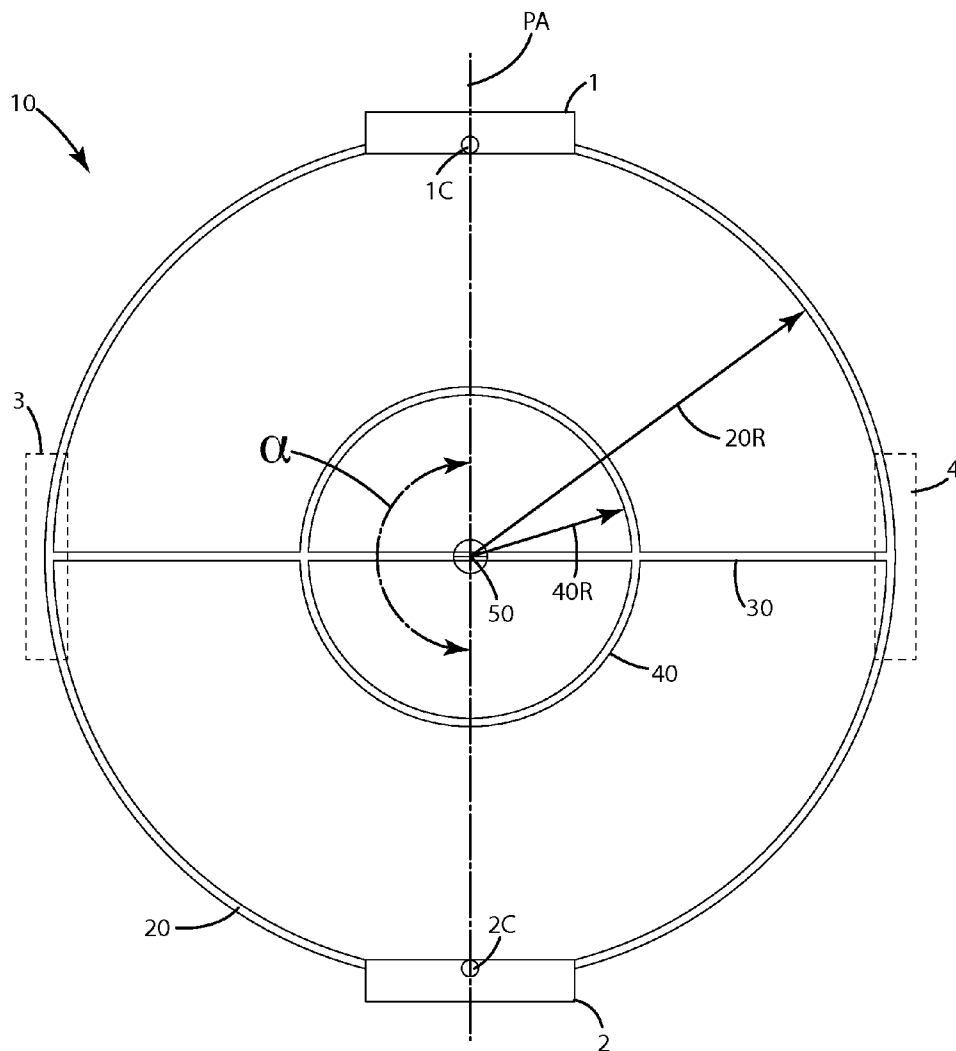




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(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication**
Peel et al.(10) **Pub. No.: US 2015/0306490 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Oct. 29, 2015**(54) **FOOTBALL PLAYING FIELD AND
ASSOCIATED GAME****Publication Classification**(71) Applicant: **Reeths Puffer Youth Soccer Club, Inc.**,
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28, 2014.(51) **Int. Cl.**
A63C 19/02 (2006.01)(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **A63C 19/02** (2013.01)(57) **ABSTRACT**

A circular playing field, also known as a playing surface or pitch, for a modified game of soccer, also referred to as football herein, is provided, wherein the circular field includes a generally continuous, circular marked perimeter line, a marked midline and a marked center circle that is concentric with the circular marked perimeter line. Goals can be disposed diametrically opposite one another along or adjacent the perimeter line, generally on opposite sides of the marked midline. The game can be played on the field by opposing teams of 2-4 players each, and optionally 3 players each. The field can be circular in shape and of a radial dimension that can vary as a function of the age, skill and the number of players to occupy the field while playing.



