Sept. 5, 1950 J. J. BRAUND 2,521,500

SIMULATED BASEBALL GAME

Filed May 12, 1947 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

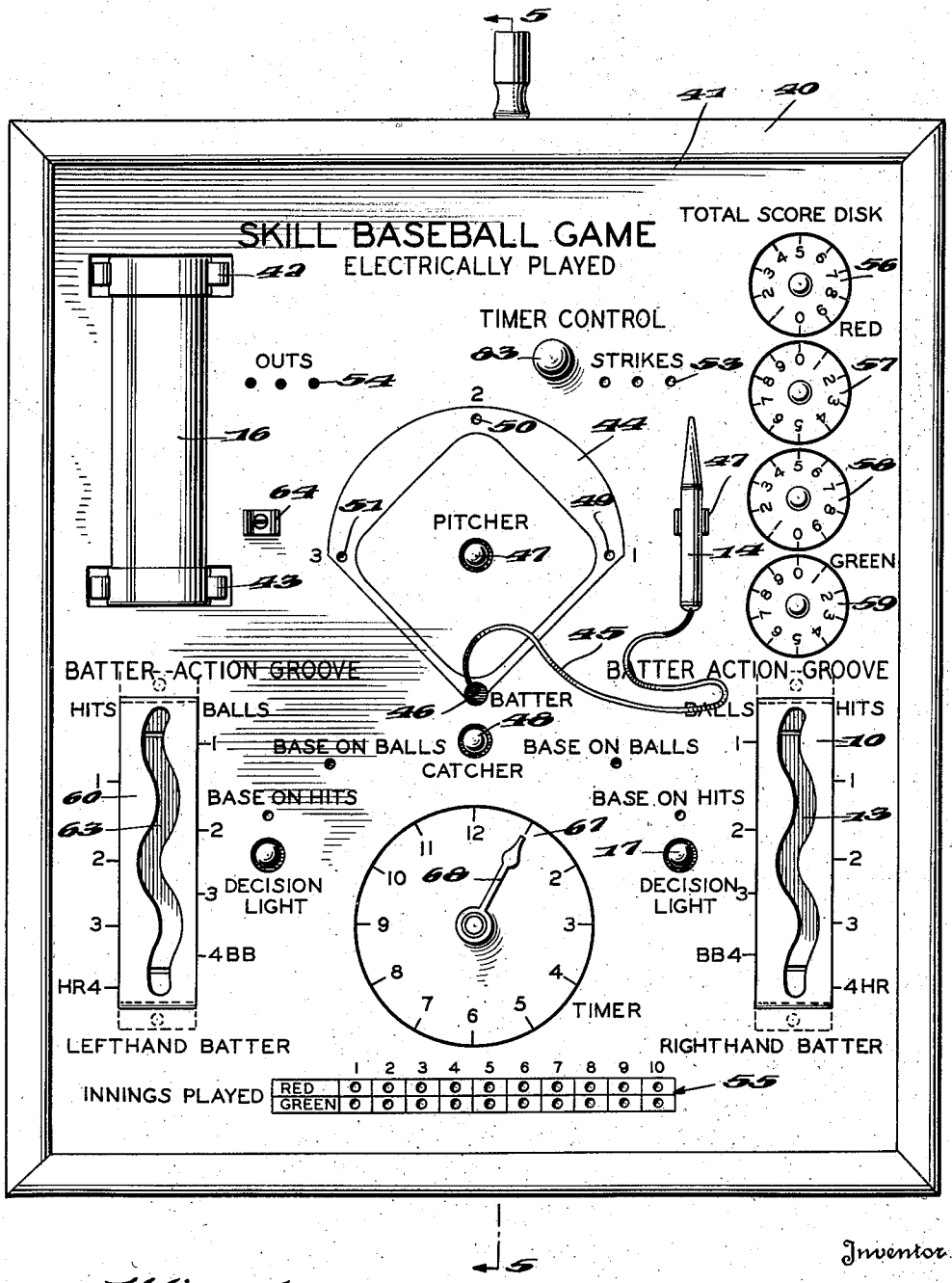


Fig. 1.

