

Nov. 26, 1940.

G. E. SMITH

2,223,189

GAME APPARATUS

Filed Nov. 3, 1937

FIG. 1

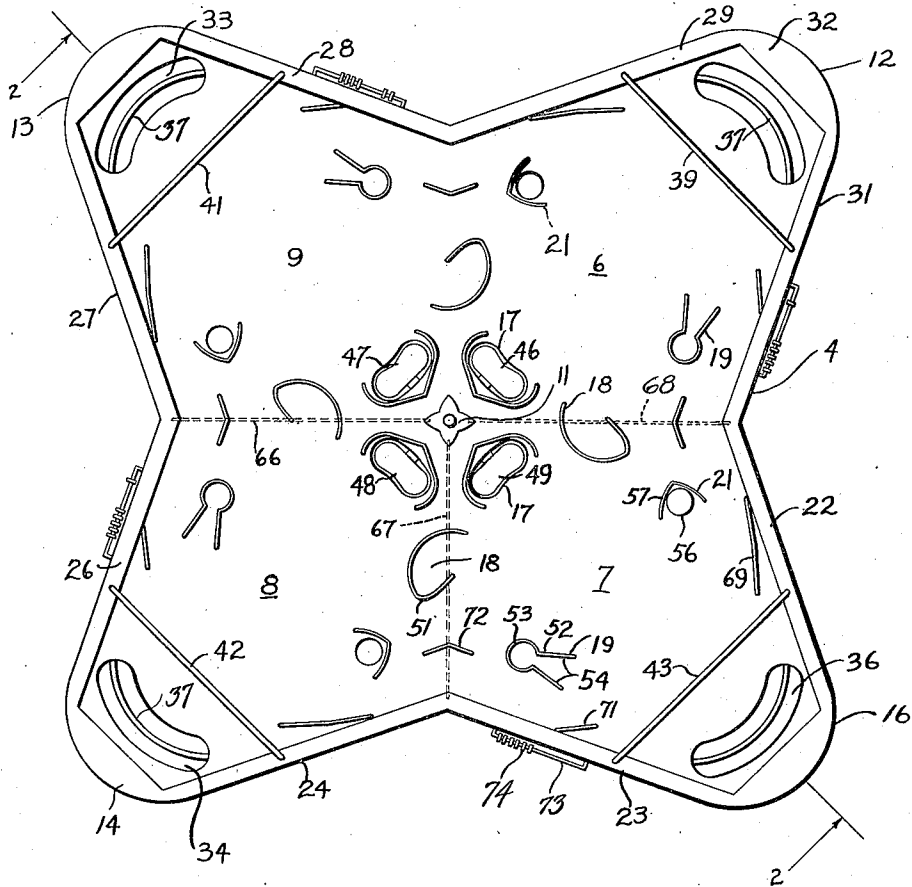


FIG. 2

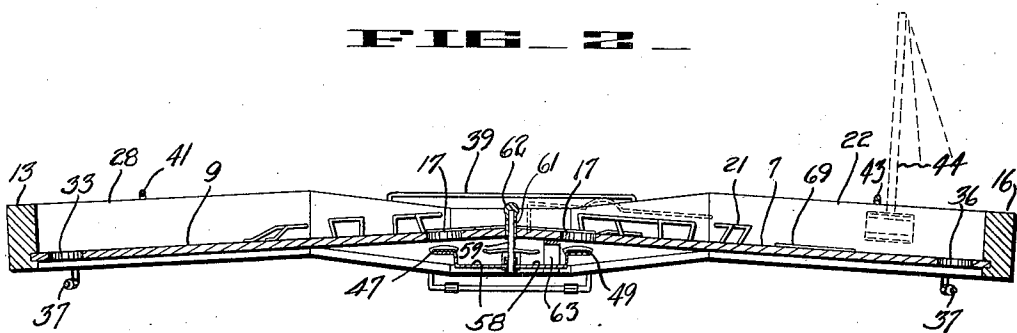


FIG. 3



INVENTOR.