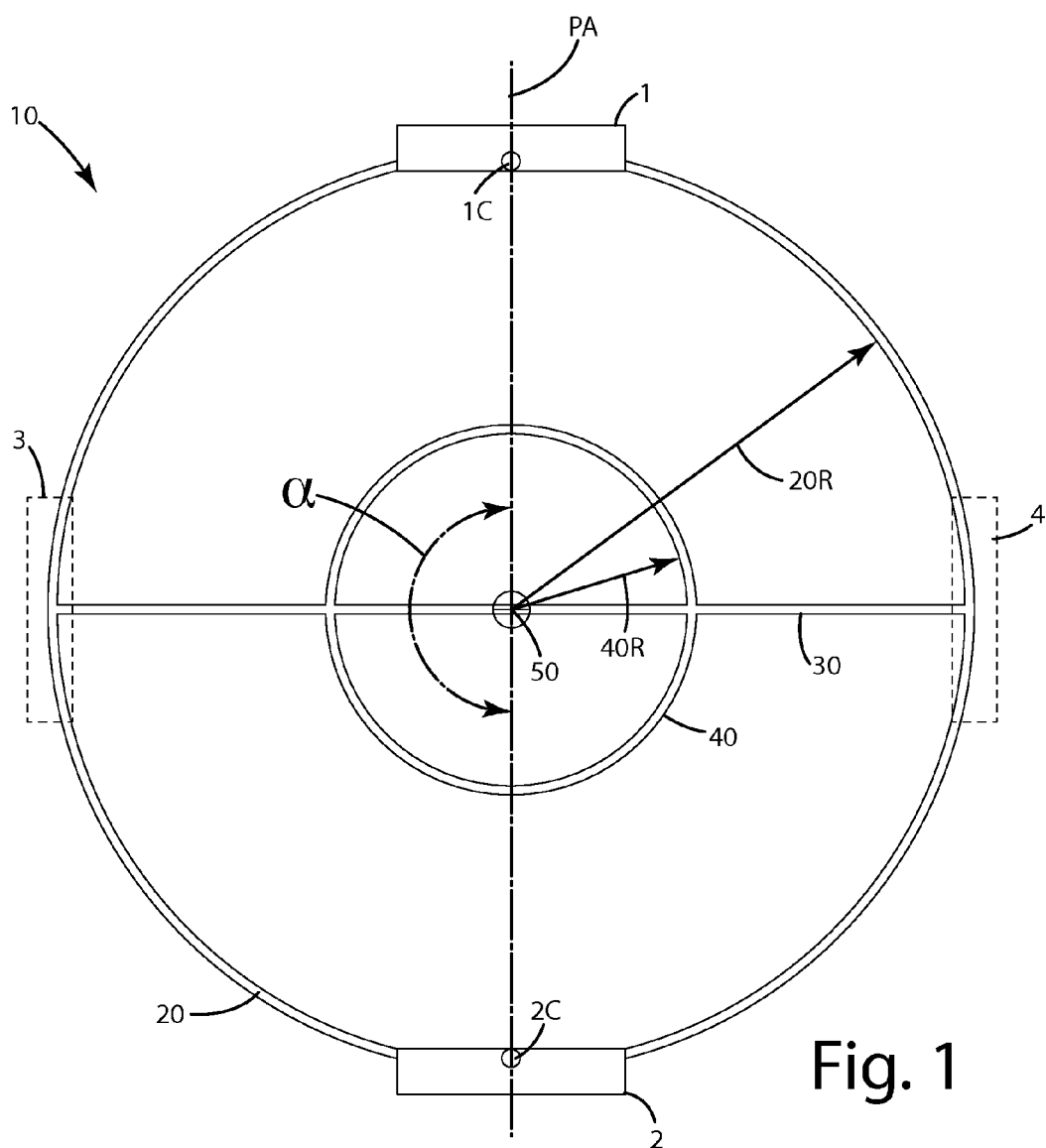


Fig. 1

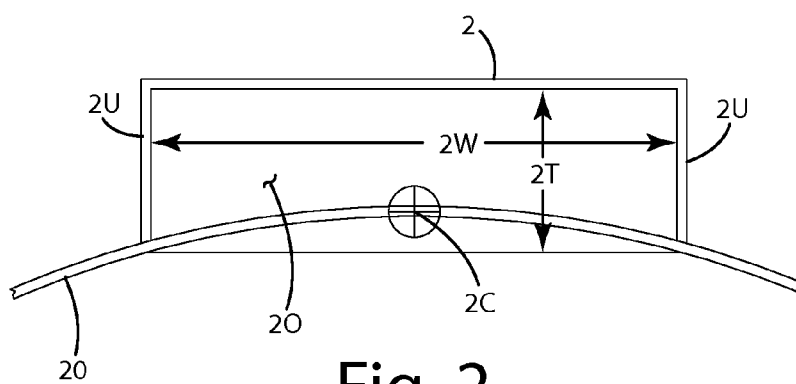


Fig. 2

FOOTBALL PLAYING FIELD AND ASSOCIATED GAME

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a playing field and a game, and more particularly to a circular playing field with at least one goal and associated rules of the game, which is similar to football or soccer.

[0002] Conventional football or soccer fields are in the form of a rectangular playing field of significant dimensions. Most have a length between opposing, separated, non-contiguous goal lines of 100 yards to 130 yards, and a width at the goal lines of 50 yards to 100 yards. Rectangular goal boxes are marked in the field adjacent rectangular, upright goals along each of the respective goal lines.

[0003] Typically, football or soccer is played by opposing teams of eleven players each. The teams attempt to score by using any part of the player's body, other than their hands or arms, to send a spherical ball through an opposing goal, guarded by a dedicated goal tender.

[0004] In many cases, conventional football or soccer is a low scoring sport, and usually this is caused by the large size and rectangular shape of the playing field. It also can be caused by particularly skillful goalies defending their team's goal well. Due to this, observers of the game sometimes can lose interest, particularly in a long, drawn out game.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] A circular playing field for a modified game of soccer, also referred to as football herein, is provided. The circular field includes a generally continuous, circular marked perimeter line, a marked midline and a marked center circle that is concentric with the circular marked perimeter line. Goals can be disposed diametrically opposite one another along or adjacent the perimeter line, generally on opposite sides of the marked midline.

[0006] In one embodiment, the game can be played on the field by opposing teams of optionally 1-5 players each, further optionally 2-4 players each, and even further optionally 3 players each.

[0007] In another embodiment, the playing field is circular in shape and of a radial dimension that varies as a function of the age and the number of players to occupy the field while playing.

[0008] In still another embodiment, two goals for scoring can be placed on the opposing ends of the circular marked perimeter, with the ends and goal centers generally located on or adjacent a polar axis of the field. The goals can be oriented 180° from one another, with open sides of the goals facing each other inwardly toward the center. The midline, which can be placed perpendicular to the polar axis, can be between the goals.

[0009] In even another embodiment, three, four or more goals can be divided equally angularly about the field, and particularly, around the circular perimeter line. Optionally, three, four or more teams may play on the field during a game, each attempting to score in their respective goals.