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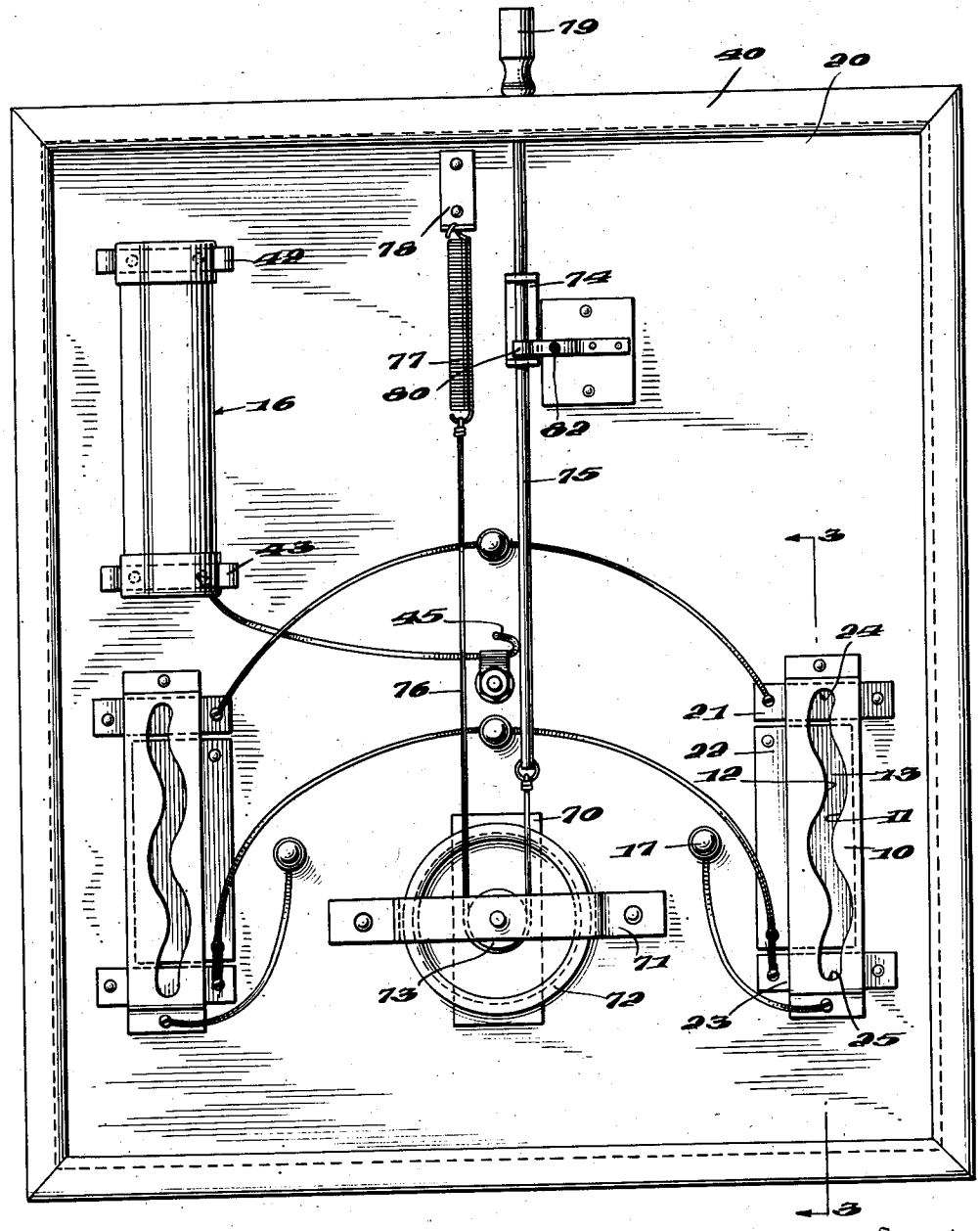


Fig. 2.

