Dec. 6, 1927.

1,652,062

J. F. STAUFFER

TARGET

Filed May 23, 1927

3 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 1.

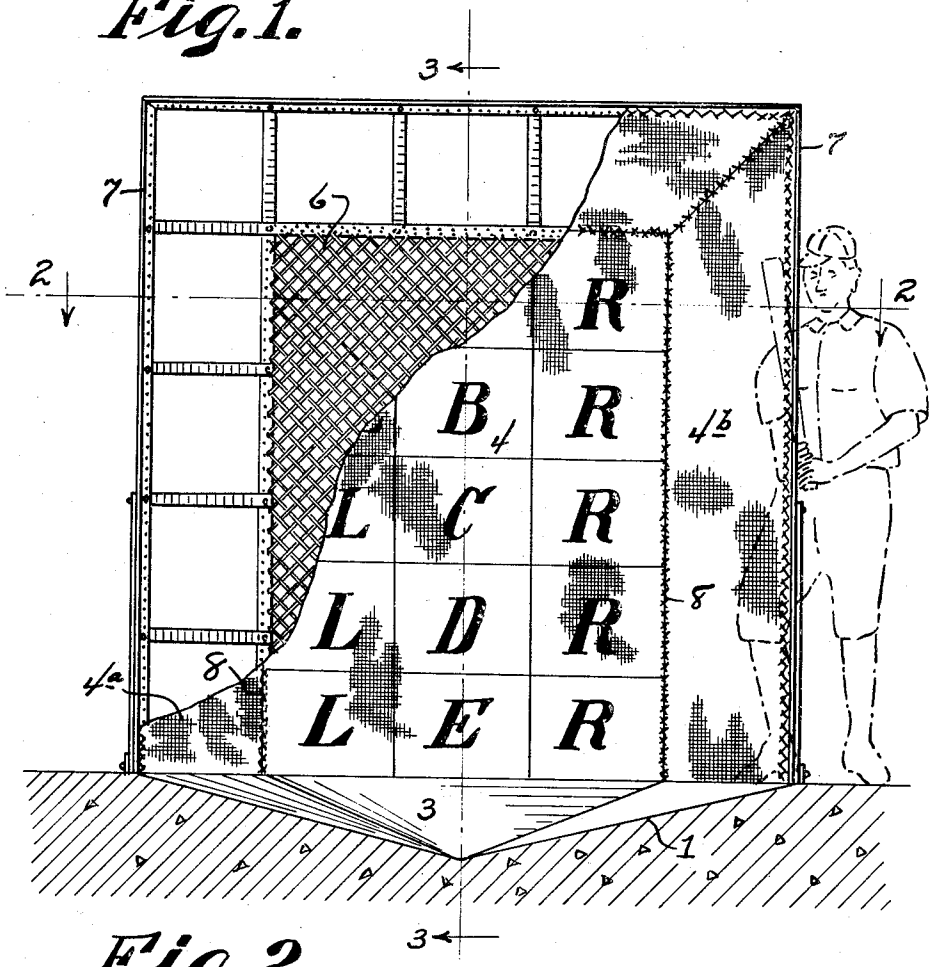
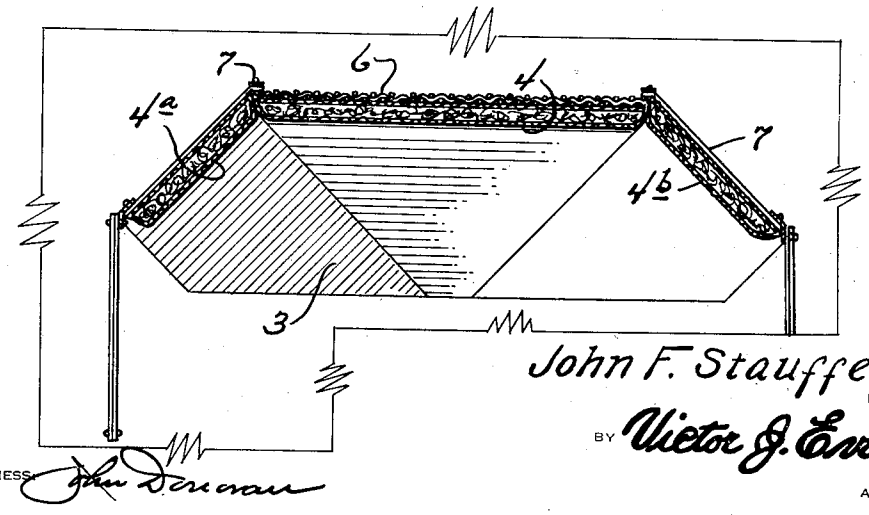


Fig. 2.