[0010] In yet another embodiment, the goal size can vary based upon the age and number of players or the emphasis of the game played to change the degree of scoring difficulty.

[0011] The current embodiments of the field and game provide a unique and exceptional sporting experience. The circular shape of the field changes the typical movement of

the players playing on a rectangular field. In turn, this creates a new and different game of soccer that focuses on player mobility, formation, shape and the fundamentals of passing and finishing.

[0012] These and other objects, advantages, and features of the invention will be more fully understood and appreciated by reference to the description of the current embodiment and the drawings.

[0013] Before the embodiments of the invention are explained in detail, it is to be understood that the invention is not limited to the details of operation or to the details of construction and the arrangement of the components set forth in the following description or illustrated in the drawings. The invention may be implemented in various other embodiments and of being practiced or being carried out in alternative ways not expressly disclosed herein. Also, it is to be understood that the phraseology and terminology used herein are for the purpose of description and should not be regarded as limiting. The use of "including" and "comprising" and variations thereof is meant to encompass the items listed thereafter and equivalents thereof as well as additional items and equivalents thereof. Further, enumeration may be used in the description of various embodiments. Unless otherwise expressly stated, the use of enumeration should not be construed as limiting the invention to any specific order or number of components. Nor should the use of enumeration be construed as excluding from the scope of the invention any additional steps or components that might be combined with or into the enumerated steps or components.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] FIG. 1 is a top plan view of the playing field of the current embodiment; and

[0015] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a goal of the playing field.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRENT EMBODIMENT

[0016] A playing field according to a current embodiment is illustrated in FIG. 1 and generally designated **10**. The playing field is generally in a circular form, and can be referred to as a playing surface or pitch. The playing field **10** is designed for a modified game of the sport of soccer, also referred to as football herein. The game of soccer can generally be played with a spherical ball of a designated size that can be kicked or otherwise moved by players in an acceptable manner. The field **10** can include multiple lines or elements that are marked with paint, coatings, chalk, or other marking compounds or elements on the ground at a playing field location. These items can be placed directly on artificial turf, grass, or other appropriate playing surfaces. As used herein, a marked line (regardless of the type) refers to any demarcations or visible elements of the playing field visible to players or observers to delineate the different components of the playing field **10**.

[0017] The field **10** includes a continuous, circular marked perimeter line **20** that defines the boundaries of the field of play. If a ball with which the game on the field is played moves outside this continuous, circular marked perimeter line **20**, then the ball is out of bounds under game rules. The ball can then be kicked back into play from the point along the continuous, circular marked perimeter line **20** where it left the

field of play and by the team that did not touch the ball last before the ball exited the field during play.

[0018] The circular marked perimeter line **20** generally defines a circular internal shape which forms the field. In this manner, the playing field is circular in shape and can include a radial dimensions. Specifically, it can include a perimeter line radius **20R**. The radius **20R** can be of a variety of different lengths, optionally 30 feet to 120 feet, further optionally 40 feet to 100 feet, and even further optionally about 45 feet a variety of parameters, such as the age of players, the skill of players or some other arbitrary parameter. The radius can be taken generally from the center point **50** of the circular shape defined by the circular perimeter line **20**. The center point **50** can be optionally marked so that it can be visible, or it can be unmarked so it cannot readily be identified.

[0019] The playing field **10**, in particular the circular shape defined by the circular marked perimeter line **20** includes a polar axis **PA** extending between opposing first and second points along the circular marked perimeter line. The polar axis **PA** generally bisects the circular marked perimeter line **20** and the associated circular shape of the field, optionally passing through the center point **50**. The polar axis **PA** also can extend through the centers **1C** and **2C** of the respective first **1** and second **2** goals as described further below. Optionally, the polar axis **PA** can bisect the circular shape formed by the circular marked perimeter line **20**.

