Oct. 20, 1936. B. WALTHER 2,058,277

BASEBALL PRACTICE MACHINE

Filed April 15, 1936

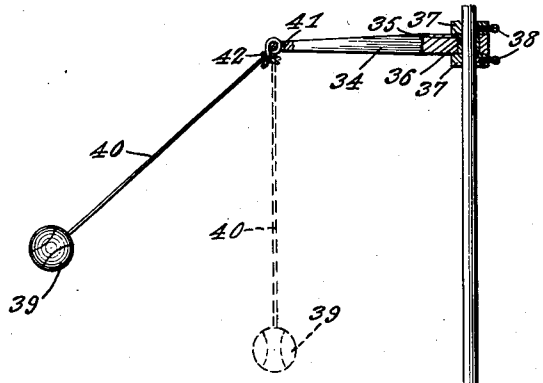


Fig. 1.

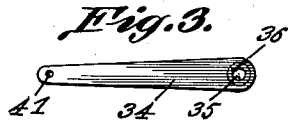
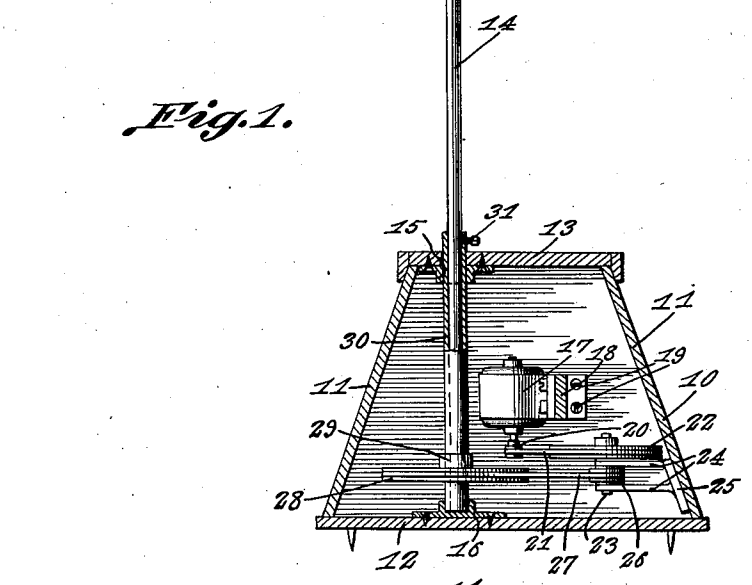


Fig. 3.



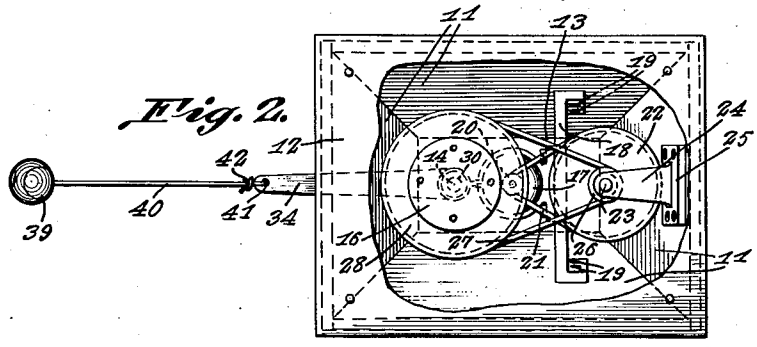


Fig. 2.

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Patented Oct. 20, 1936

2,058,277

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,058,277

BASEBALL PRACTICE MACHINE

Benjamin Walther, Albany, N. Y.

Application April 15, 1936, Serial No. 74,546

1 Claim. (Cl. 273—26)

This invention relates to baseball practice machines and has for an object to provide apparatus of this type which may be conveniently used for batting practice or catching practice and which will include a regulation baseball or a mush ball suspended from an arm adapted to rotate the ball around the axis of rotation of the arm toward the player at a height to be conveniently struck or caught by the player.

A further object of the invention is to provide apparatus of this type having the ball supporting arm adjustably mounted upon its rotating shaft so that the ball may be disposed at various heights above the ground to simulate low balls or high balls to be batted or caught in practice.

A further object is to provide apparatus of this kind which will be formed of a few strong, simple and durable parts, which will be inexpensive to manufacture and which will not easily get out of order.