GEORGE E. SMITH

BY

Joseph B. Gardner

ATTORNEY..

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,223,189

GAME APPARATUS

George E. Smith, Oakland, Calif.

Application November 3, 1937, Serial No. 172,542

2 Claims. (Cl. 273-123)

The invention relates to game apparatus of the type having a playing surface or table over which balls may be rolled or driven by the player into one or a plurality of ball receiving portions of the surface or table.

An object of the invention is to provide an apparatus of the character described wherein several persons may take an active and simultaneous part in playing the game competitively one against the other without each waiting his turn as is necessary in games generally of this character.

Another object of the invention is to provide a game of the character described which, when participated in by several persons, affords a lively and fascinating and merry game, in which accuracy and skill and coordination is required of the winning player.

A further object of the invention is to provide a game of the character described which may be constructed in a relatively small and portable size, whereby the same is suitable for use in an average home and which may be stored away in a relatively small closet space and which may be readily removed and placed into operation by supporting the same on any suitable table or the like.

The invention possesses other objects and features of advantage, some of which, with the foregoing, will be set forth in the following description of the preferred form of the invention which is illustrated in the drawing accompanying and forming part of the specification. It is to be understood, however, that variations in the showing made by the said drawing and description may be adopted within the scope of the invention as set forth in the claims.

Referring to said drawing:

Figure 1 is a plan view of a game apparatus constructed in accordance with the present invention.

Figure 2 is a diagonal sectional view through the apparatus and is substantially on the plane of line 2-2 of Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a side elevation of a partition means for dividing the game into sections when fewer than a maximum number of players use the game.

Briefly stated, the game apparatus of the present invention consists of a plurality of playing surfaces which are arranged in adjacent contiguous relation and are each provided with a plurality of receiving and holding means for balls or the like which are directed over the surfaces by the operator from playing ends of the

surfaces. The players take their positions adjacent the ends of the playing surfaces and in accordance with the present arrangement, each strikes and directs his ball or balls by means of mallets or the like in an effort to deposit the balls appropriately in the ball receiving means on his playing surface. Upon misdirection of any of his balls whereby the latter miss the ball receiving means on the surface, the balls will likely roll onto one of the other playing surfaces so as to provide the player on such surface with an increased number of balls with which to score on his surface. Preferably also, the several playing surfaces are inclined upwardly towards the common center whereby the balls will tend to gravitate back towards the outer ends of the surfaces from which they were directed; and in starting the game, means is preferably provided for simultaneously releasing a plurality of balls on the inner end of each of the surfaces for gravitation towards the outer end. Other constructional features of the apparatus which add to the novelty and interest of the game are more fully hereinafter set forth in the detail description of the apparatus.

With reference more specifically to the accompanying drawing, the game apparatus of the present invention consists of a platform or table 4 which is provided with a plurality of playing surfaces 6, 7, 8 and 9 which, in accordance with the present embodiment, extend outwardly from opposite sides of a common playing center 11 and are provided on their playing surfaces adjacent the center and between the latter and the outer ends 12, 13, 14 and 15 with a plurality of ball holding or receiving means 17, 18, 19 and 21 for the receipt of balls rolled or driven from the outer ends of the playing surfaces by the operators. In the present form of the apparatus the playing surfaces 6, 7, 8 and 9 are positioned substantially at right angles to each other and joined along right angular partition lines intersecting the center 11 of the board, so as to position the several surfaces in 90° quadrants with respect to the playing center. It will be understood, however, that the surfaces may be otherwise arranged to provide common contiguous portions over which the balls may pass from one playing surface to another.

