

[54] **TETHER BALL HOLDER**

3,351,343 11/1967 Papp.....273/58 C

[76] Inventor: **Kenneth R. Minchin**, 1118 W. Coronado Road, Phoenix, Ariz. 85007

Primary Examiner—George J. Marlo
Attorney—Donald A. Kettlestrings

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

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Related U.S. Application Data

[63] Continuation-in-part of Ser. No. 144,984, May 19, 1971.

[52] U.S. Cl.....273/58 C, 119/96, 272/78

[51] Int. Cl.....A63b 43/02

[58] Field of Search.....273/58 C, 26 E, 200, 95 A, 273/196, 197, 198; 119/106, 109, 96; 46/87, 88, 89; 272/77, 78

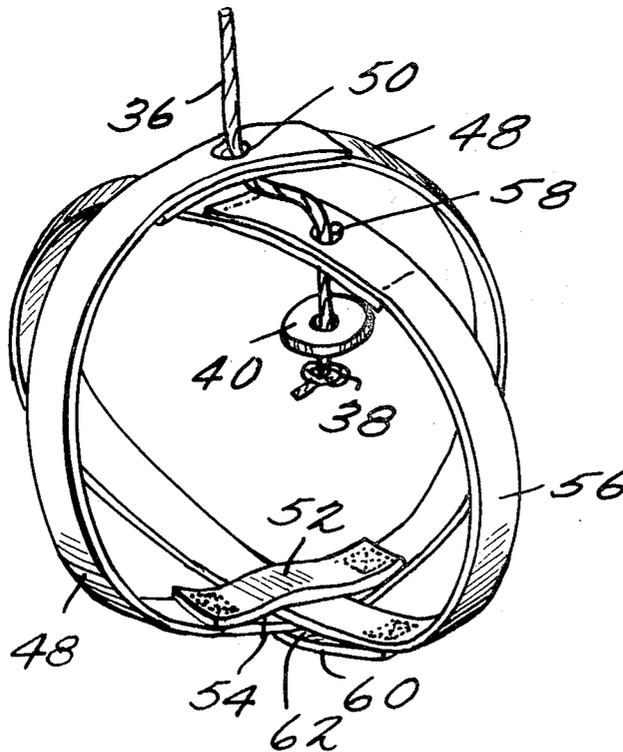
A tether ball holder or harness for anchoring a tether to a ball. Straps are provided which are tightly fitted around surface portions of the ball, and an elongated tethering cord is passed through holes within the straps and is provided with a knot or other enlarged portion at one end of the tethering cord for cooperation with a perforated washer whereby the ball is tightly held by the harness. In one embodiment, each strap is endless and includes an interlocking strip which, in conjunction with the strap, defines an opening through which the other strap slidably extends. Other embodiments involve the use of straps including holes and loops at the ends thereof and a ring plate having an apertured tethering portion which is adapted to be inserted through aligned holes in the straps.

