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PLAYING FIELD AND APPARATUS FOR RACING GAME

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FIG. 1

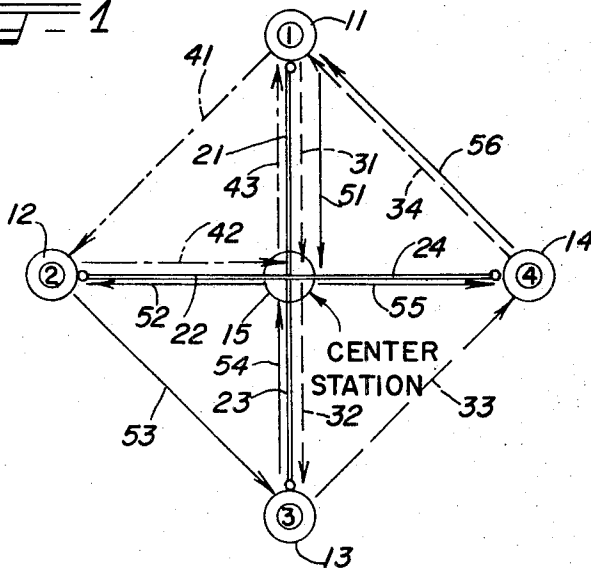


FIG. 2

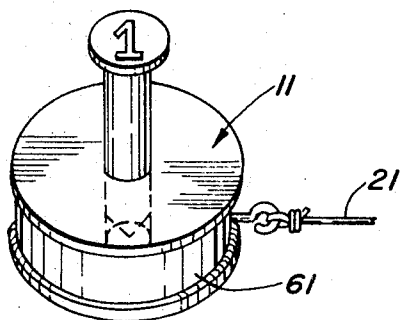


FIG. 5

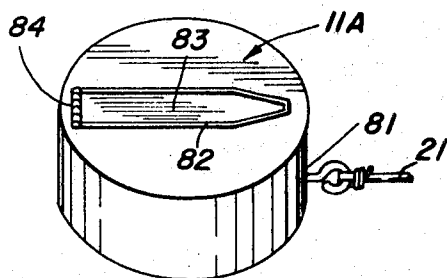


FIG. 3

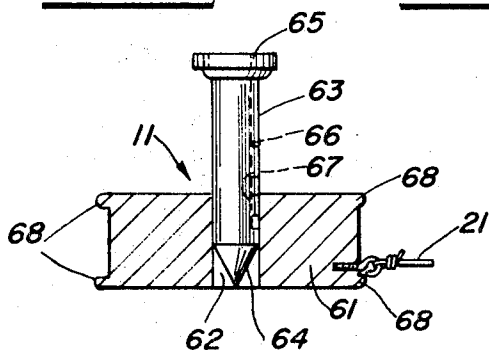
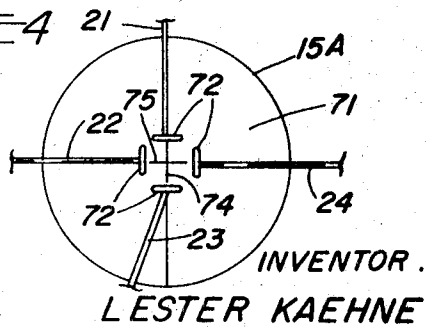


FIG. 4



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PLAYING FIELD AND APPARATUS FOR RACING GAME

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5 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A playing field game apparatus for a racing game including four individual station markers or bases each connected to a central location by an elongated flexible connector to define a playing field when the bases are spaced outwardly from the central location by the full lengths of the connectors and approximately equally spaced from each other.

