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P. T. SIMMONS

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BASE BALL GAME AND APPARATUS

Filed Aug. 17, 1928

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

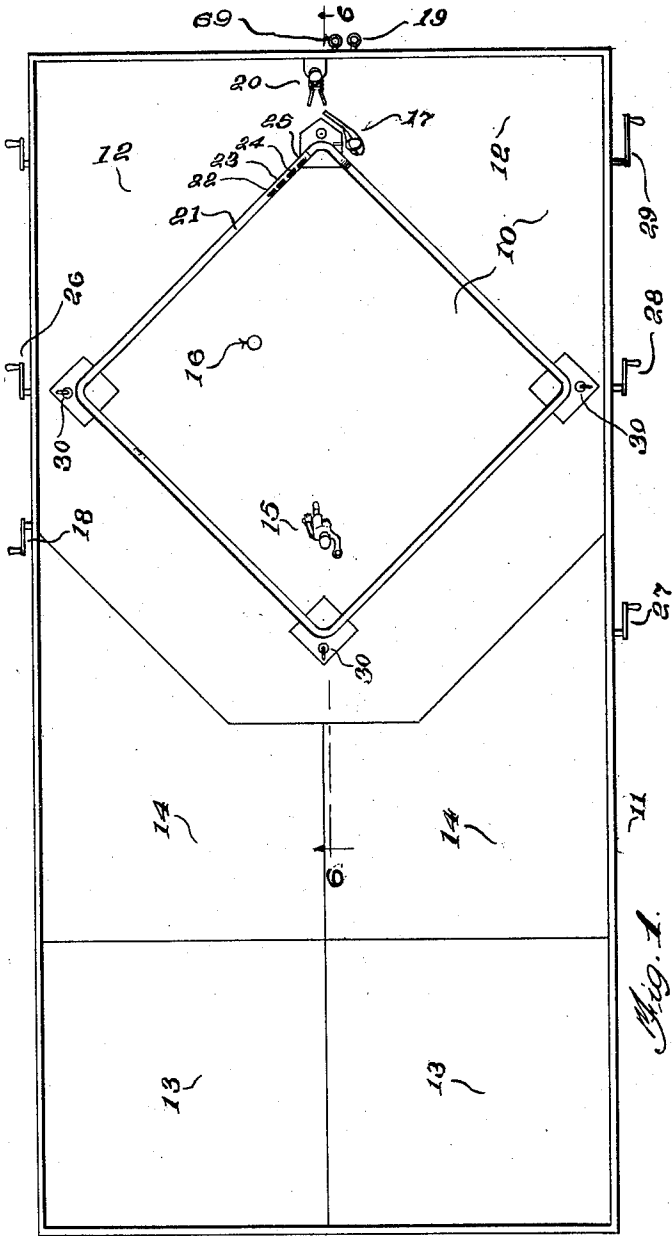


Fig. 1.

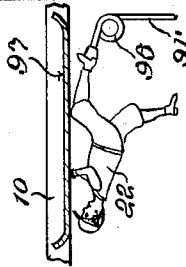


Fig. 6.

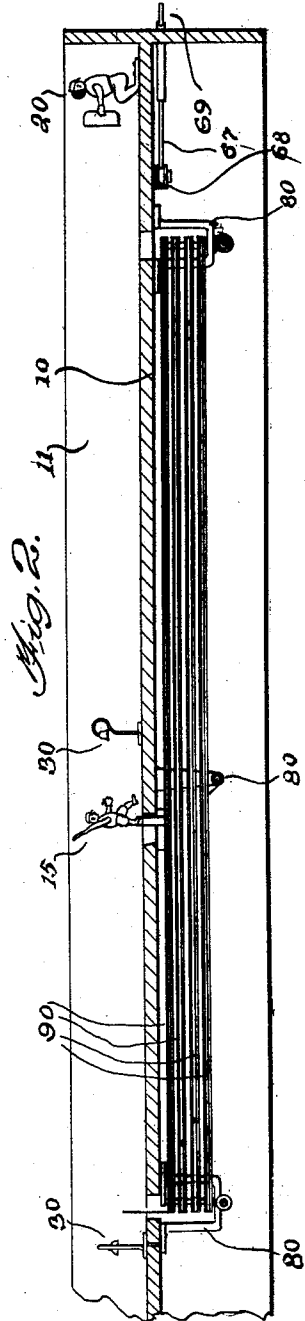


Fig. 2.