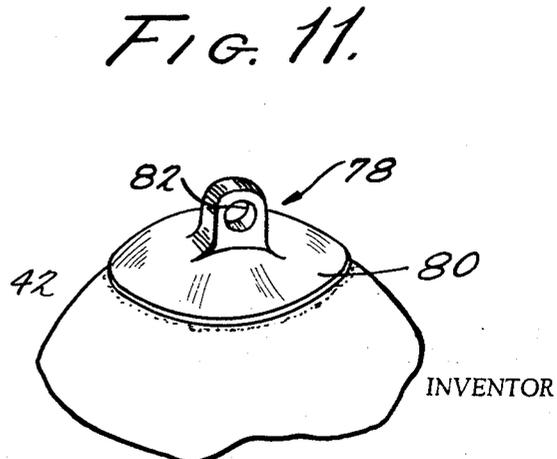
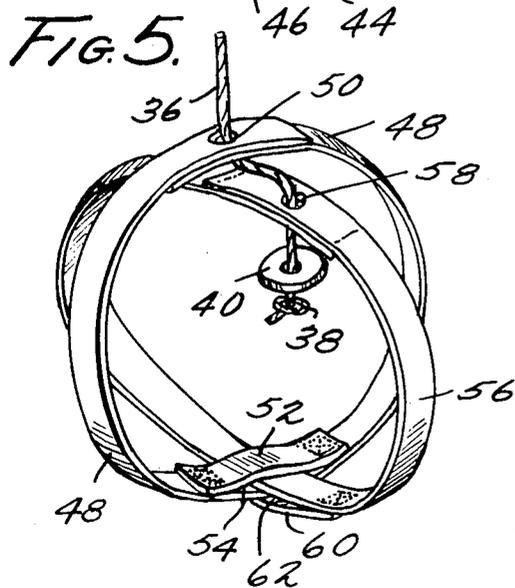
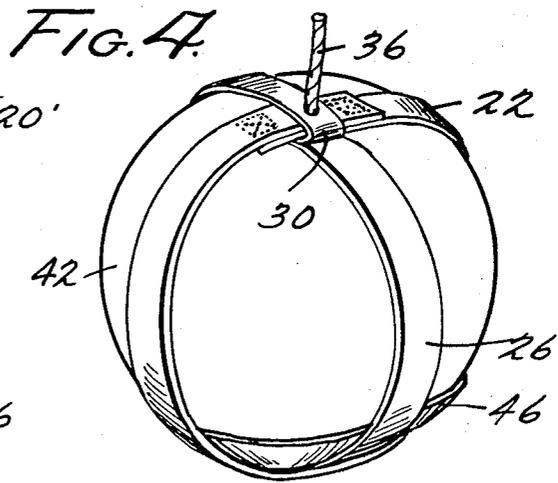
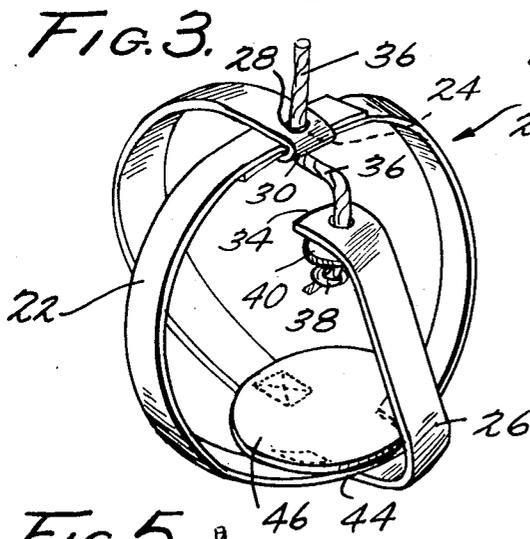
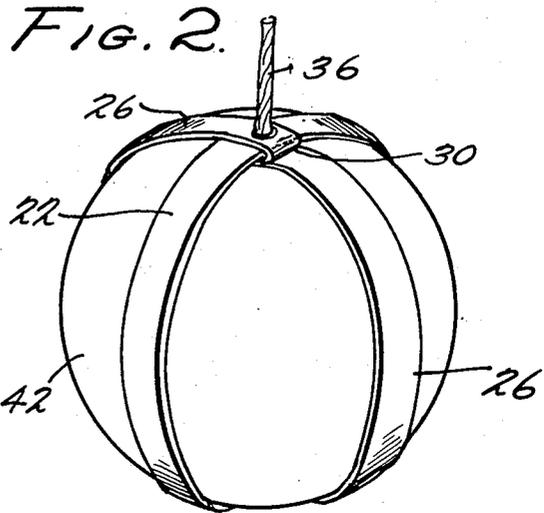
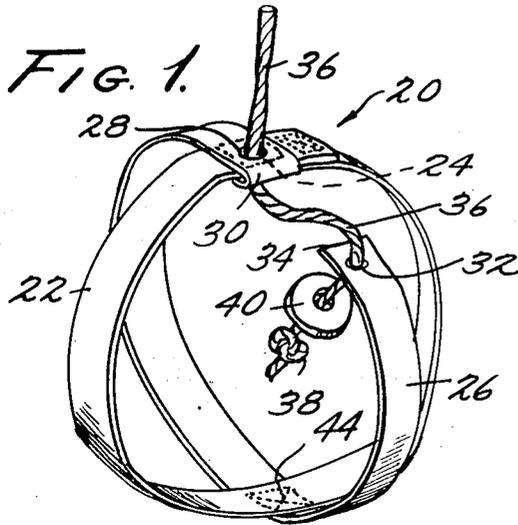
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4 Claims, 13 Drawing Figures





INVENTOR

KENNETH R. MINCHIN

BY *Fleet, Lippley & Jacobson*
ATTORNEYS

FIG. 6.