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3 Sheets-Sheet 2

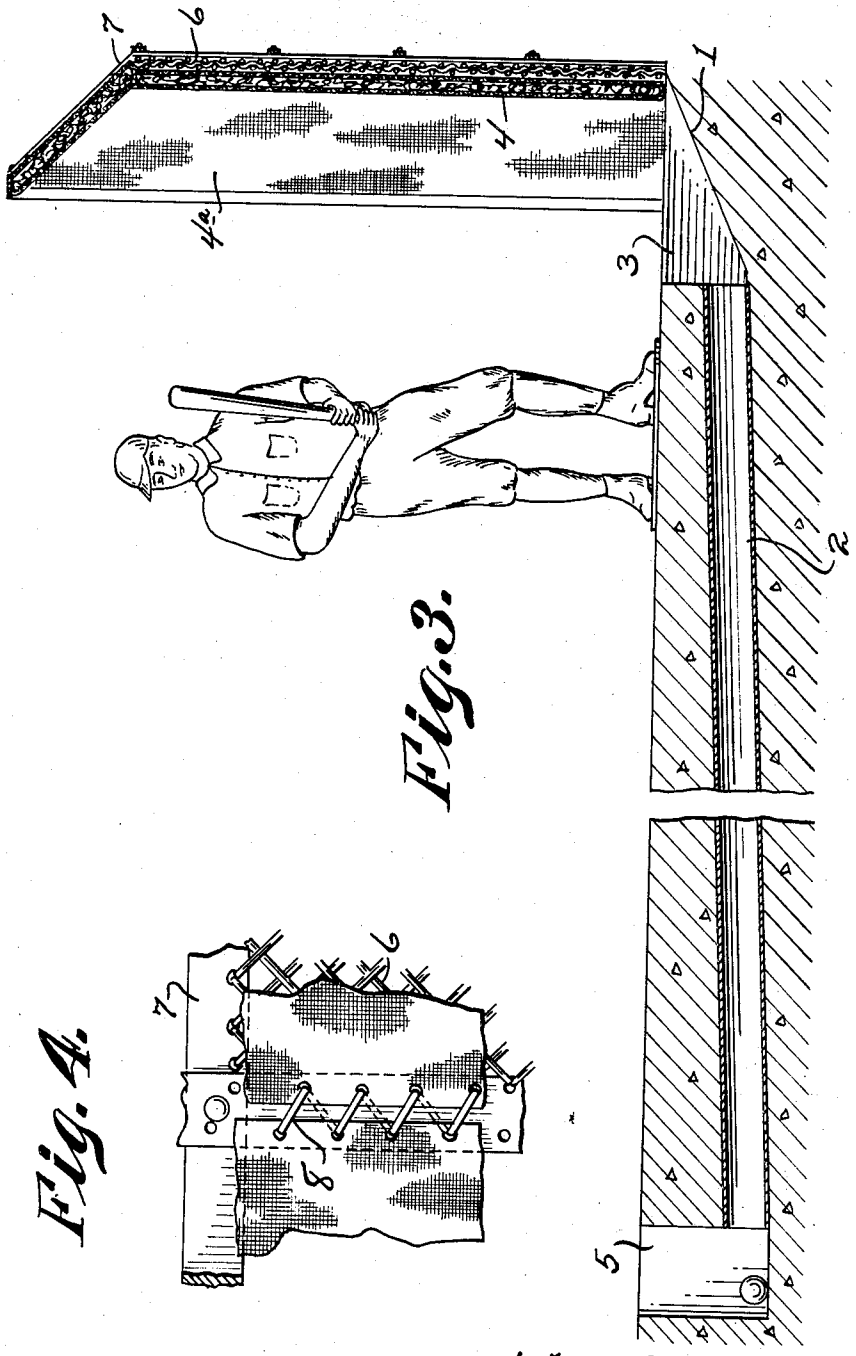


Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

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3 Sheets-Sheet 3

Fig. 5.

TRY-OUT ORDER No.____

DATE_____192_

_____ Mgr. To _____ Pitcher

At_____ Batter_____ Right or Left Hand

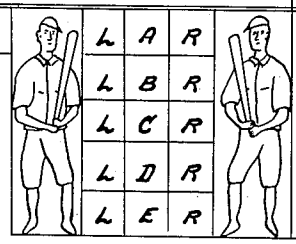
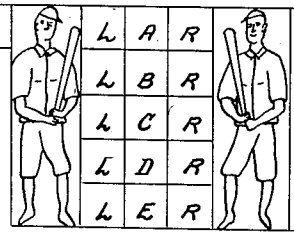
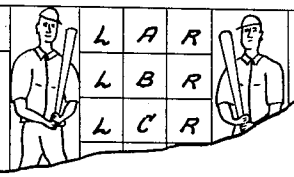
Straight Balls At	C-	90 Ft.	
Out Curve " "	D-L	120 Ft.	
In Curve " "	B-R		
Drop Curve " "	D-	250 Ft.	
Up Curve " "		350 Ft.	