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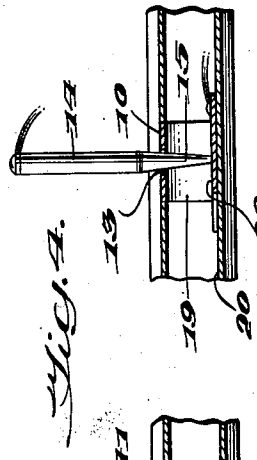


Fig. 4.

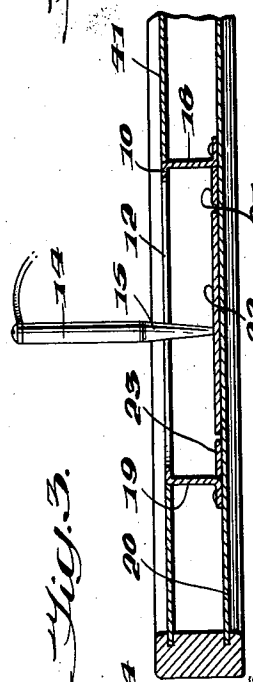


Fig. 3.

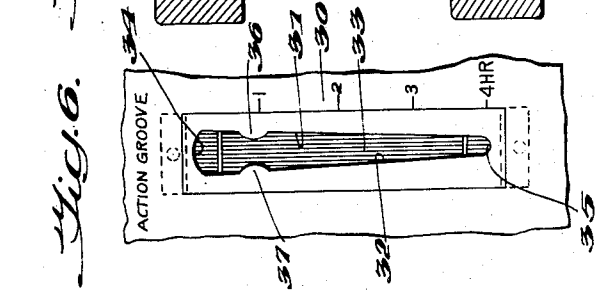


Fig. 6.

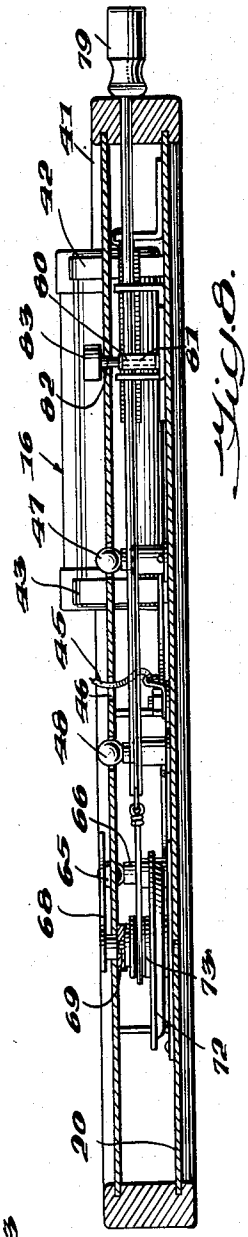


Fig. 5.

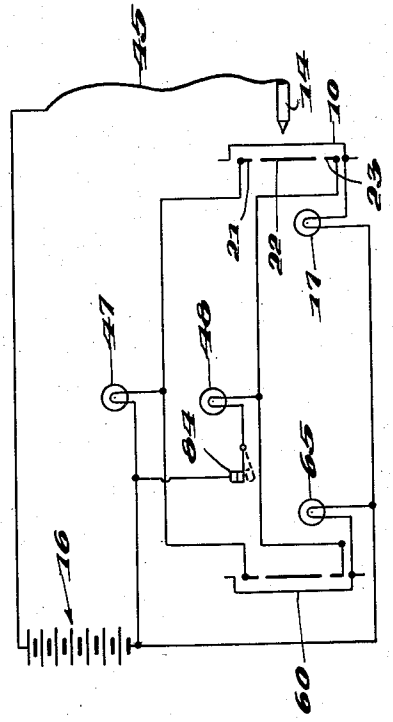


Fig. 8.

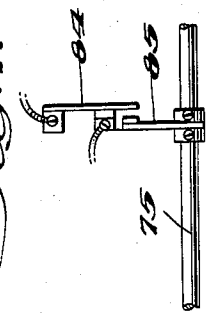


Fig. 7.