INVENTOR:

PARKER T. SIMMONS,

BY

H. Woodward

ATTORNEY.

Dec. 16, 1930.

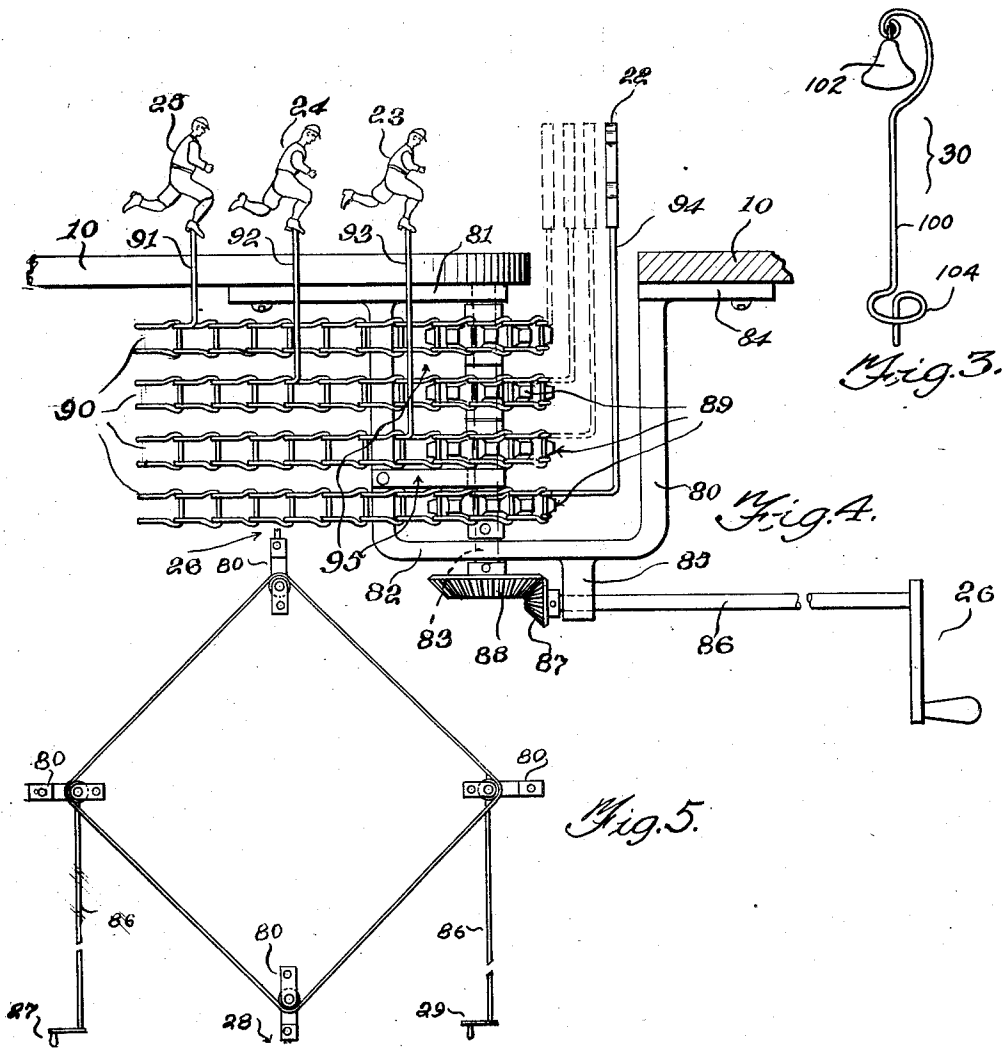
P. T. SIMMONS

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BASE BALL GAME AND APPARATUS

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2 Sheets-Sheet 2



INVENTOR:
PARKER T. SIMMONS,
BY *H. Woodward*
ATTORNEY.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

PARKER T. SIMMONS, OF EAST HAMPTON, NEW YORK

BASEBALL GAME AND APPARATUS

Application filed August 17, 1928. Serial No. 300,236.

The pitching device, the batter device and the catcher device referred to in this application are disclosed respectively in my applications of even date as follows: Serial No. 300,237, pitching devices for baseball game apparatus; Serial No. 300,238, batting apparatus for baseball games and the like; Serial No. 300,239, ball catching device.