Fig. 6.

RECORD TRY-OUT SHEET No.____

DATE_____192_

_____ Pitcher To ___ Right or Left Hand Batter

			Hit	Missed	Wi - th.	Hit B.	
Straight Balls At C	L A R L B R L C R L D R L E R						%
Out Curves At D-L	L A R L B R L C R L D R L E R						%
In Curves At B-R	L A R L B R L C R						

John F. Stauffer INVENTOR

BY Victor J. Evans

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WITNESS: John Donovan

Patented Dec. 6, 1927. 1,652,062

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOHN F. STAUFFER, OF TUTWILER, MISSISSIPPI.

TARGET.

Application filed May 23, 1927. Serial No. 193,605.

This invention relates to a tryout target for determining the skill of baseball players to give an accurate record of their skill in pitching, throwing or various qualifications of a good player, that may be tabulated in a form so as to indicate to a manager of a team the rating of any player. I provide a mantlet of substantially concave form with a central panel and extensions angularly related thereto forming a substantial target for a pitcher or other player in delivering a ball either from the pitcher's box or some part of the baseball field, the several parts of the central panel being formed in squares of three rows, five squares deep, with appropriate indicia to indicate the point of delivery of a ball delivered to a dummy stationed at the plate. These indicia form means of tabulating on a record sheet of characteristic design the accuracy of the player, showing any desired number of throws, straight balls, out curves, in curves, drop curves, up curves, or any break ball that may be thrown by the player, thus giving a general test of the delivery ability of the player. The arrangement of the panels permit the pitcher to be ordered to throw a certain kind of a curve at a certain indicated spot on the target and his percentage of hits found immediately by the operator of the target who tabulates the record on the record sheet.

I am aware that various devices have heretofore been proposed for determining the skill of a player of baseball or other game, but it is my object to afford a cheap structure which may be easily installed on a playground and be provided with substantial construction for withstanding the hard use to which it must be subjected without forming a displeasing appearance. It is evident that a system of this kind will permit the manager of a baseball team to form a conclusive opinion as to the merits of the pitcher or other player who may be subjected to a test with my apparatus. Moreover, the apparatus permits the manager to determine the fitness of a player as to his condition at any given time for entering a game, or for testing young talent a manager may wish to engage as to their fitness for training for the team.

In carrying out the invention I mount a back stop or mantlet with a central mattress formed of wire gauze on the back, and a canvas front and sides, mounted by lacework in a steel work frame, the sloping sides of which form a 45° angle with the center part of the mantlet, thus forming a concave back stop which receives the impact of the balls. In front of this the field is provided with a sloping bowl, the walls of which converge toward a central point which forms a ball receptacle adjacent to which is a pipe large enough to freely transmit the ball, and depressed in the earth with its end adjacent the pitcher's box and at sufficiently low depression to carry the ball by gravity from the bowl where it drops after impact with the mantlet and is automatically delivered in a cup accessible from the top in front of the pitcher's box.

My invention therefore comprises a target having an elastic surface and of concave formation placed adjacent to the catcher's position in the game of baseball, said target being provided with indicia in a plurality of vertical rows to indicate the accuracy of a pitcher or other player's delivery of the ball, and automatic means for deliverying the ball after its rebound from the target to the pitcher for further use. It embodies also other features, the novelty of which will hereinafter be definitely described and specifically indicated in the appended claims.

In the accompanying drawings:

Figure 1 represents a target of my improved design.

Figure 2 is a cross section of the same on the plane 2—2 of Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a cross section on the vertical plane 3—3 of Figure 1.

Figure 4 is a detail illustrating the mode of mounting my ball cushion.

Figure 5 is a record sheet for a tryout order which will be found useful in connection with my invention.

Figure 6 is a form of record tryout sheet to determine a player's qualification.

Referring now specifically to the drawings, Figure 3 indicates the position of a striker standing on the plate in front of the mantlet or back stop against which the ball is thrown. This player is shown as holding a bat and is merely a dummy or image of a player, of which I employ two types, one for a right hand striker and the other for a left hand striker. Immediately in front of the back stop the field is dug up to form a sloping wall 1, adjacent to which is the end of a pipe 2 large enough to permit transit of a baseball freely. This pipe inclines to-

ward the pitcher's box at a desired angle to permit the ball to gravitate readily from the bowl 3 into which the ball drops after impact with the mantlet 4. At the end adjacent the pitcher's box the earth is scooped out and lined if necessary with a cylindrical wall 5. The distance from the mantlet to the pitcher's stand may be 65 ft. and the ball pit may be placed 10 ft. in front of its limit. The covering of the center panel of the mantlet is preferably formed of stout canvas in which is formed square panels in three rows, five squares deep, the center panel being marked with indicia of height which may be arranged alphabetically, A, B, C, D, E, and the outside rows may be marked L and R to indicate an inside or outside ball passing over the plate.