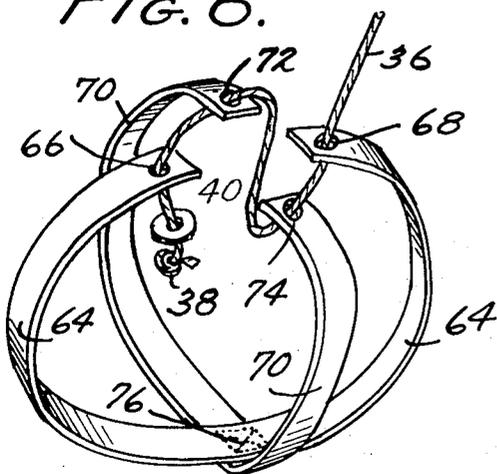


FIG. 7.

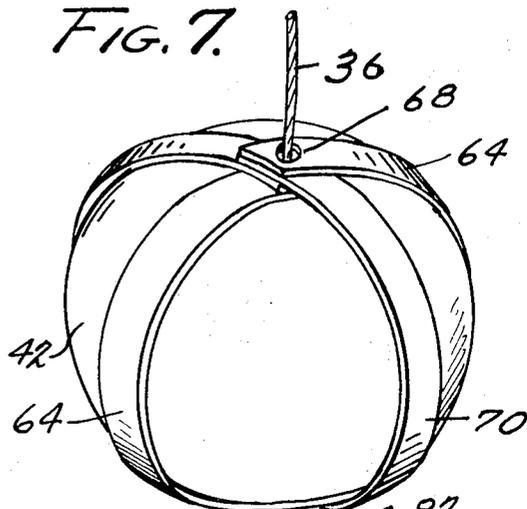


FIG. 8.

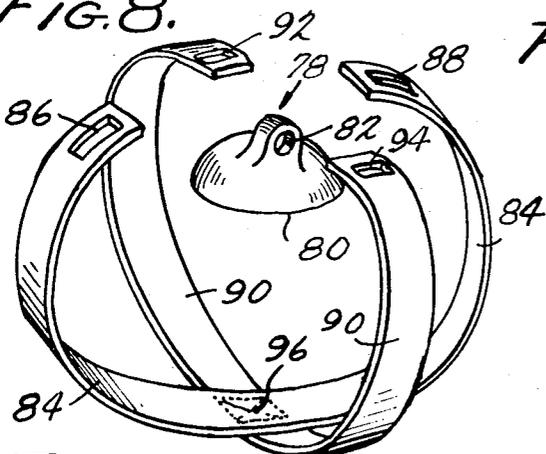


FIG. 9.

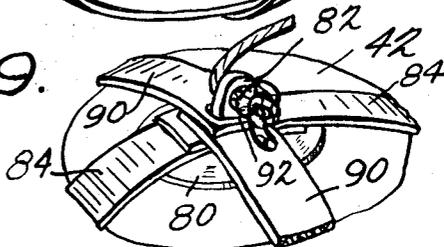


FIG. 12.

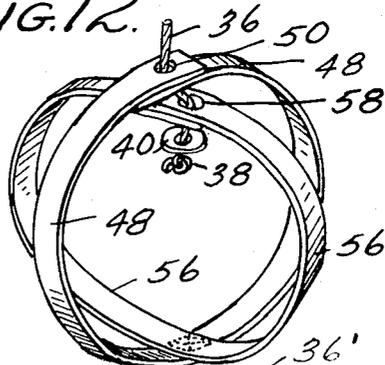


FIG. 10.