Fig. 9.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,521,500

SIMULATED BASEBALL GAME

John J. Braund, Washington, D. C.

Application May 12, 1947, Serial No. 747,448

9 Claims. (Cl. 273—88)

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This invention relates to games of skill. In its broader aspect, the invention is directed to a novel game wherein a playing element is manually guided along a course of somewhat greater width than the playing element with the object of preventing the playing element from touching boundaries which define the opposite sides of the course.

Since "a touch" may not be discernible readily to the eye it is preferred to construct the game in an electric form so that "a touch" will be electrically registered, as by an electric light or other electrically operated signal.

Again, since it is easier to avoid "a touch" by guiding the playing element along the course slowly, it is further proposed, as an auxiliary feature of the invention, to employ a timer which will fix the playing time for traversing the course. A registering device may be employed in conjunction with the timer which will indicate whether or not the course has been traversed within the allotted playing time.

While an interesting game of skill may be provided incorporating only the features above described, it is further proposed to employ such features as the basic unit with additional features for the playing of known games. The invention is well adapted to and includes a baseball game of skill as hereafter more fully pointed out. It is also adapted for other games of sport such as football, basketball, etc. A plurality of parallel courses may be provided for simulated races. In fact, the adaptations of the basic game unit are almost limitless.

The invention will be more fully understood by reference to the baseball game embodiment thereof illustrated in the accompanying drawings hereafter to be described.

In such drawings:

Fig. 1 is a top plan view of a baseball game according to the invention;

Fig. 2 is a plan view corresponding to Fig. 1 with the playing board and certain other parts removed to show interior construction;

Fig. 3 is a fragmentary sectional elevation of one of the basic game units and taken on line 3—3 of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is a fragmentary transfer section taken at right angles to Fig. 3;

Fig. 5 is a longitudinal section taken on line 5—5 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 6 is a top plan view of a modified construction for the course of the basic game unit;

Fig. 7 is a top plan view of a switch device constituting an auxiliary feature of the invention;

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Fig. 8 is a wiring diagram for the complete game and incorporating the switch of Fig. 7; and

Fig. 9 is an elevation of a playing pin employed for scoring and other purposes in connection with the invention.

The course to be traversed is provided by a member 10 having an elongated slot 13 defined by opposite boundaries on side walls 11 and 12. The course is preferably of hazardous character to make it more difficult to traverse. This is accomplished in the present form by making the slot or channel 13 of sinuous character.

The playing element designed to be manually guided along the course provided by slot 13 is most conveniently constructed as an elongated stylus-like element 14 which in portion 15 at the level of member 10 is only slightly narrower than the width of the slot or channel 13.

In order that "a touch" of member 14 against sides 11 or 12 of slot 13 may be known definitely, sides 11 and 12 are made electrically conductive and playing element 14, or at least the portion of surface 15 in the plane of member 10, is made electrically conductive. In the form shown, but not necessarily, the slotted member 10 is made of aluminum or any other suitable metal and playing element 14 is composed of a tapered steel or brass rod which may or may not incorporate an insulating sheath. Member 10 which incorporates the channel, playing element 14 and a dry cell battery 16 are located in a series circuit with an electric signal lamp 17 shown in Figs. 2 and 8. When playing element 14 contacts either of the walls 11 and 12 of the channel member 10 the circuit is closed to energize lamp 17. As long as element 14 is guided through the channel without contact with the side walls, the circuit remains open.

In order that accidental tilting of element 14 as well as lateral bodily shifting thereof off a true course through channel 13 may result in touching of the playing element surface 15 against one or the other sides 11 and 12 defining the channel, member 10 can be elevated, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4, supported in spaced relation to baseboard 20 by legs 18 and 19, here shown as integral with member 10 and suitably secured to board 20. With such arrangement, playing element 14 projects below member 10. The lower end thereof will slide along a supporting surface which is here constituted, for reasons hereafter to be explained, by a series of longitudinally adjoining but slightly spaced elec-