The invention has for an object to effect an improvement in game apparatus, and particularly that kind intended to simulate the standard outdoor game of baseball in such manner that teams may participate in games with my apparatus and the team members perform therewith functions corresponding closely to those which players would perform in the outdoor standard game.

The invention also attains an improvement in particulars of apparatus suitable to the conduct of a game in accordance with my disclosure, and it is a particular aim of the invention to effect a novel embodiment of operative means for base runners.

Additional objects, advantages and features of invention reside in the construction, arrangement and combination of parts involved, as will be understood from the following description and accompanying drawings, wherein,

Figure 1 is a top view of a game board constructed in accordance with my invention.

Figure 2 is a longitudinal section.

Fig. 3 is a detail of the base signal.

Fig. 4 is a fragmentary view of the runner operating device.

Fig. 5 is a diagrammatic plan of the runner operating mechanism.

Fig. 6 is a fragmentary section of the game board showing a runner construction.

The game is characterized by the use of a board representing a playing field, and comprising a floor 10 having a boundary board or fence 11 therearound extending above and below the floor, as shown. A base-ball diamond is represented on the floor 10 with the home plate near but spaced from the adjacent end sufficiently to accommodate a catcher device to be described. Foul field areas 12 are indicated in respective corners of the field spaced laterally a distance from the home

plate, while right and left outfield areas 13 are indicated at the opposite end of the floor; intermediate right and left field areas 14 immediately adjacent the diamond and inwardly of the back field area 13. The board is of such size preferably as to enable a number of players to be accommodated along the sides and at each end, so that one player may operate a batting device centrally of one end, while two other players at adjacent corners may field balls entering the foul areas 12, and at the sides separate players may control a pitching mechanism and respectively four runner operating devices, while at the end opposite the home plate, or at the sides, two or more players may field balls entering the areas 13 and 14.

A pitching mechanism 15 is located in or adjacent the diamond on the medial longitudinal axis of the field represented, this device being adapted to throw a small ball 16 across the home plate, the ball being of a suitable size and weight to be struck by a batting device 17 located at the home plate, and adapted when properly operated to strike the ball with sufficient force to knock it into some portion of the intermediate or back fields. The pitching device is controlled by a release lever 18, located at the side of the board and laterally outward of the fence 11, so that an individual member of the team supposed to be in the field may operate this device. The batting device 17 is also controlled by a release or other suitable appliance at 19, midway of the end of the device, closely adjacent the home plate, as represented; and this appliance 19 is to be operated by an individual member of the team "at bat". A catcher device 20 is located closely adjacent the home plate, constructed so as to receive a ball thrown by the pitching device 15, in case it is not struck by the batting device 17 when operated. The path of the diamond has an endless slot 21 therein extending across the home plate and each of the bases, being suitably curved at these points. Runner members 22, 23, 24, and 25 respectively, are mounted to move longitudinally of this slot, suitable operating means being provided for these runners, including individual control or op-

erating members 26, 27, 28 and 29 respectively, by which the movement of respective runners is effected, these being in the form of cranks, in the present instance, which may be operated manually by persons on the team "at bat". Base signals 30 are located at first, second, and third bases, adapted to sound when struck by the ball. The catcher 20 may also be adapted to resound when struck by the ball.

In the production of this game, it is important to have the field of ample size, bearing in mind the manner in which the game is to be played, as will be explained. Particularly, the action of the pitching device 15 and its spacing with respect to the mounting device 17 should be such as to afford a time interval in the movement of the ball from the pitching device to the mounting device sufficient to enable a person controlling the mounting device 19 to receive the mental impression of the moving ball and to act in time in releasing or actuating the batting device to effect the striking of the ball. Also, the control appliances 18, 19, 26 to 29 inclusive, must be properly spaced to permit a separate individual to operate each without the movements of one interfering with those of another of such players as far as reasonably practicable; and in addition to accommodate adjacent the field areas 12, 13 and 14 respective persons representing field team players.

In the playing of the game, the pitching device 13 is manually set at an initial position from which it may be released by the device 18 to perform a throwing action. After being set, the ball 16 is manually placed in the device, and the player assigned thereto initiates the operation of the pitching device by means of the device 18. Another person at the control 19 then endeavors to actuate the batting device in time to strike the ball. In case a fair ball is struck across the field, another player at the control device 26 then begins to operate the crank 26 so as to move the runner 22 in the direction of first base.

