the ground, remove the desired club(s), and take the shot. As a result of the self-supporting position of the accessory bag, golf clubs may be readily removed from the interior of the accessory bag, and easily re-inserted into the interior of the accessory bag.

[0037] The accessory bag achieves the self-supporting position, in one particular aspect of the invention, by the user initiating an activation mechanism (and more particularly a leg activation mechanism) linked to an activation button that is operable to enable the two or more legs, at their extremities adjacent to the bottom of the accessory bag to pivot and extend away from the accessory bag. As explained further below, the mechanism for enabling the accessory bag to achieve the self-supporting position incorporates one or more springs (or equivalent) such that the mechanism tends to the retracted position. The activation mechanism nonetheless is operable to move the support legs to the self-supporting position, and then placement of the accessory bag on the ground tends to fix the support legs in the self-supporting position. Once the accessory bag is lifted from the ground, this tends to release the two or more legs, allowing them to achieve their resting position, by operation of the one or more spring means, in a position where the legs are disposed in a substantially parallel position to the length of the accessory bag, so as to enable the accessory bag to be returned to the cavity. This enables the easy return of the accessory bag to the cavity, in essence enabling it to be dropped back into place.

[0038] Also, upon return of the accessory bag to the cavity, the accessory bag locks into place automatically, until of course the release button is initiated again.

[0039] In one embodiment, the accessory bag and the main bag part together have the profile of a full-sized golf bag.

[0040] In a particular embodiment, the lock mechanism that is operable to maintain the accessory bag in place within the cavity, so as to maintain the accessory bag and the main portion as an integral golf bag, consists of a pin and a receiver which inter-engage when the accessory bag slides into the socket or bag. In one particular embodiment, the pin is fixed to the main bag portion.

[0041] In another embodiment, a receiver is provided including a biased catch for snap-fitting engagement of the accessory bag to the main bag portion.

[0042] In a further embodiment, the biased catch is part of a mechanism of the accessory bag.

[0043] In one embodiment, the catch is an aperture in a biased and sliding receiver plate which is movable in one direction by a user actuator and is biased in the opposite direction, as best shown in FIG. 9.

[0044] In another embodiment, the receiver plate is connected to a user actuator button for sliding in one direction against the bias, and for sliding in the opposite direction under the bias to engage a notch in the pin.

[0045] In a further embodiment, the accessory bag includes a stand mechanism comprising a user actuator and legs movable between a retracted position alongside the accessory bag body and a splayed-out position.
In one embodiment, the actuator comprises a pivotable shoulder for each support leg, the support shoulders pivoting the connected support legs away from the casing of the accessory bag.

In another embodiment, the slider pushes the legs at a location close to an upper pivot joint.

In a further embodiment, the slider may comprise an arcuate bar or rubber rod arranged between the portions of the legs connecting to the body of the accessory bag so as to cause the legs to pivot and splay out to achieve the self-supporting position.

In one embodiment, the stand mechanism includes a spring system which automatically locks the legs back in place when returned.

In another embodiment, the stand mechanism comprises a spring arranged to engage a catch member in a sliding button to lock the legs.

In a further embodiment, the accessory bag comprises a lower loop arranged for a user’s arm to pass through to hold the accessory bag against the body.

In one embodiment, the loop is attached to the accessory bag body at a location close to a lower location where a main carrying strap is attached.

Referring to the drawings (including for example FIGS. 1a, 1b, 1c, and 2) a golf bag 1 comprises a main portion, an accessory bag 3, and a socket 4 or cavity for receiving the accessory bag 3. As shown in for example FIGS. 1a, 1b, and 1c, the accessory bag 3 forms an integral part of the golf bag when inserted with the cavity or socket of the main portion, made to receive the accessory bag. This gives the impression that the golf bag 1 is conventional. However, a golfer may easily remove the accessory bag by simply gripping it at handle 15 and pressing a button 20 to release a lock.

In one particular embodiment, button 20 (shown for example in FIGS. 5a-5c) is at the end of a bar 27 which forms part of a mechanism 24. Mechanism 24 is best understood by referring to FIGS. 8a, 8b, 9a, 9b, and 9c. The mechanism 24 keeps the accessory bag 3 secured to the main portion 2 to the extent that the full golf bag 1 can be lifted from the handle 15. It performs the dual task of locking the accessory bag 3 to the main portion 2 and of operating legs 11 to form a stand after the accessory bag 3 has been removed.

The mechanism 24 includes a receiver pin 25 on the main bag portion 2, a receiver plate 26, a bar 27 (attached to the button 20), a top housing 28, and a bottom housing 29.

The mechanism 24 also comprises an activation means at the end of an activation button 16, operable to achieve the mentioned self-supporting position. In one embodiment, pivoting shoulders 12a, 12b are attached to support legs 11. As shown in FIGS. 9a and 9b, the action of pushing the button 16 causes the activation of the of the pivoting shoulders 12a, 12b, despite being biased to a retracted position by means of spring 18, resulting in the playing of the support legs 11, as shown for example in FIGS. 5a, 5b. This occurs by means of the activation of activation button 16 overcoming the biasing of spring 18; the translation movement of the bar, spring connectors 13a and 13b; which together provide the activation of the legs such that they splay away from the accessory bag to achieve the self-supporting position.