[0020] The playing field also can include a marked center circle line **40** which generally defines a circular shape. This center circle **40** can be concentric with the circular marked perimeter line **20**. The circular line **40** also can be centered on the center point **50**. The center circle can include a radius **40R**. This radius **40R** can be optionally 10 feet to 50 feet, further optionally 10 feet to 25 feet, and even further optionally 15 feet. The sizes of the center circle radius **40R** and circular perimeter line radius **20R** can be varied based on a number of parameters, such as the age of the players, the number of players, and the skill sets of the players, with the emphasis of the game played, to change the degree of scoring difficulty and/or activity on the field.

[0021] The playing field **10** can include a marked linear midline **30**. This midline optionally can extend through the center point **50** and can be transverse to the polar axis **PA**, generally traversing that polar axis **PA** at some point, optionally at the center point. Further optionally, the marked linear midline can be perpendicular to the polar axis **PA**. The midline **30** generally can bisect the field into opposing circular semicircular portions of equal size. Generally, the marked linear midline **30**, also referred to as a midfield line, is placed between the opposing goals **1** and **2**, optionally about halfway between each, along the polar axis **PA**. Further optionally, the distance from the midfield line **30** to the first goal can be equal to the distance between the midfield line **30** and the second goal **2**.

[0022] The field **10** can include first **1** and second **2** goals that can be located on opposing portions of the circular marked perimeter line **20**. The goals **1** and **2** can be located on opposite sides of the marked linear midline **30**. Optionally, the goals **1** and **2** can be diametrically opposed and across the midfield line **30**. The goals can be on or adjacent the circular marked perimeter line **20**. The goals can include centers with the first goal **1** including a first center **1C** and the second goal **2** including a second center **2C**. These centers can be located between respective uprights, for example, the uprights **2U** shown in FIG. 2 of the second goal **2**.

[0023] Generally, the two goals **1** and **2** for scoring are placed on opposing polar ends, along the polar axis **PA** and the circular perimeter line **20**, with an open side facing each other inwardly toward the center point **50**. The centers **1C** and **2C** of the respective goals can be placed so that the goal center **1C** of the first goal **1** is at an angle of 180° from the goal center **2C** of the second goal **2**.

[0024] As shown in FIG. 2, each of the respective goals, can include uprights **2U** extending perpendicular to the ground to form at least one of a rectangular, semicircular, rounded, polygonal or other shaped opening **2O** through which a goal can be scored by kicking a spherical ball through the opening. The goals can be constructed to include specific dimensions. For example, each goal can form an opening that is a width of 72 inches and a height of 30 inches tall as indicated by the width **2W** and the height **2T** in FIG. 2. Of course, other dimensions can be selected with a size of the opening depending on the particular game, and age or skill level of the players playing on the field **10**.

[0025] Optionally, the playing field **10** can include three, four or more goals similar to the goals above. For example, third **3** and fourth **4** goals as shown in broken lines in FIG. 1 can be added. In this case, the centers of these goals **3**, **4** are located generally on or near the midline **30**, on opposite sides of the field. Each of the four goals can be about 90° offset from one another. In other configurations, there can be any number of goals offset at equal angles relative to one another. For example, there could be three goals with centers about 120° offset from one another, or six goals offset 60° from one another. Further optionally, the number of teams in play can equal the number of goals. For example, where the field includes four goals, four teams can simultaneously play the game, each attempting to move the ball into a designated goal or goals.

[0026] The circular shape of the field can change typical movement of players, versus that of players playing on a conventional rectangular field. This creates a new and different game of soccer that focuses on player mobility, formation, shape and fundamentals of passing and finishing and other related skills. It also speeds up the scoring given the proximity of the first goal relative to the second goal, as players can readily and quickly run from one end of the field to the other end to score goals.