With the above and other objects in view the invention consists of certain novel details of construction and combinations of parts hereinafter fully described and claimed, it being understood that various modifications may be resorted to within the scope of the appended claim without departing from the spirit or sacrificing any of the advantages of the invention.

In the accompanying drawing forming part of this specification:

Figure 1 is a longitudinal sectional view through a baseball practice machine constructed in accordance with the invention, parts being shown in elevation.

Figure 2 is a plan view of the device shown in Figure 1 with the top of the casing broken away to expose the parts concealed in the casing.

Figure 3 is a plan view of the ball supporting arm.

Referring now to the drawing in which like characters of reference designate similar parts in the various views, 10 designates a casing which may be in the form of a box, the side walls 11 of which are sloped inwardly from the bottom 12 of the box to the cover 13 of the box to provide a wide base for the practice machine so that danger of the same being upset or tipped over will be eliminated. A stand shaft 14 is journaled in bearings 15 and 16 secured respectively to the cover and to the bottom of the box and rises above the top of the box to a height of preferably about four feet.

The shaft is rotated at a speed of about seventy-two revolutions per minute by means of a motor 17 which is bolted to a bracket 18 that is secured at the ends to the opposite walls of the casing as shown at 19. The pulley 20 of the motor is connected by a belt 21 to a large pulley 22 which is fixed to a shaft 23 that is journaled in openings in the spaced arms 24 of a bracket 25. A pulley 26 is fixed to the shaft between the arms of the bracket and is connected by a belt 27 to a pulley 28, the hub 29 of which is fixed in any suitable manner to a sleeve 30 which surrounds the stand shaft 14 and is removably secured to the latter by means of a set screw 31.

A ball supporting arm 34 is adjustably mounted on the stand shaft and for this purpose one end of the arm is provided with an opening 35 having therein a bushing 36 which receives the stand shaft with sufficient frictional engagement between the parts to permit the arm being rotated as a unit with the shaft about the axis of rotation of the shaft while at the same time permitting the arm to swivel on the shaft in a direction opposite to the direction of rotation of the shaft under impulse of a batted ball as will presently appear. A pair of collars 37 are adjustably mounted on the stand shaft 14 by means of set screws 38, one of these collars being disposed above the arm 34 and the other collar being disposed below the arm 34. Adjustment of the collars vertically on the stand shaft permits of the arm being moved correspondingly to a predetermined height above the ground.

A regulation baseball 39 has attached thereto a rubber cord 40, the end of which is threaded through an opening 41 in the free end of the arm 34 the cord being then knotted upon itself as shown at 42.

In use the arm 34 is adjusted vertically on the stand shaft 14 to any desired height above the ground. When the motor 17 is started the shaft 14 will be rotated in a direction to swing the ball 39 toward the player in an arc concentric with the axis of rotation of the shaft 14, centrifugal force throwing the ball outward from the arm 34 as the speed of rotation of the shaft increases to about seventy-two revolutions per minute at which time the ball is in an angle relative to the arm as illustrated in Figure 1. The player may now take his stance and either catch the ball as it comes toward him or bat the ball with the bat. If he is engaged in batting practice, should he connect squarely with the ball, the ball will be driven away from him and the arm 34 will instantly be swiveled on the stand shaft 14 in a direction opposite to the direction of rotation of the shaft until momentum is lost at which time the

shaft again begins to revolve the ball in the player's direction.

It will be noted that the apparatus may be used for both right and left handed players by simply reversing the belt **22** on the pulleys **20** and **22.**

From the above description it is thought that the construction and operation of the invention will be fully understood without further explanation.

What is claimed is:

In a practice device of the class described, a casing, a shaft journaled at the bottom in the casing and projecting above the casing, a motor supported by the casing, stepped-down motion transmission means connecting the motor to the shaft for rotating the shaft at a predetermined speed, an arm having a bushed opening frictionally engaging the shaft above the casing to permit the arm to be rotated by the shaft as a unit in one direction and to be swiveled on the shaft in the opposite direction, stop collars on the shaft adjustably mounting the arm longitudinally of the shaft, a cord on the arm, and a ball carried by the cord and adapted to be struck by the player during the rotation of the ball in an orbit around the axis of rotation of the shaft.

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