In one form, the players operate in pairs. One player of the pair tosses the ball from a first base to the other player of the pair at the central location. Then the one player hops to the second base and receives the tossed ball. Then the other player hops to the third base and receives the tossed ball, etc. The first pair to complete the cycle wins.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In many instances, it is desirable to have available an active, interesting outdoor game in which the number of participants can vary and which provides substantial interest both for the players and for spectators. Many games require a rather large number of players for efficient play, as in the case of baseball. Others require accurately defined playing surfaces or other special, expensive equipment (e.g. tennis, basketball) as well as imposing limitations on the number of participants. Indeed, almost any outdoor game is likely to entail special field preparations in order to avoid controversies as to actions taking place inbounds and out-of-bounds and otherwise varying from the game requirements.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The playing field game apparatus of the present invention affords an interesting and potentially highly exciting game that may be played by a varying number of couples. It provides the excitement of teamwork in a context that permits substantial variations in the number of participants, with considerable interest for spectators as well as those playing the game.

The playing field game apparatus of the invention, when appropriately aligned upon virtually any available playing surface, affords an accurate layout for the playing field without requiring separate measurements and with no need for auxiliary apparatus to achieve the desired accuracy. Nevertheless, the playing field apparatus can be stored compactly when not in use and can be taken up or laid out in a matter of minutes. The game can be played upon a grass surface or upon a hard surface such as macadam with no change in the apparatus or in the basic game requirements.

A playing field game apparatus, in accordance with the present invention, for use in a racing game, comprises a plurality of individual station markers and a corresponding plurality of elongated flexible connectors, each connecting a respective one of the station markers to a central location. The game apparatus defines a playing field in which the markers are bases spaced outwardly from the aforesaid central location by the full lengths of the connectors and spaced by approximately equal distances from each other.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

FIG. 1 is a plan view of a playing field game apparatus constructed in accordance with one embodiment of the invention, laid out for playing the game, with explanatory markings to indicate game actions;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of one station marker incorporated in the playing field game apparatus;

FIG. 3 is a sectional elevation view of the station marker of FIG. 2;

FIG. 4 is a plan view of a central station marker for use in one embodiment of the invention; and

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of another embodiment of a station marker that can be used in the game apparatus of the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The playing field game apparatus illustrated in FIG. 1, comprising one embodiment of the present invention, includes a plurality of individual station markers or bases. In this instance, there are four station markers 11, 12, 13 and 14. Each of the station markers is distinctively encoded to identify that marker as constituting a particular base for the racing game that is played with the game apparatus. Thus, markers 11, 12, 13 and 14 each carry a prominent indicator of their position in the game as bases one, two, three and four, respectively.

The playing field game apparatus of FIG. 1 further includes a plurality of elongated flexible connectors 21, 22, 23 and 24 individually connected to respective ones of the station markers 11, 12, 13 and 14. That is, connector 21 is affixed at one end to base 11, connector 22 is affixed to base 12, and so on. The four flexible connectors intersect at a central station 15. In the illustrated apparatus, central station 15 is a separate station marker, generally similar to the peripheral station markers 11-14, as described more fully in connection with FIG. 4. However, the central location for the intersection of the flexible connectors need not comprise a separate station marker. If desired, connectors 22 and 24 can constitute a single connector element and connectors 21 and 23 may constitute another unitary connector element with the two connector elements marked at their centers to identify the center station 15 at which they should intersect.

The basic game for which the game apparatus of FIG. 1 is intended may be played by two, three, or four couples. At the start, one couple is located at each of the stations 11, 12, 13 and 14 and each couple is provided with a ball. The ball is preferably similar in size and characteristics to a soccer ball or volley ball. Furthermore, the individual balls should be distinctively marked so that each couple will know which ball is theirs in the event of confusion during the course of the game, as may sometimes occur.

The game is basically a race; all pairs start simultaneously and the first couple to complete the race wins. At the start of the game one player in each couple hops to the center station 15 at the middle of the playing field defined by the bases 11-14. The remaining member of the same couple then stoops over and throws the ball between his legs to the partner that has hopped to the middle station, the throw being like that used by a center on a football team. If the player at the center station fails to catch the ball or drops it, he must hop to retrieve the ball and then hop back to the center position. This condition applies throughout the game, whenever a player drops the ball or fails to catch it.

