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APPARATUS FOR PRACTICE KICKING OF FOOTBALL GOALS

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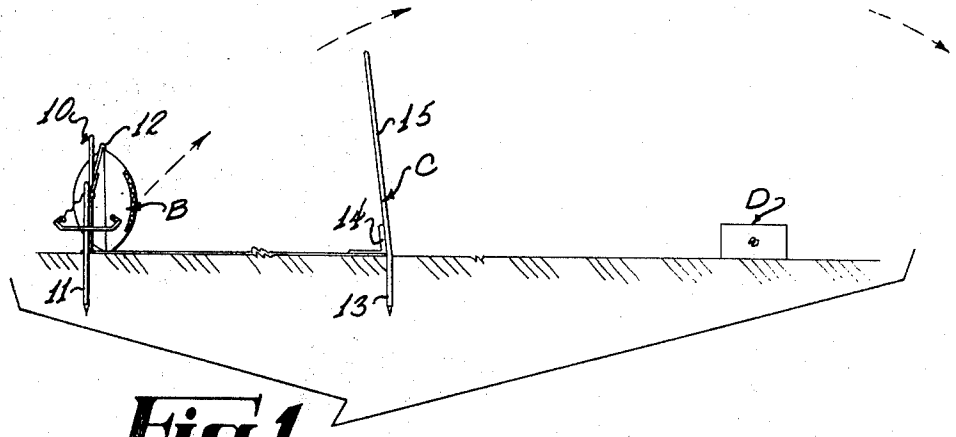


Fig. 1

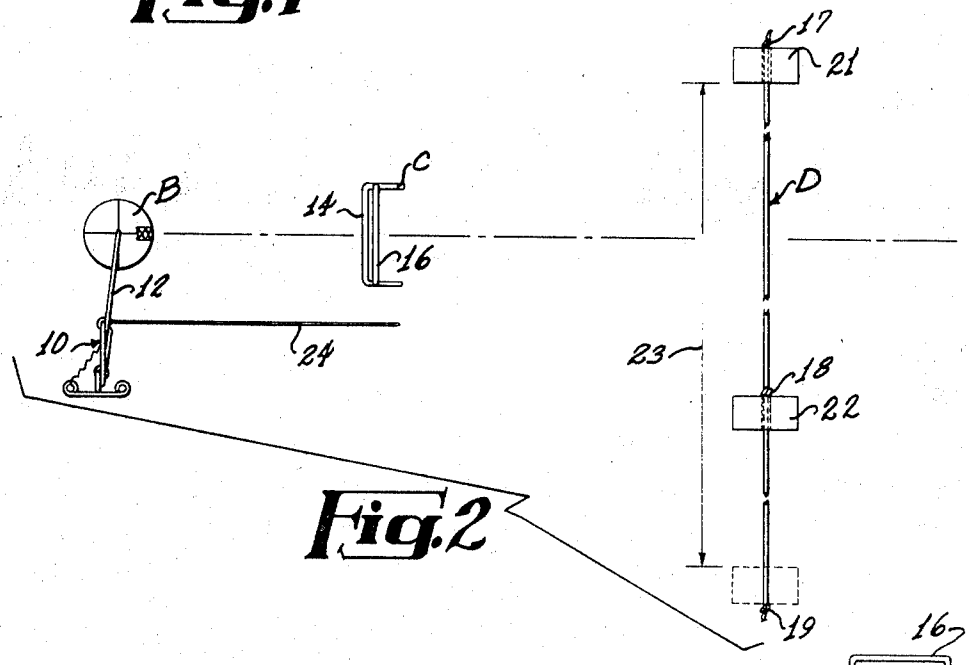


Fig. 2

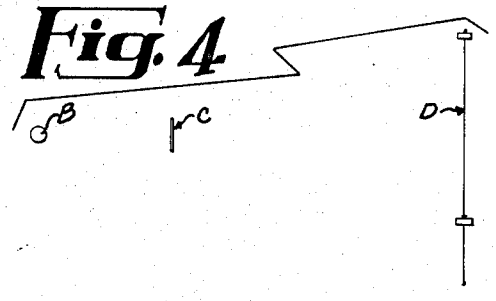


Fig. 4

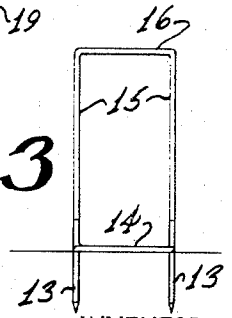


Fig. 3

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APPARATUS FOR PRACTICE KICKING OF FOOTBALL GOALS

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A football goal kicking practice apparatus embodying a ground supported height marker over which a football may be kicked, in combination with a goal marker laid upon the ground, the parts being so dimensioned and relatively placed that a football kicked over the marker and over the goal member would have passed over the onrushing linesmen of an opposing team and would otherwise have been so kicked as to have scored a point or points in an actual game.