trically conductive plates 21, 22 and 23. While not essential, portion 15 of playing element 14 is preferably tapered so that its diameter is slightly smaller than the width of channel 13 at the plane of member 10 and so that the lower end thereof constitutes a blunt point adapted to slide along plates 21, 22 and 23 without appreciable friction. It will be evident that if element 14 with its lower end in engagement with one of the supporting plates is accidentally tilted even slightly in a generally lateral direction, it will contact one or the other of sidewalls 11 and 12. Combined tilting and bodily shifting of element 14 will readily cause surface 15 to contact one of the sidewalls of the channel, and in conjunction with the circuitous character of channel 13 makes it quite difficult for the player to manually guide element 14 from the starting end 24 to the finish end 25 of the channel without "a touch." Thus the construction so far described provides a real game of skill for an experienced player as well as a novice.

While the sinuous channel 13 in member 10 provides a very satisfactory type of course which will tax the skill of a player, it will be understood that the direction and width, as well as the length of the course may be varied widely within the intent of the invention. Also, the course may be of different character at different portions of its lengths and local hazards may be placed at any desired point to make it more difficult for the player to traverse one portion of the course than another. For example, in the embodiment of Fig. 6, member 30 is formed with an elongated slot or channel 33 defined by opposite electrically conductive sides 31 and 32 which is made somewhat wide at the starting end 34 and gradually converges to a narrow width at finish end 35, just enough wider than the coacting surface of member 14 to avoid "a touch" when element 14 is absolutely perpendicular and located on the medial line of channel 33. Additionally or alternatively, member 30 may be so formed as to provide opposing protuberances such as 36 and 37 to define one or more local narrowed areas in channel 33.

A baseball game according to the invention includes a frame 40 grooved around its inner periphery to support baseboard 20 and a playing board 41 spaced upwardly from board 20 to provide an interior compartment in which are housed various operating parts. As best shown in Fig. 3, board 41 is provided with a cutout to receive channelled member 10 and is positioned substantially in the plane thereof. Board 41 is also provided with a further cutout through which projects battery 16, the mounting of which is obtained by providing spring supporting clips 42 and 43 secured to baseboard 20. Such clips not only mount the battery but provide the electric contacts for the opposite ends thereof. A circular further cutout is provided in playing board 41 through which projects signal lamp 17.

On the surface of playing board 41 is a simulated baseball diamond 44. Playing element 14 represents a baseball bat and flexible electric conductor 45 connecting the same in the electric circuit heretofore described projects through an aperture 46 representing the batter's box and home plate. When playing element 14 is not in use it may be supported in a spring clip 47 at the side of diamond 44.

On the playing board adjacent channel member 10 on the left side at spaced points along channel 13 are numerals 1, 2, 3 and 4 under the heading "Balls." A similar series of numerals are located on the righthand side under the heading "Hits."

Located in the position of the pitcher's box on diamond 44 is a signal lamp 47, as shown in Fig. 8, which connects with plate 21 underlying starting end 24 of channel 13. When playing element 14 is lowered into contact with plate 21 at the start of a play, the pitcher's signal light 47 lights up and as soon as the playing element reaches a position beyond plate 21 the circuit to such lamp is broken. Located at the position of the catcher's box is a further signal light 48 which is in a circuit with plate 23 at the finish end 25 of channel 13. When playing element 14 is moved the complete length of the slot into contact with plate 23 the circuit to lamp 48 is completed to light the lamp.