Preferably, the playing surfaces are inclined upwardly from their outer ends to the center 11 and are provided with upstanding side walls including walls 22 and 23 for the surface 7, walls 24 and 25 for the surface 8, walls 27 and 28 for the surface 9, and walls 29 and 31 for the sur-

face 6. The side walls in each of the playing surfaces preferably diverge from the outer end of the surface so as to define a four-pointed star shaped figure wherein the point of intersection of the side walls 23 and 24, 26 and 27, 28 and 29, and 31 and 22 are positioned on substantially the quadrant lines aforesaid and removed inwardly from the outer ends of the playing surfaces. In this manner the outer end of each playing surface is the lowest point of the surface whereby balls will gravitate from all points on the surface towards the outer end. Also, as will be clear, the diverging walls confine the angle of approach of the balls towards the outer end of the playing surface and permit a better coverage of this end for striking the balls towards the center by the players.

There is preferably provided at the outer or playing ends of the surfaces, ball pockets or holding means 32, 33, 34 and 36 which are guarded by the players to prevent the entry of balls thereto and in accordance with the present game, all balls deposited in these outer end pockets score against the player guarding the same. As here shown, these ball pockets are formed by cutting elongated slots through the playing surfaces and mounting thereunder a cross member 37 here in the form of wires, and which serve the dual purpose of holding the balls in the slots and also serve as supports for the platform on a supporting surface such as a card table or the like. As before indicated, the players take their places opposite the outer ends of the playing surfaces and attempt to direct the balls from such ends into the ball receiving means on the playing surfaces adjacent the center, and in accordance with the present arrangement, the players are provided with mallets for striking the balls towards the playing center. Preferably, a plurality of guards 39, 41, 42 and 43 are placed across the playing surfaces to limit the stroke of the mallet and as here shown, these guards are in the form of wires supported on the top surfaces of the diverging side walls of the playing surfaces, so as to confine the mallet movement to the outer ends of the playing surfaces and to engage and stop the handles 44 of the mallets and the latter are moved to an innermost position.

The ball receiving and holding means 17, 18, 19 and 21 on each of the surfaces may be of substantially any desired form and arrangement on the surfaces. As here shown, the means 17 is in the form of an elongated slot cut through the playing surface and is adapted to receive a plurality of balls which are supported under the slot by plates 46, 47, 48 and 49. The ball receiving means 18 is here in the form of a curved wire loop or wicket 51 which is fastened to the playing surface and is provided with an open side for the receipt of a ball on the playing surface substantially at the junction of the surface and an adjacent playing surface. The ball holding means 19 is here in the form of a curved wire 52 having an elevated circular ball receiving portion 53 and inclined runway portions 54 leading to the portion 53 from the playing surface. The ball receiving means 21 here consists of a circular opening or seat 56 provided in the playing surface and a guard 57 here in wire form surrounding a side of the seat.

In starting the play, the balls are preferably positioned in the ball receiving means 17 and are simultaneously released therefrom for gravitation over the several playing surfaces towards

the outer ends of the surfaces. The simultaneous releasing of the balls from the pockets 17 is here effected by raising the plates 46, 47, 48 and 49 so as to lift the balls out of the slots in the playing surface and as here shown, the plates are connected by a plurality of arms 58 to a common vertical central pin 59 which is journaled in a hub bearing 61 at the playing center 11 of the platform. The pin 59 is preferably provided with a knob 62 at its upper end by which the same may be readily grasped and which also serves to engage the hub bearing 61 to support the arms and plates in proper lowered position below the slots. Preferably, the plates are held in proper rotated position below the slot openings by means of a suitable vertical guide here shown in the form of an inverted U-shaped member 63 which is fastened to the under side of one of the playing surfaces and provides a vertical guide for one of the arms 58.