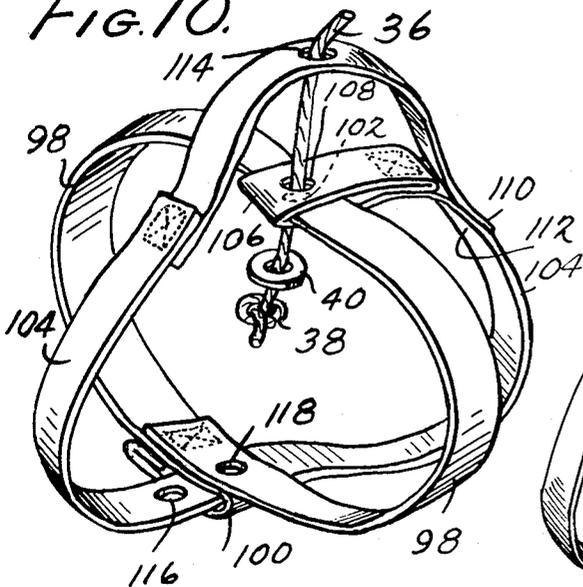
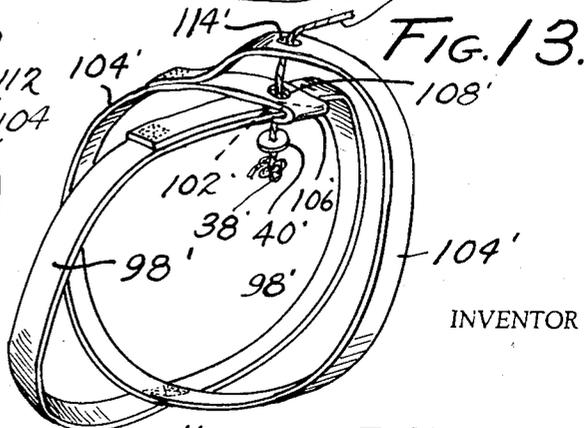


FIG. 13.



INVENTOR

KENNETH F. MINCHIN
 BY *Fleet, Apple & Jacobson*
 ATTORNEYS

TETHER BALL HOLDER

This is a continuation-in-part application of application Ser. No. 144,984, filed May 19, 1971 for Tether Ball.

This invention relates to a tether ball construction, and more particularly to a removable tether ball holder or harness that encompasses and confines the ball.

Tether balls and captive baseballs, golf balls, bouncing and paddle-actuated balls are well-known in the art, and it is commonly known to connect a tethering cord or line to a ball for various purposes. Examples of such well-known tether ball arrangements are described in U. S. Pat. Nos. 2,858,249; 2,941,805; 3,351,343; and 3,397,887.

Although many such tether ball constructions are known, they frequently become damaged after heavy use, and the ball often becomes disconnected from the tether as a result. Throughout the years, it has been found that many of the previous tether ball constructions have become weakened with the use at the point where the tethering cord is attached to the ball.

It is, therefore, an object of the present invention to provide a ball and means on the ball for enabling a tether to be fastened to the ball to provide a strong, durable, long-lasting and uniformly resilient tether ball.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a tether ball holder or harness which, notwithstanding its normally tight fit around the ball, is constructed to readily enable the user to loosen the holder and to remove the holder from the ball.

Additional objects and advantages of the invention will be set forth in part in the description which follows and in part will be obvious from the description, or may be learned by practice of the invention. The objects and advantages are realized and attained by the instrumentalities and combinations particularly pointed out in the appended claims.

To achieve these and other objects, the present invention provides a tether ball holder or harness for snugly engaging the external surface of a tether ball and wherein the harness is adapted for easy removal from the ball when desired. An elongated flexible tethering cord is provided with an enlarged or knotted portion adjacent one end thereof, and the opposite end of the tethering cord is fed through a perforated washer and through holes in the harness whereby a strong and durable tether ball arrangement is provided.

More specifically, one embodiment of the invention provides for a tether ball holder and harness having a first endless strap with a hole therein, a second strap having a first hole therein located adjacent a first end thereof and having a second hole therein located adjacent a second end thereof, the first end of second strap being secured to the first strap with the first hole aligned with the hole in the first strap, a tethering cord slidably positioned through each of the holes and having an enlarged or knotted portion adjacent one end, and a perforated washer positioned on the tethering cord between the enlarged portion of the cord and the straps for enabling the washer to be pulled into contiguous relationship with the second end of the second strap and to hold the harness in position around a tether ball.

Another preferred embodiment of the invention provides a tether ball holder and harness having a first

endless strap with a hole therein, a first interlock strip fastened to the first strap and forming a first opening between the first interlock strip and the first strap, a second endless strap having a hole therein and slidably extending through the first opening, a second interlock strip fastened to the second strap and forming a second opening between the second interlock strip and the second strap, the first strap slidably extending through the second opening, a tethering cord slidably positioned through each of the holes and having an enlarged or knotted portion adjacent one end, and a perforated washer positioned on the tethering cord between the enlarged portion of the cord and the straps for enabling the washer to be pulled into contiguous relationship with the first strap and to hold the harness in position around a tether ball.