The mantlet is formed of three sections 4, 4^a, 4^b, the section 4^b forming a 45° angle with the central panel 4, thus forming a concave depression in front of the home plate. These mattress panels are filled with a semi-elastic material as cotton, tow or the like, the back end of which may be of metal gauze 6 and the front face of which is preferably of a stout canvas such as duck. The central section is drawn taut over an iron framework 7 by lacework 8 so as to afford an elastic mounting to receive the impact of the ball's delivery against the mantlet.

In noting a pitcher's qualifications on the record sheets, for example on the tryout order, the name of the manager may be entered on the left side at the top, the name of the pitcher on the right side, and the date of test with appropriate indication as to the place and the batter and his personal equation. The record indicates the character of balls taken, as to their curvature of delivery and whether high or low, and the character of a panel for the notation as to the action of the batter and his percentage of efficiency. Such a sheet is undoubtedly of great use to a manager of a team. In Figure 6 is another form of record as to a player's efficiency, showing that the player has acted on straight balls delivered at C, the character of the hit, the ball and whether he struck out, and an additional panel for his percentage of the tryout. The lower panels of this sheet indicate the pitcher's performance on different character of balls.

The mantlet or back stop is of a plurality of sections with the sides forming a forward angle with the central panel, thus forming a wide target for a pitcher or thrower and the sectional indicia panels in the center enable any ball delivered to be definitely indicated as to its characteristic delivery over the home plate, thus permitting a pitcher to have definite information as to the delivery of his balls instantly and training him to deliver them at a particular spot hard to be hit by the batter. This instant information delivered by the observer at the mantlet or target will certainly be regarded with special favor by experienced pitchers as it will be also instructive for beginners. Further, it is for the purpose of testing the accuracy of an infielder's throwing at a distance of 90 ft. and 120 ft., and an outfielder's throwing at a distance of 250 ft. and 350 ft., but in testing fielders I intend that the entire face of the target must be the object to be thrown at, and when the face is hit it shall be called a hit, without regard for any of the letters thereon. Moreover, the chart indicated will form a record invaluable to a manager in a critical stage of the game, permitting the pitcher's record and even that of the fielders to be governed by secret signals to deliver balls of certain type as to curvature of delivery or at a particular part of the target to embarrass the opposing player. The multiple squares in straight balls delivered over the plate also serve as an effective guide in assisting the pitcher to direct his aim at a particular indicated panel of the central row and to apply to the ball any particular twist directed by the manager. The lay figure or stuffed image of the pseudo batter may be varied as to a left hand batter or right hand batter at will, and the appropriate record of the pitcher's performance therewith will prove of great service to the manager of the team.

It will thus be seen that I have provided an efficient tryout system for developing efficiency in a baseball player, which will be of marked assistance in developing attainment of excellence in the player's ability. My system may or may not be accompanied by automatic spring-controlled mechanism to register the swiftness of the balls, but as such devices are of known use no special mechanism therefor is shown. The observer at the target is preferred in my system as he may instantly communicate the characteristics of the impact of the ball and thus instruct or direct the player at once.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:—

1. In an efficiency apparatus for baseball, an elastic back stop or target to receive the impact of balls thrown over the home plate, said target having parallel tiers of indicia defining the character of the balls delivered, whereby an observer may chart each ball for a player, and a subsurface inclined chute terminating in a bowl to catch spent balls, the other end of the chute terminating in a depression in the ground for access to the pitcher.

2. In an efficiency apparatus for baseball, an elastic back stop or target to receive the impact of balls thrown over the home plate, a right and left hand stuffed figure representing a batsman at the plate, said target

having parallel tiers of indicia defining the character of the balls delivered, whereby an observer may chart each ball for a player, and a subsurface inclined chute terminating in a bowl to catch spent balls, the other end of the chute terminating in a depression in the ground for access to the pitcher.

3. In an efficiency apparatus for baseball, an elastic target composed of multiple sections the outer sections of which form a forward angle with the center, the center panel being a mattress with a wire mesh back and a duck front, a lacing between the side sections and center panel to promote flexibility, the center panel having parallel tiers of indicia defining the direction characteristics of balls delivered, whereby an observer may chart each ball delivered by a player, and means for returning the spent balls in an inclined subsurface chute at the pitcher's box.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature.

JOHN F. STAUFFER.