If desired, the game may be made more difficult and intricate by using balls of different colors or other external markings which will score only if placed in one of the ball receiving means 17, 18, 19 and 21 so that the player is not only called upon to direct the balls in the direction of the ball receiving means generally, but must determine the character of the ball he is about to strike and attempt to direct the same specifically to one of the ball receiving means. In the event that the ball receiving means is missed by the player and the ball has sufficient velocity, the same will pass over the divide at the junction of the playing surface and onto an adjacent playing surface where the player thereon will have an opportunity to use such ball to score on his surface. Also, since the balls in the outer pockets of the playing surfaces count against the player, it is possible for a player to effectively score by directing a ball down the side of an adjacent playing surface to elude the player thereon, so that if the shot is successful the latter player will be penalized for allowing the entry of the ball into the outer pocket of his playing surface. In this connection, the game may be made more lively by providing one or a plurality of balls which do not score at all for the player when deposited in one of the ball receiving means 17, 18, 19 and 21, but which only count against a player who allows such ball to gravitate into the outer pocket of his playing surface. It will be understood from the foregoing that when the game is played by a plurality of persons, an extremely lively and merry and entertaining game will result wherein each of the players is engaged constantly in the playing of the game and there is no waiting of turns on the part of the several players, but rather they all start together and finish substantially together when the last ball has been deposited in one of the ball receiving means above described.

While the apparatus here disclosed is arranged for use by a maximum of four persons, it will be understood that the number of playing surfaces of the game may be increased or decreased without departing from the spirit of the present invention. Also, while a substantially star shaped figuration is illustrated, it will be clear that the same may be made rectangular or polygonal or circular or curved, as may be desired. Where fewer than four persons desire to play the game, the apparatus provides for the placing of partitions about certain of the playing surfaces so as to prevent the

entry of balls thereon and to confine the balls onto the playing surfaces being used by the players. As here shown, such partitions are in the form of detachable cross wires 64 which may be positioned along the junction of adjacent playing surfaces and between the point of intersection of the diverging side walls and the playing center. Thus, where three persons wish to play the game and take their positions at the outer ends 12, 13 and 16 of the playing surfaces 6, 9 and 7, the partition wires 64 may be positioned as illustrated in dotted lines 66 and 67 in Figure 1, so as to prevent entry of the balls onto playing surface 8. In this position of the partitions the game may be practiced by one person using only the playing surface 8. On the other hand, if two persons wish to play the game and place themselves at the outer ends 12 and 13 of playing surfaces 6 and 9, the partitions may be positioned as shown by dotted lines 66 and 68 of Figure 1, so as to shut out playing surfaces 7 and 8. One of the important features of these partition wires is the provision thereof for extending across the ball receiving means 18 without preventing the entry of balls thereto. This is effected by providing the partition wires with a raised portion extending over the wire loops 51 of the ball receiving means 18 so as to allow the entry of a ball thereunder into such receiving means. Otherwise, the partition means extends sufficiently low to the plane of the playing surface as to engage and turn back any balls which strike against the same.

If desired, various means may be positioned on the surface for deflecting the balls so as to increase the difficultness of the game and the variation of travel of the balls and as here shown, I have mounted on the board various deviating members 69, 71 and 72 on each of the playing surfaces.

Counters are preferably provided in connection with each of the playing surfaces to enable the keeping of score by the players and as here shown, a wire guide 73 is here mounted on one of the side walls of each of the playing surfaces and carries a plurality of slidable beads 74 which may be slid along the wire to keep the players' score.

I claim:

1. A game apparatus comprising, a plurality of adjacent inclined playing surfaces having contiguous edges extending to a common center, ball receiving means on one of said surfaces at the junction of said other surface, and extending forwardly thereon whereby the ball may enter from one surface and cross the junction of said surfaces and be held in said ball receiving means by the inclination of the other playing surface and partition means adapted for positioning along the junction of said surfaces and being formed to clear said ball receiving means.

2. In a game apparatus having, a plurality of adjacent inclined playing surfaces having a joined contiguous edge portion and adapted for receipt of balls to be directed over said surfaces, a ball receiving means on one of said surfaces at said contiguous edge and extending onto the adjacent playing surface and downwardly thereon whereby a ball entering said ball receiving means from one surface will cross said contiguous edge portions and be held in said means by the slope of the second playing surface, and partition means adapted for positioning along such edge and comprising a wire member having an upwardly curved raised portion at said ball receiving means so as to permit passage of a ball over said contiguous edges while in said ball receiving means.

GEORGE E. SMITH. 40