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W. BARRETT

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LEG GUARD FOR ATHLETES

Filed July 10, 1926

Fig. 1.

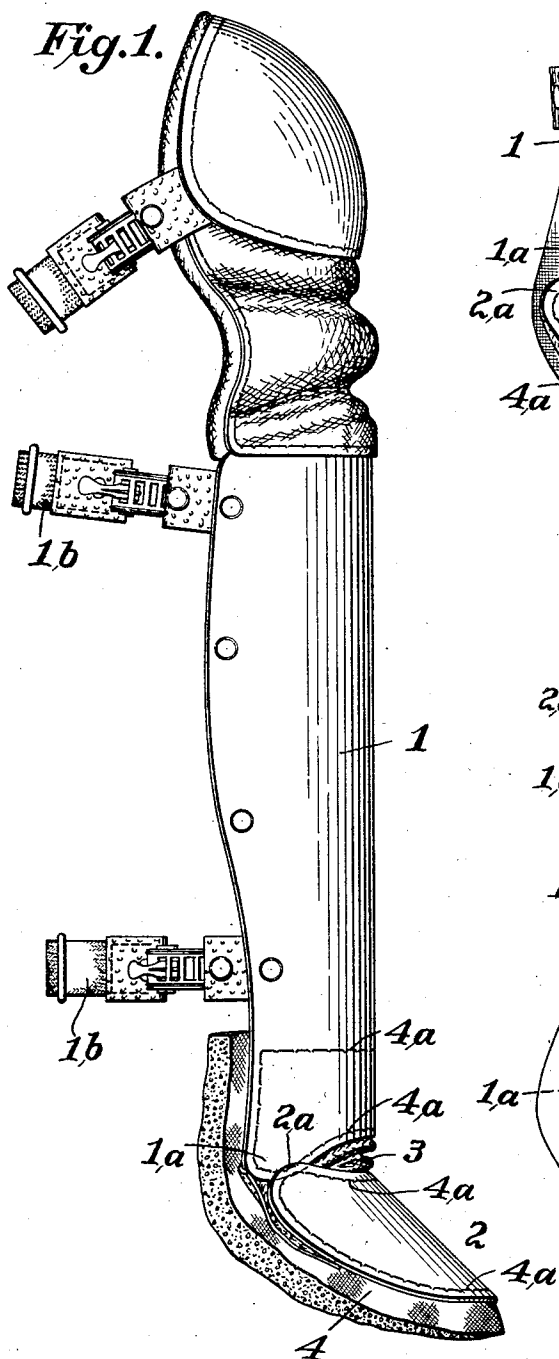


Fig. 2.

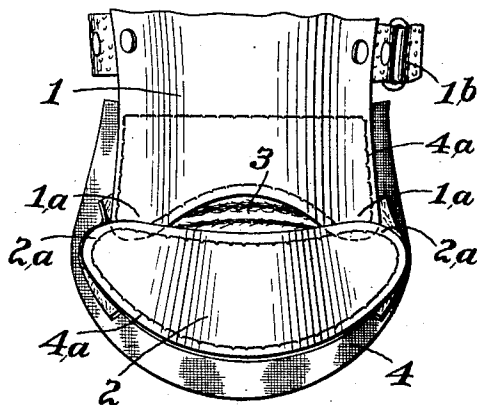


Fig. 3.

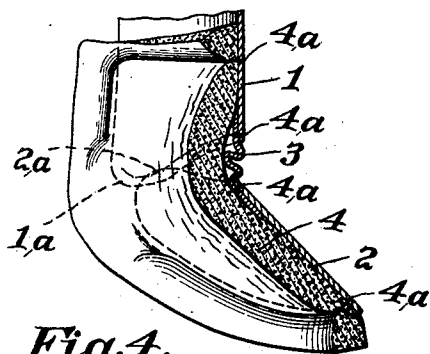
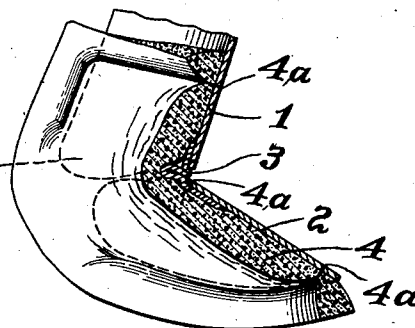


Fig. 4.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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LEG GUARD FOR ATHLETES.

