Dec. 14, 1937. C. H. RICHARDSON 2,102,220

DEVICE FOR USE IN PLAYING SOLITAIRE CONTRACT BRIDGE

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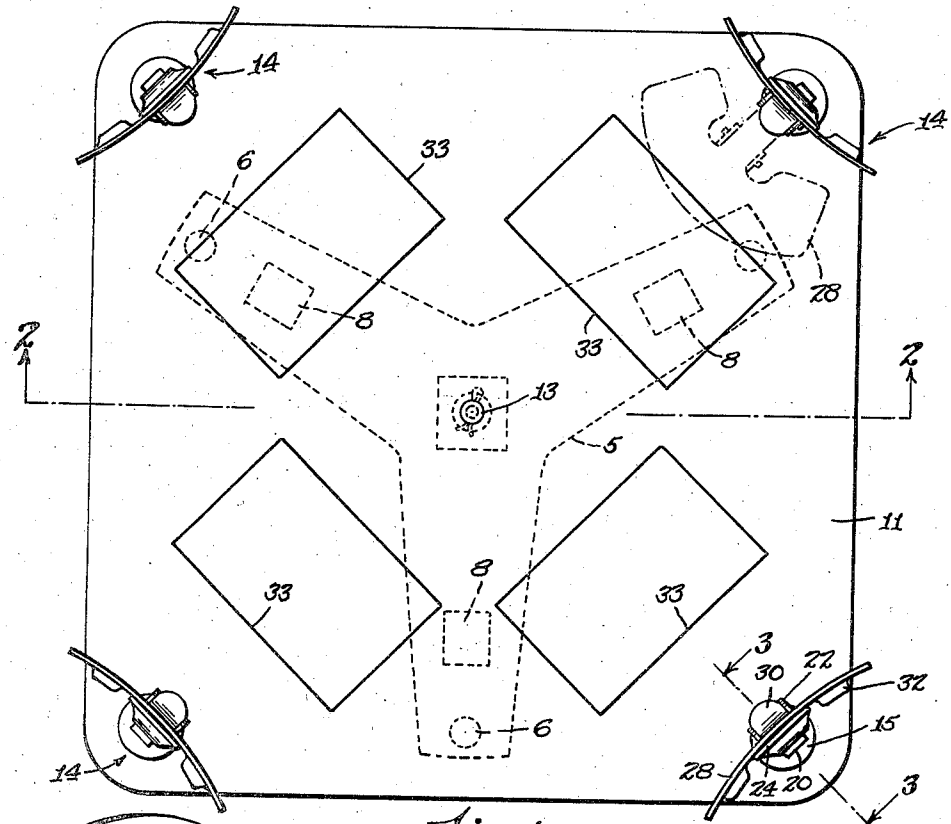


Fig. 1.

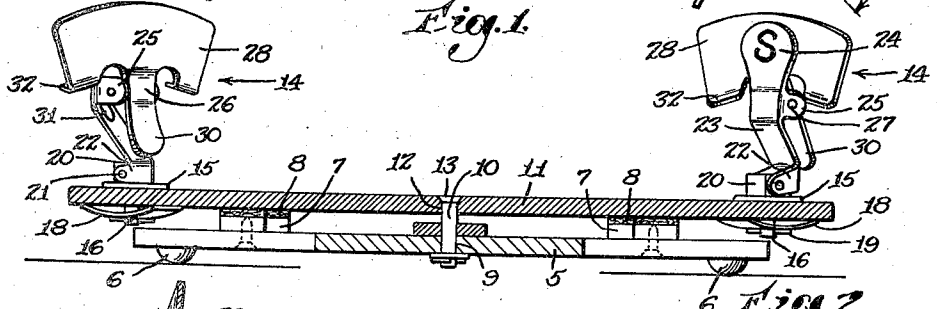


Fig. 2.

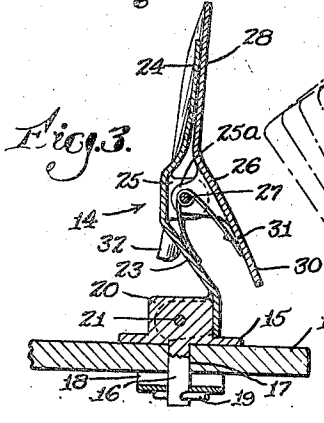


Fig. 3.