The persons on the field team designated to look after the areas 14, 13 and 12 respectively will then endeavor to return the ball (according to the area it is in) and strike one of the base signals 30 before the runner reaches the same, striking of the device 30 and ringing of the bell there having the same significance as the return of a ball from the field to a baseman in the actual game of base ball, as is well understood. In case the first runner 22 reaches first base safely, the pitching and batting operations described are repeated, a new player being designated at the bat control 19, the original player at the control 26 remaining there until the runner which he is operating either makes the circuit of the bases for a run or is put out.

In case the second player at the control 19

bats a fair ball, a fourth player on the team "at bat" then operates the device 27 so as to move the runner 23 toward first base while the player at 26 endeavors to move the runner 22 to second base before the ball is returned by one of the team in the field. The principles of the standard game of baseball will apply to the various plays which are made in this game it being possible to make a double play corresponding to that in the regular game. In case the batting device fails to knock a fair ball but strikes it in such manner as to cause it to enter one of the "foul" areas 12, if one of the field team designated to operate in these respective areas catches the ball before it strikes the fence 11, or fields the ball in some other required way in accordance with specific rules which may be made, the batter may be called "out" in the same respect as the catcher in the standard game catches a foul ball.

The runner mechanism

While I am aware that devices have been evolved for moving runners about between bases of a baseball diamond represented upon a game board, none of these prior devices are suitable for use in my invention to enable the playing of the game in the manner contemplated, particularly with reference to the operation of runners individually by respective persons and responsive to the will of these persons individually until the complete circuit of bases has been made in accordance with the rules of standard baseball, or until a "put-out" has been recorded against the runner involved.

Owing to the formation of the slot 21 endlessly between the bases, the inner portion of the floor within the diamond is completely detached from the outer part, and for this reason brackets 80 utilized in mounting the runner mechanism are also utilized to form a supporting connection between the floor without the diamond and that part bounded by the slot. One of the brackets 80 is mounted adjacent each of the bases, including the home plate. Each includes a top plate 81 and a bottom plate 82 in spaced relation therewith, a vertical shaft 83 being revolvably mounted in and between these two plates. The top plate is suitably extended and apertured for attachment to the under side of the floor within the diamond at its opposite end from the shaft 83, while the bottom plate is extended at its end adjacent the shaft 83 for a distance beyond the shaft, thence upwardly and provided with a plate 84 in the same plane with the extension of the plate 81, so that it may be attached to the under side of the floor 10 outwardly of the slot 21. A downwardly extending bearing flange 85 is also formed on the lower plate 82, in which there is mounted the inner end of an operating shaft 86, the outer end of which is ex-

tended transversely through the boundary 11. In the cases of the brackets adjacent the first base and third base, each flange 85 is arranged transversely of the lower plate 82 at the beginning of the extension 84, while in those brackets 80 adjacent the home plate and second base, the flange 85 is at one side of the plate 82 in line with the shaft 83. At the inner end of the shaft 86 a bevelled gear 87 is fixed thereon, meshed with a somewhat larger bevelled gear 88 carried on the lower extremity of the shaft 83 which projects through the plate 82 for that purpose. Upon the upper part of the shaft 83 between the plates 81 and 82 there are engaged four sprockets 89, all having hub portions which serve between mutually adjacent sprockets to hold the sprockets in properly spaced relation. At first base, the lowermost sprocket is secured to the shaft 83, while the other sprockets are loosely revoluble upon the shaft as idlers. At second base, the sprocket next to the bottom is fixed upon the shaft 83 while the lower sprocket and two upper ones are idle on the shaft. At third base the sprocket next to the top is fixed to the shaft, while the remaining three are loose on the shaft, and at the home plate the topmost sprocket is fixed to the shaft, while the three therebelow are idlers. The shafts 86 from the brackets adjacent the home plate and adjacent the second base are both extended out through the left-hand side of the bottom part of the boundary board of the device, as is the shaft 86 from the bracket adjacent the third base, while the shaft 86 from the bracket at first base is extended out through the right-hand side of the device, the crank 26 thereon being the only one for operating a base runner at that side of the device. Four endless chains 90 vertically spaced are engaged around the parallel sprockets 89 alined at corresponding levels, so that each chain is engaged upon one sprocket which is fixed to a shaft 83, and upon three idle sprockets, and consequently, any chain can be operated by only one particular crank 26, 27, 28 or 29. Upon the topmost chain at one point there is extended upwardly from one of the links close to the inner side of the slot 21 a resilient standard 91. From the next chain therebelow at one point, there is extended upwardly a standard 92 which at its lower end is provided with an extension laterally from the chain, so that it is offset sufficiently to move in a separate path from the first mentioned standard 91, permitting the two to pass in the slot 21 without interference. In the same way, a third similar standard 93 is mounted on the third chain from the sprocket, still further offset so that it may pass the standard 92, and from the bottom chain a fourth standard 94 still further offset is extended upwardly through the slot 21. All of these standards project a slight distance above the floor 10 and have