When a player is at bat he announces initially whether he wishes to try for a one, two or three base hit, or home run, or whether he wishes to try for a base on balls. He then places playing element 14 at starting end 24 of channel 13 in contact with plate 21. Pitcher's lamp 47 lights. He then moves the playing element along the channel towards the point thereof representing his choice. Assuming that the player has selected a base on balls, he must completely traverse channel 13 until playing element 14 contacts plate 23 and lamp 48 lights. If element 14 touches either of the sides of channel 13 lamp 17 lights and represents a strike. If the playing element makes "a touch" more than three times before completing its traverse of the channel, the batter is out. Assuming that the player has decided to try for a particular hit, "a touch" indicated by lamp 17 will put the batter out. As usual, three outs will retire the player and the opposing player takes over. The diamond 44 is provided with a series of apertures 49, 50 and 51 at the various spaces to receive pins 52 shown in Fig. 9 which are moved in accordance with the hit scored by moving playing element 14 in channel 13 as previously explained. A series of apertures 53 to receive pins structurally similar to pins 52 can be employed to register strikes. A further series of apertures 54 to receive further pins can be employed to register outs. At the bottom of playing board 41 is an apertured chart 55 adapted to receive two rows of still further pins which can be employed to show the number of innings played. On the upper portion of board 41 above channelled member 10 are pairs of rotatable discs 56, 57 and 58, 59 for recording the number of runs scored by the sides of each player.

Since the position of channel member 10 is more suitable for a right-handed player an identical member 60 formed with a similar sinuous channel 63 is mounted on backboard 20 and flush with playing board 41 on the left side thereof. The same playing element 14 may be used by the left-handed player in channel 63. While not necessary, a second spring clip 64 for holding playing element 14 when not in use may be provided on the left-hand side of diamond 44. While signal lamp 17 which registers "a touch" when channel member 10 is used may also be wired to operate in conjunction with channelled member 60, it is preferred to provide a second signal lamp 65 to register "a touch" when channelled member 60 is being used. The wiring arrangement therefor will be understood from Fig. 8. As will be understood from Fig. 5, signal lamp 65, as well as the other signal lamps 17, 47 and 48 are mounted in suitable sockets 66 secured to base-

board 20. Such lamps project through apertures in playing board 41, as above explained.

A timing device is provided to fix the period for moving playing element 14 in channelled members 10 and 60 from the starting end to the positions in the channels representing the batting play selected by a player. While various forms of timing mechanism may be employed the embodiment here shown is designed to be economical of manufacture and be so located as to be readily observable by a player as he moves playing element 14 through one of the channelled members 10 and 60. The same includes a time dial 67 located on playing board 41 between channelled members 10 and 60. Coacting with the dial is a pointer 68. As best shown in Figs. 1 and 5, pointer 68 is mounted on a shaft 69 journalled in plate 70 and arbor 71, also, secured to shaft 69 is a flywheel 72 and a pulley 73.

Slidably supported by a bracket 74 lengthwise of backboard 20 and projecting upwardly through an aperture in the upper side of frame 40 is an actuating rod 75 connecting with a cord 76 passing around pulley 73 and secured at its opposite end to a spring 77 anchored to backboard 20 by a bracket 78. Pulling actuating rod 75 outwardly through its handle 79 to its maximum limit as determined by bracket 74 rotates pointer 68 relative to dial 67, causing a complete revolution thereof. When the actuating rod is released, pointer 68 rotates clockwise back to its starting position.

Dial 67 is shown as being calibrated in arbitrary units, although it can be calibrated for seconds or minutes. It is preferred that the timer be of a variable speed type so that it can be set for slow operation for inexperienced players and to fix a shorter period for element 14 to complete its play for experienced players. To this end, an adjustable friction brake 80 is mounted on a support 81 in frictional engagement with rod 75. A shaft 82 is threaded in support 81 and is provided with a shoulder engaging the upper side of brake 80. The upper end of the shaft projects through the playing board 41 and is provided with an adjustment knob 83.

It is intended that the player opposing the player at bat shall operate the timing mechanism. The player at bat places element 14 at the starting end of one of the channelled members 10 and 60, lighting the lamp 47 in the pitcher's box. The opposing player then pulls out actuating rod 75 to wind the timing mechanism. The player at bat calls that he is ready to start, whereupon the opposing player releases rod 75 to start the timing mechanism running.

When the player at bat elects to try for a base on balls or a home run, dispute may be avoided as to whether he reaches the finish end of one of the channel members by providing a spring arm switch 84 in the circuit of lamp 48 in the catcher's box which, as shown in Fig. 7, is designed to be opened by an actuating arm 85 secured to actuating rod 75 of the timing mechanism just as such rod has reached the end of its stroke at the termination of the playing period. If playing element 14 has reached the end of the channel to contact plate 23 of member 10 or the corresponding plate of channeled member 60 within the allotted period lamp 48 will light momentarily before its circuit is broken by the opening of switch 84. If, however, the timing period has expired before playing element 14 has made contact with the plate, lamp 48 will not light.