An alternative embodiment provides a holder and harness having a first strap with holes adjacent either end thereof, a second strap having holes adjacent either end and fastened at its midpoint to the midpoint of the first strap, a tethering cord slidably positioned through each of the holes and having an enlarged or knotted portion adjacent one end, and a perforated washer positioned on the tethering cord between the enlarged portion of the cord and the straps for enabling the washer to be pulled into contiguous relationship with one of the straps and to hold the harness in position around a tether ball.

Another preferred embodiment provides a tether ball having a ball body with a substantially spherical external surface, a ring plate having a base shaped to conform with a portion of the exterior surface of the ball and having a loop integral with the base for receiving a tether, a first strap having holes adjacent either end thereof and positioned around the ball body with the ring plate loop extending through the holes, a second strap having holes adjacent either end and fastened at its midpoint to the midpoint of the first strap, the ring plate loop extending through the holes in the second strap, and a tether extending through the ring plate loop and through one of the holes in the second strap to provide a strong and durable tether ball.

Another embodiment provides for a tether ball holder and harness having a first endless strap with a loop at a first location on the exterior of the strap and having a tether-receiving hole therein at a location diametrically opposed, with respect to the tether ball, from the loop, a second strap having an end loop slidably receiving the first strap and having tether-receiving holes within the last-mentioned loop, the second strap being slidably located within the loop of the first strap, the second strap having a second end secured to the second strap at a location removed from the end loop to permit easy placement of the tether ball in the harness and easy removal of the ball from the harness, and the second strap having a tether-receiving hole therein at a location closer to the second end than to the end loop, a tethering cord slidably positioned through each of the tether-receiving holes and having an enlarged or knotted portion adjacent one end, and a perforated washer positioned on the tethering cord between the enlarged portion of the cord and the straps.

It should also be understood that wherever a ring plate or tether and washer are used, a cotter pin could

be used in the alternative to which the tether cord could be fastened. Other loop arrangements could also be used wherein the loop is adapted to receive the tether cord and to hold the harness in position around the ball.

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated in and constitute a part of the specification, illustrate the invention and, together with the description, serve to explain the principles of the invention.

IN THE DRAWINGS:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of one embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the embodiment shown in FIG. 1 and illustrating the harness positioned around the tether ball;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of another embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view of the embodiment shown in FIG. 3 and illustrating the harness positioned around the tether ball;

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of another embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of an alternative harness embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 7 is a perspective view of the embodiment shown in FIG. 6 and illustrating the harness surrounding the tether ball;

FIG. 8 is a perspective view of still another embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 9 is a partial perspective view of the embodiment shown in FIG. 8 and illustrating the harness surrounding a tether ball;

FIG. 10 is a perspective view of a further embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 11 is a fragmentary perspective view of another embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 12 is a perspective view of another embodiment of the invention similar to that illustrated in FIG. 5; and

FIG. 13 is a perspective view of an alternative embodiment of one-piece construction.

With reference now to the drawings, wherein like reference characters designate like or corresponding parts throughout the several views, there is shown in FIGS. 1 and 2 a first embodiment of the invention. The holder or harness is generally indicated by the numeral 20, and the harness includes a first endless strap 22 having a hole 24 therein. A second strap 26 is provided, and the second strap has a first hole 28 therein located adjacent a first end 30 of the strap 26 and a second hole 32 therein located adjacent a second end 34 of strap 26. First end 30 is sewn or otherwise secured to first strap 22 with first hole 28 aligned with hole 24 of strap 22. A tethering cord 36 is slidably positioned through each of the holes, and an enlarged portion or knot 38 is provided adjacent one end of the tethering cord. A perforated washer 40 made of metal leather or other durable material is positioned on tethering cord 36 and between knot 38 and first end 30 of strap 26 for enabling the washer to be pulled by the tethering cord into contiguous relationship with second end 34 of strap 26 and to hold the harness in position around a tether ball 42 (FIG. 2).

First strap 22 is preferably fastened to second strap 26 at a location 44 midway between the ends of second

strap 26 and at a location on first strap 22 diametrically opposed, with respect to the tether ball 42, from hole 24 in first strap 22. Straps 22 and 26 are preferably made from nylon, leather or other durable material, and the straps are preferably sewn together at location 44. Of course, it is to be understood that the straps could be fastened together by means other than sewing.