[0027] The field **10** facilitates playing a game of soccer or football. This game can include providing a playing field such as that described above. During the game, first and second teams, each including optionally 1 to 5 players, further optionally 2 to 4 players and further optionally 3 players, can be situated on the field at a time to play the game. During the playing of the game, posting of a dedicated goalie or goalkeeper in either of the first or second goals can be forbidden. This can enable increased scoring opportunities and encourages players to take on multiple positions. The first team and the second team playing a game can attempt to score at least one goal during the game by moving the football, which again can be a spherical ball such as a soccer ball, though respective ones of the first and second goals.

[0028] The game can be played in two halves, each half being 10-20 minutes in duration, optionally 12 minutes in duration. The halves can be separated by a halftime that is less than 5 minutes in duration, and optionally 2 minutes in duration. Generally, timeouts can be forbidden during play of the game. If during the play of the game, a player moves a ball outside the circular marked perimeter line **20** at a location, the

ball is deemed out of bounds. The ball can re-enter the field at the location being moved by the team that was last to touch the ball before it went out of bounds.

[0029] Optionally, the game can be played in a tournament where multiple teams play multiple games against various other teams. A point system can be developed for such a tournament. For example, three points can be awarded to a first or a second team that has a majority of goals scored during a game. One point can be awarded to each of the first and second teams when the first and second teams tie in goals during the game. Zero points can be awarded to the first or second team that has the least goals scored during a particular game. At the end of a tournament, the points of the various teams can be added up, with the team having the highest number of points ultimately winning the tournament.

[0030] Below is an optional and exemplary list of tournament rules and an organizational outline for a specific embodiment of a three-on-three tournament using the playing field noted above. The rules can be varied depending on the particular field, number of players, player's age or skill level, or other factors so these rules are not to be considered limiting.

1. Team Organization

[0031] a. Number of Players: Games are played by two opposing rival teams, with three players each. No Goal Keepers are permitted. Teams may have no more than 4 and no fewer than 2 players, and players may only play on one team.

[0032] b. Player Registration: Players can be registered on their team's roster form before the tournament begins.

[0033] c. Age of Participants: As an example, for 2015, the age group of each team is determined by the age the team's oldest player will be on Jul. 26, 2015. A United States Soccer Federation ("USSF") sanctioned player card or form of government identification must be presented at time of check-in to verify player age. This age grouping can be determined by like methods in years after 2015.

[0034] d. Uniforms: All players of a team can wear matching color jerseys during play.

[0035] Each team must have an alternate color of jersey or practice bibs available. A coin will determine which team must change color should both be the same. An authorized referee can approve players wearing soft protective casts. Hard casts are not permitted. Knee braces with exposed metal are not permitted. Jewelry including earrings of any type, necklaces and bracelets are not permitted with the exception of medical bracelets.

[0036] e. Equipment: All players can wear shin guards to play.

[0037] f. Schedule Changes: It is the responsibility of the coach or team captain to check the schedule for any changes after each tournament game (there will be no official notification of changes). A designated Site Director has the right to move or reschedule games, as well as the right to shorten game times.

2. Game Play

[0038] a. Game is 3 players versus 3 players, with no goal keepers.

[0039] b. Game Officials/Referees: One per field.

[0040] c. Start: Both teams will check-in with referee before the start of each game. A coin toss will determine direction and possession before the start of the game. The team winning the coin toss will choose which goal to defend and the other team will kick.

[0041] d. Off Sides: None.

[0042] e. Substitutions: Players must enter and exit the field at the midfield line intersection. Substitutions may be made at any restart situation regardless of possession, or during the run of play, so long as the player leaving the field is completely off the field before the entering player steps on.

[0043] f. Scoring: A goal may be scored from any part of the field. Restarts must touch another player before a goal may be scored.

[0044] g. Time: The game shall consist of two 12-minute halves separated by a 2-minute halftime period. Games tied after regulation play shall end in a tie, except in the playoffs. A team, at the discretion of the referee, will forfeit at game time if they are not present. There are no timeouts during 3 player versus 3 player games.