It will be understood that the invention includes as its primary construction one or more courses defined by boundaries or sides through which manually guided means are moved with the objective of avoiding contact of such means with the boundaries or sides. Such primary construction may or may not be employed in conjunction with the various electric signaling means and the timing means functioning in the manner above explained. The invention further includes the described baseball game employing one or more courses and manually guided means as its primary operating features. For these reasons, and also because the construction of the various parts in the embodiment of the drawing is merely exemplary, the scope of the invention is to be determined in accordance with the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A game including an elongated channel course defined by electrically conductive, opposing spaced boundary walls, electrically conductive bottom means electrically insulated from the boundary walls, a manually movable playing element adapted to be moved along the course with the view of preventing contact of the playing element with the boundary walls, said playing element having an electrically conductive end adapted to make sliding supporting and electric contact with the bottom means and having an electrically conductive intermediate portion narrower than the course adapted to electrically contact the boundary walls, electrically operated signal means adapted to register contact of the intermediate portion of the playing element with the boundary walls and further electrically operated signal means adapted to register contact by said end of the playing element with the bottom means.

2. A game according to claim 1 wherein the bottom means includes separate electrically conductive members electrically insulated from one another and underlying different longitudinal areas of the course, and there are electrically operated signal means adapted to register contact of the end of the playing element with each of the electrically conductive bottom members.

3. A game including an elongated channel course defined by electrically conductive, opposing spaced walls, a manually movable, electrically conductive playing element having a portion narrower than the channel course adapted to be moved through the course with the view of preventing contact thereof with the opposing walls but capable of making contact with said walls, timing means adapted to be started running when the playing element is operatively positioned in one end of the channel course to fix a predetermined period for movement of the playing element to the other end of the course, electric signal means operatively connected to the opposing walls and the playing element adapted to register contact of said walls by the playing element, an electric contact adapted to be contacted by the playing element upon reaching the second end of the course, electric signal means operatively connected to said electric contact and the playing element and adapted to register arrival of the playing element at the second end of the course, and a circuit breaker responsive to the timing means to render said latter signal means inoperative at the end of the time period fixed by the timing means, said electric contact at the second end of the course being accessible to contact by the playing element both when said latter signal means is

capable of operation and when said signal means is rendered inoperative by said circuit breaker.

4. A game including an elongated channel course defined by electrically conductive, opposing spaced walls, a manually movable, electrically conductive playing element having an intermediate portion narrower than the course adapted to be moved through the course with the view of preventing contact of said portion with said walls but capable of contacting said walls, said playing element terminating in an end beyond said intermediate portion, an electric contact located at the bottom of the channel at one end of the course adapted to make contact with said end of the playing element when the playing element is operatively positioned in the course at said end of the course, electrically operated signal means responsive to electric contact of the playing element with said electric contact, a second electric contact located at the bottom of the channel at the second end of the course adapted to make contact with said end of the playing element when the playing element is operatively positioned at the second end of the course, electrically operated signal means responsive to electric contact of the playing element with said second electric contact, and electrically operative signal means responsive to electric contact of the playing element with the walls of the course.

5. A baseball game including a batter action device comprising an elongated channel course defined by electrically conductive, opposing spaced walls and having indicia arranged at intervals along the course denoting different favorable actions by a batter, an electrically conductive batter action element having a portion narrower than the channel course adapted to be moved manually therethrough from one end thereof with the view of reaching a position opposite a preselected favorable batter action indicia without contact with the course walls but capable of making electrical contact with said walls, and electric signal means denoting adverse batter action electrically interconnected with the course walls and the playing element to operate upon electric contact of the playing element with the course walls.