As explained above, by placing the accessory bag on the ground with the support legs 11 in the self-supporting, splayed position, the support legs tend to maintain this position. But once the accessory bag is lifted, so long as the activation button 16 is not being engaged, the support legs 11 return to the retracted position by means of spring 18, as shown for example in FIGS. 3a, 3b, 3c, and 3d. Also, spring 22 pushes down on button 26 so as to maintain it in place.

The locking action is performed by pushing the accessory bag 3 into the socket 4, upon which the pin 25 in the main portion 2 snap-fits behind the receiver plate 26, as best shown in FIG. 9c.

As shown in FIGS. 9a, 9b and 9c, when the locking button 20 is pressed, the receiver plate 26 is pushed so that it no longer engages in a notch of the pin 25 and so the accessory bag 3 may be lifted out. In more detail, to release the accessory bag 3 one presses the locking button 20, which is attached to the bar 27, which pushes against the plate 26. This realigns holes in the housing 28 and 29 with the hole in the plate 26. This frees the slot 30 to release the receiver pin 25. The spring 21 automatically offsets the hole in the plate 26 ready for locking again.

When the accessory bag 3 has been removed the mechanism 10 can be used as described above for opening the legs 11.

To reattach, one simply returns the accessory bag 3 to its position and it will automatically lock back in place due to action of the spring 21 which urges the locking button 20 outwardly. The angle at the head of the receiver pin 25 pushes the plate 26, enabling the receiver pin 25 to pass. When the plate 26 is lined up with the slot 30, the return spring 21 pulls the plate 26 back into the slot 30, locking them in position.

A strap is preferably attached to the accessory bag 3 in two parts, a main strap and a small loop strap for the wrist. The loop strap is generally used by passing one’s hand through the strap to secure the bag to the body eliminating the bounce of the bag which causes irritation and sometimes injury to the user.

It should be understood that the present invention provides a very simple structure to enable one or more of (a) automated locking of the accessory bag once in place in the cavity, and easy manual release of the locked accessory bag, and/or (b) easy initiation of an activation mechanism of two or more support legs to that they splay to achieve a self-supporting configuration of the accessory bag. Additionally, the accessory bag is configured such that the support legs automatically return to their retracted position when the accessory bag is lifted, and the activation button is not being initiated.

It will be appreciated that the invention provides a very simple and effective accessory bag for occasional use either on the course or at the driving range.

The invention is not limited to the embodiments described but may be varied in construction and detail.

1. A golf bag comprising a main bag portion, and an accessory bag portion, wherein the accessory bag portion may be either placed within a socket portion of the main bag portion such that the main portion and the accessory bag portion are integrated to form a golf bag, or removed from the socket portion to provide access to an accessory bag that is smaller than the golf bag, characterized in that:

(c) the accessory bag portion includes a handle; and

(d) the golf bag includes a lock mechanism that is operable to automatically lock the accessory bag portion in place relative to the main bag portion, when the accessory bag portion is inserted into the socket portion; wherein once locked in the socket portion, the locking mechanism enables a user to lift the golf bag using the handle.
2. The golf bag of claim 1, characterized in that the lock mechanism comprises a pin and a receiver which inter-engage when the accessory bag slides into the socket.

3. The golf bag as claimed in claim 2, characterized in that the pin is fixed to the main bag portion.

4. The golf bag as claimed in claim 2 or 3, characterized in that the receiver includes a biased catch for snap-fitting engagement of the accessory bag portion to the main bag portion.

5. The golf bag of claim 4, characterized in that the biased catch is part of a mechanism that is part of the accessory bag portion.

6. The golf bag of claim 5, characterized in that the biased catch includes an aperture in a biased and sliding receiver plate which is movable in one direction by a user engageable locking/unlocking button, and is biased in the opposite direction.

7. The golf bag of claim 6, characterized in that the receiver plate is connected to the locking/unlocking button for sliding in one direction against the bias, and for sliding in the opposite direction under the bias to engage a notch in the pin.

8. The golf bag of claim 1, characterized in that the accessory bag includes an activation mechanism operable, based on user initiation of an activation button, to actuate two or more support legs from a first retracted position, to a second splayed out position operable to enable the accessory bag to achieve a self-supporting upright position.

9. The golf bag of claim 8, characterized in that the activation mechanism includes a slider, a pivoting shoulder for each supporting leg, and a spring means connecting each pivoting shoulder to the slider, such that the user initiation of the activation button moves the supporting legs to the second splayed out position.

10. The golf bag of claim 9, characterized in that the supporting legs are biased to the first retracted position.

11. The golf bag of claim 1 characterized in that the golf bag includes a handle, and either adjacent to the handle or integrated with the handle is (a) a button that enables the release of the locking mechanism so as to permit the accessory bag portion to be removed from the main bag portion, and (b) an activation button that enables the actuation of two or more support legs to achieve a splayed out position that enables a self-supporting position.