This invention relates to an apparatus for practice kicking of football goals, either field goals or goals after touchdown.

The object of our invention is to provide a simple apparatus by means of which a player may practice kicking of field goals or extra point after touchdown goals, which apparatus embodies means to hold the ball in upright position together with a height marker placed at normal distance ahead of the kicker and a goal marker placed upon the ground and which represents the distance between the goal posts. The height marker is so dimensioned and so relatively placed with respect to the ball and to the goal marker that when a ball is kicked over the height marker it describes a trajectory which would be above the upstretched arms of members of an on rushing team so that, if kicked at this height, and accurately as to azimuth, it passes over and between markers placed on the goal marker, representing that the ball has been properly kicked to score a point.

A further object of our invention is to provide apparatus of the character designated in which a goal marker may be provided with devices slideable thereon or otherwise affixed thereto which represent the distances between standard field goal posts, that is, whether the kicker is practicing the kicking of goals between posts spaced at professional or amateur distances.

We further proopse to attach to the ball holding member a length of flexible material such as a rope of such length that it represents the normal distance behind the line of scrimmage at which the ball should be placed upon the ground for kicking, thus accurately to position the ball relative to the height marker.

We further propose to provide the goal marker of such length that it may be used to measure the approximate distance that the goal marker must be placed from the football when kicking amateur extra points in practice. For extra points the goal marker should be placed three full lengths of the goal marker from the football. In other words, the goal marker serves a dual purpose, namely, to act as an indicator of the distance between the posts of the actual goal posts on a football field and also as a measuring device to position the goal marker itself.

Apparatus illustrating features of our invention is shown in the accompanying drawings forming a part of this application, in which:

FIG. 1 is a somewhat diagrammatic side elevational view showing the apparatus set up for kicking a goal;

FIG. 2 is a plan view of the same;

FIG. 3 is a front elevational view of the height marker; and,

FIG. 4 is a diagrammatic view illustrating in plan the method of setting up the apparatus.

Referring now to the drawings for a better understanding of our invention we illustrate at **10** a suitable form of device for holding a football in upright position. While various devices may be used to so hold the ball, we prefer to use that type of football holder which is shown, described and claimed in our co-pending application Ser. No. 557,147, filed June 13, 1966, "Football holder." As is illustrated, the holder embodies a post which may be stuck into the ground and which is indicated at **11**, together with a holding finger or rod **12** which rests lightly on top of football B, thus removably to hold it while the ball is kicked.

Adapted to be stuck into the ground and thus supported thereby is a height marker indicated generally by the letter C. As shown, the height marker may comprise two substantially vertical lower ends **13**, disposed to be stuck into the ground and a stirrup or footpiece **14** welded across the same which limits penetration of the ends into the ground. The members **13** continue upwardly as at **15** and are joined by a cross bar **16**. If desired, the entire height marker except for the stirrup **14** may consist of a single length of generally U-shaped round rod sharpened on the ends.

Also used in conjunction with our apparatus and as a part thereof is the goal marker indicated generally by the letter D. This marker may comprise a length of rope or like material which has marks such as knots **17**, **18** and **19** tied therein at predetermined distances as will be described. Slideably mounted on the rope D are blocks **21** and **22**, the block **22** being outwardly of the intermediate knot **18** and inwardly of the outermost knot **19**.

As is understood, the goal posts which are used for high school and professional football games are 18 feet 6 inches between the insides of the posts. College goal posts are 23 feet 4 inches inside the posts. Further, high school and college teams play with the goal posts mounted 10 yards behind the actual goal line whereas the professional teams play with the goal posts mounted so that the cross bar lies exactly vertically over the goal line. When kicking for points after touchdown all teams generally place the ball on about the 8 or 10 yard line of the actual playing field. This means that for professional teams the actual cross bar is about 8 to 10 yards from where the ball is placed down on the ground for kicking. On the other hand, for high school and college teams the cross bar is from 18 to 20 yards from the point where the ball is placed on the ground for kicking after touchdown points.