It may be desirable to reinforce the connection of straps 22 and 26 at location 44, since much of the wear occurs at this location, and this embodiment is illustrated in FIGS. 3 and 4. Straps 22 and 26 are connected together at location 44, as in the embodiment of FIGS. 1 and 2, but an additional reinforcing pad 46 is fastened, sewn or otherwise attached to straps 22 and 26 at location 44 to provide additional reinforcement. Pad 46 may be made of any strong and durable material, but various forms of plastic are preferred.

Use of the harness illustrated in FIGS. 1-4 makes it easy for the user to remove the tether ball from the harness and to place the tether ball into the harness, as desired. Prior to positioning tether ball 42 within the harness, the harness is positioned as illustrated in FIG. 1 with second end 34 of strap 26 pulled away from first end 30. This creates the necessary space to permit tether ball 42 to be quickly and easily inserted into the harness.

After the ball is located within the harness, second end 34 of strap 26 is drawn toward first end 30 as tethering cord 36 is pulled in an upward direction. Washer 40 is simultaneously forced against the inside surface of strap 26 adjacent to second end 34 by means of knot 38 as the cord 36 is pulled upwardly. Thus, second end 34 is ultimately pulled beneath first end 30 and holes 24, 28, and 32 are aligned by means of the tethering cord so that the harness is tightened around the ball to be maintained in that position during use of the ball by means of washer 40 and knot 38 acting to hold second end 34 in position beneath first end 30.

Removing ball 42 from the harness is also a simple and rapid procedure. Second end 34 of strap 26 is simply pulled, together with washer 40 and tethering cord 36, away from first end 30 to create a relatively large opening through which the ball can be readily removed.

Another embodiment of the invention is illustrated in FIG. 5 wherein a first endless strap 48 is provided and wherein a hole 50 is located therein. A first interlock strip 52 is sewn or otherwise fastened to first strap 48 to form a first opening 54 between first interlock strip 52 and first endless strap 48.

A second endless strap 56 having a hole 58 therein is slidably positioned through first opening 54, and a second interlock strip 60 is sewn or otherwise fastened to second strap 56 to form a second opening 62 between second interlock strip 60 and second strap 56, through which first strap 48 slidably extends.

A tethering cord 36 is slidably positioned through each of holes 50 and 58, and the cord is provided with an enlarged portion or knot 38 adjacent one end thereof. As in the previous embodiments, a perforated washer 40 is positioned on tethering cord 36 between knot 38 and holes 50 and 58 for enabling the washer to be pulled into contiguous relationship with strap 56 and to hold the harness in position around a tether ball.

The base-interlock formed by straps 48 and 56 in conjunction with interlock strips 52 and 60 not only reinforces the base of the harness to withstand the extra wear normally occurring in the area, but strips 52 and 60 permit straps 48 and 56 to be pivoted or moved relative to one another when the tether ball is being removed from the harness in such a way as to create an opening between the straps large enough to permit the tether ball to easily pass therethrough. This, of course, significantly enhances the ease of removal of the ball when removal is desired, and at the same time, the slidable relationship of straps 48 and 56 created by interlock strips 52 and 60 avoids undue stress on straps 48 and 56 and prevents tearing of the straps even after repeated use.

In operation of the embodiment illustrated in FIG. 5, tethering cord 36 is initially pulled downwardly through holes 50 and 58. Straps 48 and 56 are then pivoted within openings 54 and 62 so that a tether ball can be easily inserted into the harness. Straps 48 and 56 are then pivoted back into position around the ball and tethering cord 36 is pulled upwardly together with knot 38 and washer 40 so that holes 50 and 58 are aligned and so that washer 40 is pulled tightly against the inner surface of strap 56 and adjacent to hole 58. The harness is, thus, tightly fitted around the ball and will remain so until it is desired to remove the ball from the harness.

The embodiment of FIG. 12 is quite similar to that illustrated in FIG. 5 with the exception that straps 48 and 56 are permanently fastened at their lower midpoints and interlock strips 52 and 60 are not used. The operation of the FIG. 12 embodiment is otherwise the same as that of the arrangement of FIG. 5. Strips 52 and 60 could be used in an alternative arrangement (not shown) as permanently sewn protective and reinforcing strips.