mounted thereon removably or otherwise runner figures 95 which may be distinctly colored, if desired.

Also, a friction device 95 may be provided on each bracket to engage the respective gear 89, so as to prevent rotation of the shaft 83 except when driven by operation of the adjacent shaft 86. In this manner, operation of any one of the shafts 86 will result in moving a particular runner, while the remaining runners are stationary, unless another shaft 86 is operated at the same time. The four runners may move simultaneously, either in the same direction or in opposite directions.

The mounting of each runner may include a light spring helix 96 and the slot 21 for a short distance from the home plate toward the first base may be closed and provided with an upturned edge portion 97 at each limit of the closed part, so that when a runner device is moved into engagement with this closed part, owing to the resilience of the spring 96 the runner will be bent down and concealed beneath the floor 10. The runner figures 95 may each have a socket at the bottom adapted to slip removably over the upper end of one of the standards 91 to 94, so that the runners may all be removed except one, when the standards are in initial position, successive runner bodies being set upon other standards successively, and when a runner is "put out" it may be first removed from the standard upon which it is mounted and the standard returned to initial position by reverse or forward operation of the crank and shaft 86 by which such runner had been previously moved to the place where "put out."

The base signal devices consist of simple wire standards 100 having a short vertical portion at their lower ends adapted to set in apertures formed in the floor 10 at first, second, and third bases, and if desired, there may also be a sounding signal 102, located conveniently to be struck by a ball rolled upon the floor across the home plate. The upper end of the standard 100 is bent laterally, and then recurved in semi-circular form and has a small bell suspended from its extremity. The lower part of the standard 100 immediately above the part which is inserted in the aperture in the forward part may consist of a horizontal coil 104 of one or two turns formed integrally in the wire between its lower inserted part and the upstanding part immediately thereabove, so that in case the ball strikes the upstanding part, it may be easily oscillated so as to cause the bell to ring.

It will be seen that by the construction provided, the person operating one of the runners, may, when the pitching device is operated endeavor to simulate the "stealing" of a base by moving his runner from one base toward another, and in case field players of the opposing team are able to place a ball upon the base toward which such runner is

being moved, the player operating the runner may then reverse operation of the device and return his runner toward the base from which it was first moved. After the ball has struck one of the base signals it is supposed to be in the hands of the field man detailed at that base until it has been delivered by such player so as to roll upon the floor 10, and consequently after the base signal has been struck in advance of a runner, the runner will be "out" if he continues to that base.

If, with a runner at first base, a ball is batted "fair," and a second runner started toward first base while the preceding one is moved toward second, in case the advanced runner is "put out" at second it may be returned to initial position without being blocked by the runner at first base. This is due to the successive offset of the runners, and the fact that the slot 21 is of ample width to permit such passing.

I claim:

1. In a device of the character described, a field floor having an orbital slot therein, a plurality of series of endless members movable in a similar orbit beneath the slot, separate operating means for each endless member, a runner-carrying member extending from each endless member upwardly through the slot, runner figures thereon, said runner carrying members being successively spaced horizontally for independent movement past each other.

2. The structure of claim 1, in which the runner members are deflectable below the level of the floor, and a closed part is provided in the slot at initial positions of the runners, to retain them below the floor level.

3. The structure of claim 1, in which the runner members are deflectable below the level of the floor and the slot is closed at the initial positions of the runners, the ends of the closed portion having inclined members to engage the runners to deflect them below the floor level when they are moved to initial position.

4. The structure of claim 1 in which the runner members are yieldingly mounted and deflectable below the level of the floor, and a closed part over the slot at the initial position of said runner members, resilient means being included in the mounting means tending to erect the runner member on emerging from said initial position, but yieldable to pressure of the closed part to deflect the runner below the floor level.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature.
PARKER T. SIMMONS.