Bearing in mind the foregoing differences in distances between goal posts and distances of goal posts from the place where the ball is placed upon the ground when kicking the point after touchdown, our invention may be more fully explained. First, the overall length between the insides of the block members **21** and **22** when separated by the knots **17** and **19** is 23 feet 4 inches, as shown by line **23** FIG. 2, this being the distance between college goal posts. When the marker **22** is placed adjacent the knot **18** the distance from the inside of the blocks **21** and **22** is 18 feet 6 inches. Therefore, the goal marker D not only can be used as a goal marker proper, but also may be used to measure the distance away from the football that the goal marker must be placed when practicing kicking amateur extra points. For kicking field goals, however, if a measuring tape is available, it should be used to measure the proper distance that the goal marker should be placed from the football. If a measuring tape is not available, the following method

works satisfactorily: A full step is approximately 1 yard. Starting from the football, pace or step off the desired field goal distance one would like to attempt; then step off 4 additional yards. These **4** additional yards should be added to whatever field goal is attempted even if a measuring tape is available or not. This will give the distance that the goal marker should be placed from the football. For instance, if one were attempting to kick a 30 yard field goal, he would position the goal marker 34 yards (or steps) from the football. This 4 additional yards added in positioning the goal marker when practicing kicking field goals and extra points allows for the downward trajectory of the football after it has been kicked. Therefore, when the football passes over the goal marker, this indicates the football would have passed over the cross bars of an actual goal posts.

In order to afford ready means for determining the distance between the ball and the height marker C, we propose to attach to the holder a length of material such as **24**. The length of rope **24** represents a distance between the ball and the height marker C such that if the ball is kicked from the location and passes over the height marker, it also would pass over the upstretched arms of the members of an onrushing team. This rope may be 4 feet long, namely, the distance that the ball **13** should be set relative to the height marker C for proper kicking, as stated. Thus, should the height marker C be knocked over, or when initially setting up the device, the rope **24** serves as a ready means for determining the exact distance that the ball should be placed in front of the height marker C.

From the foregoing it will be seen that we have devised an improved apparatus for practice kicking of field goals in the game of football. With the apparatus set up as herein explained the only help that a player needs in practicing is someone to return the ball to him, and he can readily change the distance from the simulated goal cross bar, and do so accurately, by means of the goal marker D. Thus, the goal marker D serves the dual purpose of acting as a goal marker, of variable goal bar length, as well as a member to measure the distance for attempting extra points.

In actual practice our invention has proved to be extremely practical and satisfactory. As stated, it enables a player, in limited room and with relatively inexpensive equipment to practice his kicking game and to perfect it.

While we have shown our invention in but one form, it will be obvious to those skilled in the art that it is not so limited, but is susceptible of various other changes and modifications without departing from the spirit thereof, and we desire, therefore, that only such limitations shall be placed thereupon as are specifically set forth in the appended claims.

What we claim is:

1. In apparatus for practice kicking of football goals,

(a) A height marker means construction to be readily moved from one area to another area of a football field and to be supported upright on the ground in front of a football held in generally upright position and at a normal kicking distance from the football,

(b) a goal marker means equal in length to the distance between standard goal posts and so constructed that it may be laid upon the ground at substantially right angles to the desired trajectory of the ball as viewed in plan and at a distance from the ball to be kicked representing the length of the goal attempt, and

(c) said height marker means being of such height that the ball when kicked thereover follows a trajectory which would be above the outstretced arms of the players of an opposing onrushing team.

2. Apparatus as defined in claim **1** in which the goal marker means is provided with adjustable elements slideable therealong and which are adapted to be moved selectively to positions representing the distance between various goal posts.

3. Apparatus as defined in claim **1** including a releasable element supported on the ground for holding the ball in kicking position and in which there is a marker member attached to said releasable element by means of which the ball may be placed outwardly of the height marker means at a distance which represents the closest line of advance to the ball which an onrushing team can reach before preventing the ball from passing through the goal if kicked over said height marker means.

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