Another configuration of the invention is illustrated in FIGS. 6 and 7 wherein the harness includes a first strap 64 having holes 66 and 68 adjacent the ends thereof. A second strap 70 is also provided, and the second strap has holes 72 and 74 adjacent either end. First strap 64 and second strap 70 are sewn or otherwise fastened together at their midpoints 76, and a tethering cord 36 is slidably positioned through each of holes 66, 68, 72, and 74. As in the preceding embodiments, the tethering cord is provided with an enlarged portion or knot 38 adjacent to one end of the cord, and a perforated washer 40 is positioned on the tethering cord between knot 38 and holes 66, 68, 72, and 74 to enable the washer to be pulled into contiguous relationship with one of straps 64 or 70 and to hold the harness in position around the tether ball.

An alternative of this embodiment (not shown) would provide for strap 70, for example, being endless with a hole therethrough and a cotter pin extending through the hole and through holes 66 and 68 of strap 64 to hold the harness together.

In operation of the embodiment shown in FIG. 6 and 7, the harness is first loosened by drawing the tethering cord 36 downwardly through holes 66, 68, 72, and 74, as illustrated in FIG. 6. The ends of straps 64 and 70 are then opened outwardly and tether ball 42 is inserted into the harness. Tethering cord 36 is then pulled upwardly through the holes until washer 40 contacts the

inner surface of strap 64 adjacent to hole 66, as illustrated in FIGS. 6 and 7. Of course, tethering cord 36 could be fed through the holes in any sequence, and washer 40 could be positioned adjacent to any one of the holes.

Removal of the ball from the harness is also a simple procedure. Tethering cord 36 is again drawn downwardly through each of the holes to loosen the ends of straps 64 and 70. The ends of the straps are then opened outwardly and the ball is easily removed.

Another embodiment of the invention is illustrated in FIGS. 8 and 9 wherein a ball body 42 having a substantially spherical external surface is provided and a ring plate 78 is located on the surface of the ball. The ring plate defines a base 80 shaped to conform with a portion of the surface of the ball and also has a loop 82 integral with the base for receiving a tether 36. A first strap 84 having holes 86 and 88 adjacent either end thereof is positioned around ball 42 with ring plate loop 82 extending through each of holes 86 and 88. A second strap 90 having holes 92 and 94 adjacent either end thereof is sewn or otherwise fastened at its midpoint 96 to the midpoint of first strap 84. Ring plate loop 82 also extends through holes 92 and 94, and a tethering cord 36 extends through ring plate loop 82 and through the top most hole 92 or 94.

In assembling the tether ball illustrated in FIGS. 8 and 9, ring plate 78 is first positioned on the outer surface of ball 42. Strap 84 is then positioned around the ball, and loop 82 of the ring plate is passed through holes 86 and 88. Second strap 90 is also positioned around the ball and hole 92 is fitted over loop 82 and, finally, hole 94 is fitted over the loop. Tethering cord 36 is then passed through loop 82 and through hole 94, and a suitable knot is tied in cord 36 to hold the harness in fixed position about the ball.

An additional embodiment of the invention is illustrated in FIG. 10, and the harness of this embodiment comprises a first endless strap 98 having a loop 100 located on the exterior of the strap and having a tether-receiving hole 102 therein at a location diametrically opposed, with respect to the tether ball, from loop 100. A second strap 104 having an end loop 106 therein is also provided, and the end loop is positioned to slidably receive first strap 98. Second strap 104 also has tether-receiving holes 108 within end loop 106 for slidably receiving tethering cord 36, and second strap 104 is slidably located within loop 100 of first strap 98.

Second strap 104 has a second end 110 sewn or otherwise secured to the second strap at a location 112 received from the end loop 106 to permit easy placement of the tether ball into the harness and to permit easy removal of the ball, as desired. The second strap 104 also has a tether-receiving hole 114 therein at a location closer to second end 110 than to end loop 106. Tethering cord 36, as in some of the previous embodiments, is slidably positioned through each of the tether-receiving holes 102, 108, and 114, and the cord has an enlarged portion or knot 38 adjacent one end. A perforated washer 40 is also positioned on tethering cord 36 between knot 38 and end loop 106. Of course, it should be understood that alternative arrangements of this embodiment are also contemplated. For example, end 110 of strap 104 could be affixed to the inner surface at location 112 instead of to the outer surface, as

illustrated. Additional holes, such as 116 in strap 104 and 118 in strap 98 could also be provided adjacent to loop 100, and holes could also be provided in loop 100 to permit tethering cord 36 to be fastened to the harness adjacent to loop 100 instead of adjacent to end loop 106.