[0045] h. 3-Yard Rule: In all dead-ball situations, defending players will stand at least 3 yards away from the ball.

[0046] i. Kick-Ins: The ball shall be kicked into play from the sideline instead of thrown in.

[0047] The ball is considered in play when the ball is touched with a foot and moves one full rotation.

[0048] j. Indirect Kicks: All dead-ball kicks (kick-ins, free kicks, kickoffs) are indirect.

[0049] k. Direct Kicks: None.

[0050] l. Goal Kicks: None. Restart with a kick-in where the ball exited the field of play. If the ball exits play over the goal or is scored, place the ball on the line on either side of the goal and restart play.

[0051] m. Corner Kicks: None. Restart with a kick-in where the ball exited the field of play. If that point is within 3 yards of the defending team's goal, the defending team is allowed to be within 3 yards of the kick to protect their goal. If the ball exits play over the goal, place the ball on the line on either side of the goal and restart play.

[0052] n. Kick Off: Kick Off takes place from the center-spot to begin each half, and after all goals. Teams switch direction at the start of the second half.

[0053] o. Slide Tackling: None. Players must stay upright and "on their feet" and may not make contact with an opposing player.

3. Group Play

[0054] a. Minimum of 4 teams per group.

[0055] b. Points: Games will be scored according to the following: 3 points for a win; 1 point for a tie; 0 points for a loss. A forfeited game is scored as a win for the team present.

[0056] c. Advancement: The top team from each group will advance to the playoffs.

[0057] d. Tie Breakers: For teams that are tied in record at the end of group play, if one team forfeited a game, they are the lower seed. Ties between two teams will be broken by (1) head-to-head result (2) goal difference in pool play games (3) goals for in pool play games (4) 3-minute golden goal game. Ties between three or more teams will be broken by (1) head-to-head results

between the tied teams (2) goal difference in head-to-head games (3) goals for in head-to-head games (4) goal difference in pool play games (5) goals for in pool play games (6) 3-minute golden goal game. Each tiebreaking criterion is carried out to its fullest in determining the seeds in ties between teams after group play.

4. Playoffs

[0058] a. Elimination: The playoffs are win and advance. One loss results in elimination.

[0059] b. Playoff Overtime: Golden goal (first team to score wins). Overtime periods will last 3-minutes and repeat until a team scores.

5. Common Sense

[0060] a. If a participant, coach or attendee is compromising the spirit of friendly competition through persistent infringement of the rules or unsportsmanlike behavior on or off the field, they will be asked to remove themselves from the game or tournament complex at the discretion of the Game Officials and/or a designated Site Director.

[0061] Directional terms, such as “vertical,” “horizontal,” “top,” “bottom,” “upper,” “lower,” “inner,” “inwardly,” “outer” and “outwardly,” are used to assist in describing the invention based on the orientation of the embodiments shown in the illustrations. The use of directional terms should not be interpreted to limit the invention to any specific orientation (s).

[0062] The above description is that of current embodiments of the invention. Various alterations and changes can be made without departing from the spirit and broader aspects of the invention as defined in the appended claims, which are to be interpreted in accordance with the principles of patent law including the doctrine of equivalents. This disclosure is presented for illustrative purposes and should not be interpreted as an exhaustive description of all embodiments of the invention or to limit the scope of the claims to the specific elements illustrated or described in connection with these embodiments. For example, and without limitation, any individual element(s) of the described invention may be replaced by alternative elements that provide substantially similar functionality or otherwise provide adequate operation. This includes, for example, presently known alternative elements, such as those that might be currently known to one skilled in the art, and alternative elements that may be developed in the future, such as those that one skilled in the art might, upon development, recognize as an alternative. Further, the disclosed embodiments include a plurality of features that are described in concert and that might cooperatively provide a collection of benefits. The present invention is not limited to only those embodiments that include all of these features or that provide all of the stated benefits, except to the extent otherwise expressly set forth in the issued claims. Any reference to claim elements in the singular, for example, using the articles “a,” “an,” “the” or “said,” is not to be construed as limiting the element to the singular. Any reference to claim elements as “at least one of X, Y and Z” is meant to include any one of X, Y or Z individually, and any combination of X, Y and Z, for example, X, Y, Z; X, Y; X, Z; and Y, Z.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A playing field of a soccer game comprising:

a continuous, circular marked perimeter line defining a boundary of a field of play;

a center point located at a center of the circular marked perimeter line;

a polar axis extending between opposing first and second points along the circular marked perimeter line, the polar axis generally bisecting the circular marked perimeter line and passing through the center point;

a marked linear midline extending through the center point, the marked linear midline being perpendicular to the polar axis;

a marked circular center circle line generally centered on the center point and concentric relative to the circular marked perimeter line; and

a first goal a second goal located on opposing portions of the circular marked perimeter line, on opposite sides of the marked linear midline.

2. The playing field of claim 1,

wherein the first and second goals are placed on opposing ends of the polar axis, along the circular marked perimeter line,

wherein each of the first and second goals includes a goal center,

wherein a goal center of the first goal is at an angle of 180 degrees from the goal center of the second goal.

3. The playing field of claim 2 wherein the first and second goals each include uprights extending perpendicular to the ground to form at least one of a rectangular and a semicircular opening through which a goal can be scored.

4. The playing field of claim 1 wherein the center point is marked.

5. The playing field of claim 1 wherein the first and second goals are unguarded by a dedicated goal tender during play of the game on the field.

6. The playing field of claim 1 wherein the marked center circle line defines a center circle radius of 5 feet to 25 feet.

7. The playing field of claim 6 wherein the marked center circle line defines a center circle radius of 9 feet.

8. The playing field of claim 1 wherein the circular marked perimeter line defines a perimeter radius of 30 feet to 120 feet.

9. The playing field of claim 8 wherein the circular marked perimeter line defines a perimeter radius of 45 feet.

10. The playing field of claim 1 wherein the first goal is an upright standing goal having an opening that is 72 inches wide by 30 inches tall.

11. A method for playing a game of soccer comprising:

providing a playing field comprising:

a continuous, circular marked perimeter line defining the boundaries of a field of play;

a polar axis extending between opposing first and second points along the circular marked perimeter, the polar axis generally bisecting a circular shape formed by the circular marked perimeter line;

a marked linear midline extending through the center point, the marked linear midline being perpendicular to the polar axis;

a marked circular center circle line that is concentric relative to the circular marked perimeter line;

a first goal and a second goal located on opposing portions of the circular marked perimeter line, on opposite sides of the marked linear midline;

providing a first team and a second team, each including 2 to 4 players on the field at a time to play a game;

forbidding the posting of a dedicated goalie at either of the first or second goals;

wherein the first team and second team play the game attempt to score at least one goal during the game by moving a spherical ball through respective ones of the first and second goals.

12. The method of claim **11** comprising awarding 3 points to the first or second team that has a majority of goals scored during a game.

13. The method of claim **12** comprising awarding 1 point to each of the first and second team when the first and second teams tie in goals during the game.

14. The method of claim **13** comprising awarding 0 points to the first or second team that has the least goals scored during the game.

15. The method of claim **11** wherein the game is played in two halves, each being 10 to 20 minutes in duration.

16. The method of claim **15** wherein the game is played in two halves, each being 12 minutes in duration.

17. The method of claim **11** wherein the two halves are separated by a half time period is less than 5 minutes in duration.

18. The method of claim **11** wherein timeouts are forbidden during play of the game.

19. The method of claim **11** wherein each of the first and second teams have 3 players on the field during play of the game.

20. The method of claim **11** wherein, if during play of the game, a player moves the ball outside the circular marked perimeter line at a location, the ball is deemed out of bounds, and the ball can re-enter the field at the location.

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