Meanwhile, the partner who remained at the starting station hops to the next numbered station, proceeding in a counterclockwise direction. When the second partner reaches the adjacent station the first player, the one in

the middle, throws the ball to him in the same manner as described above. The first player then hops from the center station to the next peripheral station, again taken counterclockwise from the station that his partner has just reached. The ball is then thrown diagonally from the second player to the first player, the throw again being made between the legs from a stooped position. The trailing or second player then hops to the center station 15 and the ball is thrown to him in the same manner.

This procedure is followed continuously until one of the players reaches the starting position. The final movement in the game is performed by the other player in the pair hopping back to the starting base for that pair, which signifies completion of the race on the part of that couple. The first pair to complete the cycle wins.

To assist in understanding the game procedure more fully, the paths of movement of one couple, starting at base 11, have been illustrated in FIG. 1, together with the sequential movements required for the ball used by that couple in playing the game. The movements of the first player in the pair are indicated by the dash lines 31-34. The movements of the second member of the same couple are indicated by the phantom lines 41-43. The throwing movements of the ball are indicated by the solid lines 51-56.

For the couple starting at base 11, therefore, the first movement is the hopping movement of the first player along path 31 from base 11 to center station 15. The ball is then "centered" or thrown by the second player along the path indicated by line 51. Having thrown the ball, the second player hops to station marker 12 along line 41 to be in position to receive the ball thrown to him from the center station along line 52.

When the first partner has completed the throw (path 52) to base 12, he hops along path 32 to station marker 13 to receive the next throw along line 53. When that throw has been completed, the second player hops to center station 15, along line 42, to receive the next throw, which follows line 54. The first partner, having completed the throw along line 54, hops to station 14 along line 33 and is ready to receive the next throw along line 55.

The second player, having made the throw along line 55, hops back to starting station 11 along line 43. When he reaches that station, he receives the last throw along path 56. The first player, having completed the throw along line 56, hops back to station 11 along line 34 to complete the race for his pair.

The game as described above is a relatively short version; modifications in the play of the game can be made to extend it into a longer race. For example, the second player in the pair, in the specific example shown by the path lines in FIG. 1, can be required to proceed from the center station 15 to station 13 instead of returning directly from the center station to starting station 11 along path 43. This makes it possible to increase the number of player and ball movements without changing the general pattern of the game. Other changes can be made as desired to extend the game length, as long as all players are instructed in advance as to the sequence of movements and throws that they must perform.

FIGS. 2 and 3 illustrate one construction that may be employed for the individual station markers such as the base 11. As shown therein, station marker 11 includes a relatively large and preferably rather heavy base element 61 which may be formed of metal. Base element 61 has sufficient weight so that, if placed upon a hard surface, it tends to remain in place and affords a good anchor for connector element 21. Base 61 is provided with a central aperture 62 in which a spike 63 is slidably mounted. Spike 63 has a pointed lower end 64 and a cap 65.

Preferably, spike 63 is captively mounted on base 61. For example, this can be accomplished by forming a key-

way 66 longitudinally of the spike with a key 67 on base 61 engaging in keyway 66. The keyway terminates short of the pointed end 64 of the spike so that the spike cannot be lifted out of aperture 62. Cap 65, on the other hand, prevents the spike from sliding out through the bottom portion of aperture 62. Cap 65 may be threaded onto or otherwise appropriately fastened to spike 63.

As noted above, when the game apparatus is laid out on a hard surface, the weight of base 61 is the principal factor in holding station marker 11 in place. When the game is played on a grass surface or other ground surface, it is anchored in place by means of spike 63. The spike may be driven into the ground simply by pressure on cap 65 applied by the foot of the person laying out the game apparatus.

The spike construction for the individual station markers, though advantageous in many uses, may be omitted if desired. A station marker like a baseball base can be used instead.

The individual connectors such as connector 21 may be formed from a relatively strong but lightweight metal wire. Ordinary wire of the kind used for electrical work can be employed, but less expensive wire is equally appropriate. On the other hand, a small rope may be utilized, since some minor stretching of the connectors is not critically important to the play of the game.