In an alternative embodiment of FIG. 10, strap 98 is fixed within loop 106 and strap 104 is fixed within loop 100. In addition, the washer and tether could be replaced by a cotter pin (not shown) extending through holes 102, 108, and 114 to which the tether could be fastened.

In additional embodiment of the invention is illustrated in FIG. 11. This embodiment utilizes a ring plate 78 having a base 80 shaped to conform with a portion of the exterior surface of ball 42 and having a loop 82 integral with the base for receiving a tethering cord. The ball 42 is completely spherical in nature and need not have any recessed cavities or the like on the surface thereof. In this embodiment, ring plate 78 is preferably comprised of metal and the ball surface is smooth in nature so that the ring plate can be glued directly to the surface of the ball. A tethering cord can then be passed through loop 82, and a strong and durable tether ball is provided.

Contrary to prior art arrangements, ring plate 78 of this embodiment is placed directly on the spherical surface of the ball and the ball is not provided with any cut-out portions or other discontinuous features on the outer surface. As a result, this ball is highly economical to produce since all requirements for creating special depressions or cavities for receiving the ring plate on the surface of the ball are eliminated.

A further configuration of the invention is shown in FIG. 13, and this embodiment is similar to that illustrated in FIG. 10 with the exception that the embodiment of FIG. 13 utilizes a one-piece or continuous piece of material to form the entire harness.

In this arrangement, straps 98 and 104 are sewn or otherwise fastened together at areas 101 and 103 rather than being provided with loops, such as loops 100 and 106 in the FIG. 10 embodiment. The advantage of the one-piece construction is that it is extremely strong and durable and has no areas of weakness created by sewing or otherwise fastening more than one strip together. The operation of the embodiment of FIG. 13 is the same as that for the embodiment of FIG. 10, and a tether 36 and washer 40 may be used. In the alternative, a cotter pin or ring plate or other loop arrangement can be used for passing through holes 108' and 114' and for receiving tether 36.

It should be understood that in each of the embodiments described wherein the washer 40 is utilized, the

washer is preferably made of metal, leather or from some other appropriate and durable material. The straps and material utilized in the harness of the embodiments is also made of nylon, leather or other strong and tear-resistant material. Although ring plates 78 in the embodiments of FIGS. 8, 9, and 11 may be comprised of metal, they can also be made of nylon or other appropriate materials.

The harness arrangements described and illustrated in FIGS. 1-5 and 6-10 have proven to be extremely strong and durable. Contrary to the arrangement in U.S. Pat. No. 3,351,343, for example, where the ends of the tethering cord are spread out on a patch, the harness arrangements of this invention utilize a metal, leather or other durable washer 40 to retain tethering cord 36 in fixed relationship with the harness. The use of the washer in conjunction with the knotted end of the tethering cord has proven to be a very durable and superior arrangement.

The invention in its broader aspects is not limited to the specific details shown and described, and departures may be made from such details without departing from the principles of the invention or without sacrificing its chief advantages.

What is claimed is:

1. A tether ball holder and harness, comprising:
 - a first endless strap having a hole therein;
 - a first interlock strip fastened to said first strap and forming a first opening between the first interlock strip and said first strap;
 - a second endless strap having a hole therein and slidably extending through said first opening;
 - a second interlock strip fastened to said second strap and forming a second opening between the second interlock strip and said second strap;
 - said first strap slidably extending through said second opening; and
 - means extending through said holes for holding the harness in position around the ball.
2. A harness as in claim 1 wherein said holding means, include:
 - a tethering cord slidably positioned through each of said holes and having an enlarged portion adjacent one end; and
 - a perforated washer positioned on said tethering cord between said enlarged portion of the cord and said straps for enabling the washer to be pulled into contiguous relationship with the first strap and to hold the harness in position around a tether ball.
3. A harness as in claim 2 wherein the washer is metal.
4. A harness as in claim 2 wherein the washer is leather.

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