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My said invention relates more particularly to leg guards such as are used by baseball catchers, though not limited to such use.

5 Catchers, in preparation for receiving the pitched ball, are accustomed to crouch behind the batsman, and with the types of leg guards heretofore used, frequently have their insteps or ankles rubbed sore, due to the jamming action of the bottom of the guard. This has been further aggravated rather than relieved by attempts to obviate such injury by padding material such as felt or the like, which when subjected to the action of mud and perspiration, and subsequent drying, became hard and unyielding.

The present invention aims to provide a protector for the instep which will have a hard or stiff outer surface to receive the impact of the ball and distribute the force of the blow, but which at the same time will give full freedom to ankle movement in crouching, and in other positions, and which will have a permanently soft cushion surface for contact with the instep and ankle, and which will be proof against the hardening effects of mud and moisture.

With these and other objects in view, the invention comprises the novel construction and arrangement and combination of parts hereinafter described, and precise nature and scope of the invention being defined and ascertained by the appended claims.

I have illustrated in the accompanying drawing what I at present consider the preferred form of the invention, although obviously I do not wish to be limited thereto.

In this drawing:—

Figure 1 is a side elevation of a leg guard and ankle protector.

Fig. 2 is a front view, and

Fig. 3 is a central vertical section through the ankle protector and lower part of the leg guard.

Fig. 4 is a similar view with the parts in the position assumed when the catcher is in a crouching attitude.

Referring now to the drawing, I have shown a leg guard to consist of a front plate 1 of substantially rigid or semi-rigid material such as fibre or leather, which is adapted to cover substantially that part of the leg between the knee and ankle. Suitable means such as straps 1^b are provided for securing this portion of the device to the

leg of the player, which being of customary or any desired form, need no further description. The lower end of the leg guard is curved to provide downwardly extended rounded corners 1^a.

At the lower end of the part 1 I provide an instep guard 2, also composed of comparatively rigid material, which is preferably substantially crescent shaped, the same being hinged or flexibly connected to the lower end of the guard 1. Any suitable form of hinge or flexible connection may be used without departing from the spirit of my invention, but I prefer to connect the guard members 1 and 2 by a flexible leather connection 3 in such a manner that the ends 2^a of the instep guard will slightly overlap the said corners 1^a of the shin or leg guard, the elliptic opening formed by the rounded cut away parts of the leg and instep guards allowing freedom of motion of the player's ankle at all times, while, when the catcher is in a crouching attitude, the elliptic opening is practically closed up, as shown in Fig. 4, so that the ankle is fully protected, as well as the instep.

To cushion and distribute the force of the blow of a ball, 5 provide a cushion lining in the shape of a sheet or layer 4 of sponge rubber which is preferably projected beyond the margins of the leg and instep guards, and which also preferably extends as a continuous sheet over the entire inner surface of the instep guard, across the elliptic space referred to above, and for a suitable distance over the inner surface of the lower end of the leg guard. This sponge rubber layer may be secured in position by any suitable means, as by stitching indicated at 4^a.

It will be noted that this flexible hinge and lining or cushion, does not interfere in any way with the movement of the player's ankle or foot, and yet the instep and ankle are thoroughly protected by the comparatively rigid material on the outside, and any blow received by it is cushioned by the padding material directly beneath the same. At the same time a flexible connection or hinge is provided which will readily adapt itself to different players and to fit any irregularities in the shoes worn by them.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim is:—

1. A protector for baseball catchers and other athletes, comprising a leg guard, an

instep guard, flexible means connecting the upper edge of the instep guard to the lower end of the leg guard, and a flexible padding secured to the inner face of the instep guard
5 and lower end of the leg guard, and bridging the joint therebetween.

2. A protector of the class described, comprising a leg guard having a concave curved lower edge, an instep guard having a con-

caved upper edge, the corners at the termini 10 of said concave edges of said parts being juxtaposed, and cushioning means of flexible moisture-proof material secured to the inner faces of the instep guard and lower end of the leg guard, and bridging the space formed
15 by said concaved edges.

In testimony whereof, I affix my signature.

WILLIAM BARRETT.