Where a separate station marker is to be used at central station 15, the construction 15A shown in FIG. 4 may be adopted. The center station marker 15A includes a relatively heavy base 71 with four eyelets or similar mounting elements 72 mounted therein at equally spaced intervals about the center of the station marker. The individual connector elements 21, 22, 23 and 24 are affixed to the mounting member 72. The central station marker 15A is also provided with appropriate alignment indicia comprising intersecting lines 74 and 75 to facilitate alignment of the connectors 21-24 in a manner that will assure accurate and consistent layout of the playing field. In FIG. 4, the one connector element 23 is shown out of line, the misalignment being readily apparent because the connector does not coincide with the indicator line 74.

FIG. 5 illustrates an alternate construction 11A for the station markers. Station marker 11A comprises a relatively heavy base 81 to which the connector element 21 is secured. In FIG. 5, the bottom of base 81 is shown to include a recess 82 in which a spike 83 is retractibly mounted. Spike 83 is hinged to base 81 by an appropriate hinge structure 84. Station marker 11A is used in the same manner as the marker construction 11 of FIGS. 2 and 3, the spike 83 being employed for anchoring of the station marker when used on a grass or other ground surface.

It should be understood that FIG. 1 is not drawn to scale and that the station markers are substantially smaller in size, relative to the spacing between them, than the arrangement illustrated in the drawing. To lay out the playing field apparatus, it is a simple matter to locate the center station 15 and to stretch individual connectors 21-24 outwardly of the center station in equally spaced array to locate the bases or station markers 11-14. By the same token, when the game has been completed, the complete playing field apparatus can be compactly stored against future need. To this end, the bases of the station markers can be provided with appropriate flanges, such as the flanges 68 on base 11 (FIGS. 2, 3). In this construction, each station marker serves also as a reel for storing its associated connector element.

I claim:

1. A readily portable playing field game apparatus for a racing game comprising:

a plurality of individual portable station markers, each of a size and configuration to afford a foot base for a racing game, and each distinctively encoded to identify the marker as a particular base for a racing game;

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and a corresponding plurality of elongated, flexible connectors, each attached to a respective one of said station markers, and connecting said station markers to a central location;

said apparatus, when spread out, defining a playing field containing a multiplicity of racing paths between said markers and between each marker and said central location in which the markers are spaced outwardly from said central location by the lengths of said connectors and spaced by given distances from each other, said connectors resting on the surface of the playing field when the game apparatus is disposed for play.

2. A playing field game apparatus according to Claim 1 in which each station marker includes a retractable anchor spike for anchoring the marker in the ground to afford a stable base for contact during racing from marker to marker.

3. A playing field game apparatus according to claim 1 and further comprising a central station marker corresponding in construction to the individual station markers but connected to each of said flexible connectors to afford an anchor for the central location of the playing field;

said central station marker being provided with alignment indicia indicating the correct alignment for all of the flexible connectors for accurate layout of the playing field.

4. A readily portable playing field game apparatus for a racing game comprising:

a plurality of individual portable station markers, each of a size and configuration to afford a foot base for a racing game;

a corresponding plurality of elongated, flexible connectors, each attached to a respective one of said station markers, and connecting said station markers to a central location;

said apparatus, when spread out, defining a playing field containing a multiplicity of racing paths between said markers and between each marker and said central location in which the markers are spaced outwardly from said central location by the lengths of said connectors and spaced by given distances from each other, said connectors resting on the surface of the playing field when the game apparatus is disposed for play;

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and at least two balls of distinctively different appearance for use by competitive teams in performance of the racing game.

5. A readily portable playing field game apparatus for racing game comprising:

a plurality of individual portable station markers, each of a size and configuration to afford a foot base for a racing game;

and a corresponding plurality of elongated, flexible connectors, each attached to a respective one of said station markers, for connecting said station markers to a central location;

said apparatus, when spread out, defining a playing field containing a multiplicity of racing paths between said markers and between each marker and said central location in which the markers are spaced outwardly from said central location by the lengths of said connectors and spaced by given distances from each other, said connectors resting on the surface of the playing field when the game apparatus is disposed for play;

each station marker being provided with external flange elements so that the station marker affords a reel for storage of its associated flexible connector.

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U.S. Cl. X.R.

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