6. A baseball game including a supporting frame, a playing board containing the representation of a baseball diamond mounted in the upper portion of the frame, a batter action device set in the playing board outwardly of the diamond and supported by the frame, said device comprising a metallic member formed with an elongated slot defined by electrically conductive, opposing walls, indicia located at intervals along said slot denoting different favorable batter actions, an electrically conductive batter action element having a portion narrower than the slot and adapted to be moved manually therethrough with the view of preventing contact thereof with the walls of the slot, an electric signal lamp for registering adverse batter action set in the playing board and supported by the frame, said signal lamp being interconnected by an electric circuit with the slotted member and batter action element to register electric contact of said element with the walls of the slotted member, said electric circuit including a portion located beneath the playing board interconnecting said signal lamp and slotted member and including a further portion comprising a long flexible electric cord extending outward of the board through an aperture at home plate of the diamond and connecting with the batter action element.

7. A baseball game including a supporting frame, a playing board containing the representation of a baseball diamond mounted in the upper portion of the frame, a batter action device set in the playing board outwardly of the diamond and supported by the frame, said device comprising a metallic member formed with an elongated slot defined by electrically conductive, opposing walls, indicia located at intervals along said slot denoting different favorable batter actions, an electrically conductive batter action element having a portion narrower than the slot and adapted to be moved manually therethrough with the view of preventing contact thereof with the walls of the slot, an electric signal lamp for registering adverse batter action set in the playing board and supported by the frame, said signal lamp being interconnected by an electric circuit with the slotted member and batter action element to register electric contact of said element with the walls of the slotted member, an electric contact adapted to be electrically contacted by the batter action element when operatively positioned at the starting end of the action slot, and a second signal lamp set in the playing board at the pitcher's box of the diamond and supported by the frame, said second signal lamp being interconnected by an electric circuit with the batter action element and said electric contact to register when said element and contact are in electric contact.

8. A baseball game including a supporting frame, a playing board containing the representation of a baseball diamond mounted in the upper portion of the frame, a batter action device set in the playing board outwardly of the diamond and supported by the frame, said device comprising a metallic member formed with an elongated slot defined by electrically conductive, opposing walls, indicia located at intervals along said slot denoting different favorable batter actions, an electrically conductive batter action element having a portion narrower than the slot and adapted to be moved manually therethrough with the view of preventing contact thereof with the walls of the slot, an electric signal lamp for registering adverse batter action set in the playing board and supported by the frame, said signal lamp being interconnected by an electric circuit with the slotted member and batter action element to register electric contact of said element with the walls of the slotted member, a first electric contact adapted to be electrically contacted by the batter action element when operatively positioned at the starting end of the action slot, a second signal lamp set in the playing board at the pitcher's box of the diamond and supported by the frame, said second signal lamp being interconnected by an electric circuit with the batter action element and said first electric contact to register when said element and said first contact are in electric contact, a second electric contact adapted to be electrically contacted by the batter action element upon said element reaching the finish end of the action slot, and a third signal lamp set in the playing board at the catcher's box of the diamond and supported by the frame, said third signal lamp being interconnected by an electric circuit with the batter action element and said second electric contact to register when said element and said second contact are in electric contact.

9. A game including a flat rectangular sup-

porting frame, an elongated course defined by opposing spaced boundary means, said course being mounted in the frame between opposite ends of the frame and extending in parallel relation to the side of the frame, a manually movable playing element having a portion narrower than the course and adapted to be moved along the course with the view of preventing touching of the boundary means by said portion of the playing element, dial and pointer type mechanical timing means mounted in the frame in spaced relation to the course and with its dial parallel to the frame and adapted to be started running when the playing element is operatively positioned at one end of the course and operating independently of the playing element to fix the period for movement of the playing element to the other end of the course, means for starting running of the timing means located adjacent one of said ends of the frame, signal means operative to record each contact of the boundary means by the playing element during movement along the course mounted in the frame adjacent the dial of the timing means and signal means having an energizing contact located in the bottom of the course at the starting end of the course adapted to be contacted by the playing

element when inserted in the course preparatory to movement to energize the signal means to indicate the time for starting running of the timing means.

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