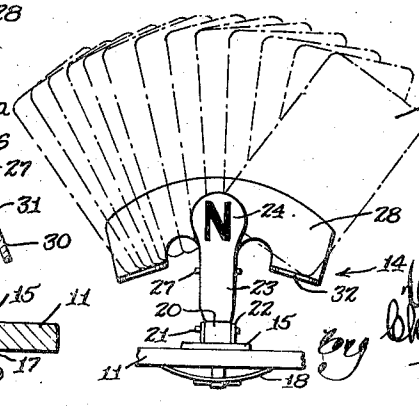


Fig. 4.

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DEVICE FOR USE IN PLAYING SOLITAIRE CONTRACT BRIDGE

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9 Claims. (Cl. 273—150)

The present invention relates to game devices, and more particularly to game devices used with playing cards which are dealt into separate hands and then played.

There are numerous card games of this class, one of which, taken herein only for purposes of illustration, is contract bridge. As this game is intended primarily to be played by four people arranged at a table in oppositely disposed pairs and each holding a hand of cards so that the front faces thereof, except those of the dummy, are concealed, it will be seen that contract bridge is not easily susceptible to solitaire playing with only cards and some sort of a flat surface on which to play them. If four hands of cards are placed face down on a table, the solitaire player must pick them up and then put them back face down successively, must keep the cards of each hand together at all times, and, except for the dummy hand, must repeat these acts until all the cards are played. All this is inconvenient and annoying, and the cards obviously cannot be placed on the table face up because this would entirely eliminate the concealment feature of the game. The difficulty with contract bridge as a solitaire game lies in devising some means whereby the cards can be easily handled in conventional manner. Such an arrangement as would readily permit the playing of bridge as a solitaire game, would facilitate the instruction of beginners and students of the game and would be a boon to invalids, shut-ins, people of advanced age who enjoy the game but who can get no one to play with them, and any others who would like to play the game at a time when sufficient people for partners are not at hand.

Looking at the matter in a different light, in addition to actually playing contract bridge, it is a general custom to arrange face up on a table hands of cards as published for exposition or instructions in newspapers, periodicals, and books, and then play the hands through as a problem or as explained by the writer who presents them and comments upon them. This custom does not require that the hands, as hands, be repeatedly picked up and put down, but considerable table space is required and the player must repeatedly reach over the table from one hand to another.

It is the principal object of the present invention to provide a game device to be used with playing cards whereby a single person can play as solitaire a game ordinarily played by four persons, such as contract bridge, or can arrange separate fanned-out hands of cards for study and game instruction, and can do these things easily, conveniently, and in keeping with the game's conventions.

To the accomplishment of this object and such others as may hereinafter appear, the various features of the present invention reside in certain constructions, combinations, and arrangements of parts fully disclosed hereinafter and then pointed out in the appended claims, possessing advantages which will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art.

The various features of the present invention will be readily understood from an inspection of the accompanying drawing, illustrating the best form of the invention at present known to the inventor, in which,

Figure 1 is a view in plan, the inclined position of one of the card holders being indicated in construction lines;

Fig. 2 is a view in sectional elevation taken along the line 2—2 of Fig. 1, but with one card holder facing inwardly of the table;

Fig. 3 is a detail view in sectional elevation of a card holder and an adjacent portion of the table; and

Fig. 4 is a detail view in front elevation of a holder provided with a hand of playing cards.

Referring to the drawings, the illustrated embodiment of the present invention is provided with a support 5 (Figs. 1 and 2), which, for purposes of disclosure only, is shown in the form of a spider. The spider 5 is intended to be placed upon a card table or other supporting surface, and may be provided with rubber knobs or cushions 6, as is well understood, to prevent sliding. Each arm of the spider 5 may be provided intermediate its ends with a block 7 (Fig. 2) the upper surface of which has a covering such as a piece of felt 8. Centrally of the spider 5 there is an opening 9 (Fig. 2) for the reception of one end of a pin 10.

The spider 5 functions as a base on which is rotatably mounted a flat table 11, shown for purposes of illustration only as being square. Centrally the table 11 is provided with an opening 12 for receiving the pin 10, the head 13 of which is preferably flat and countersunk to the level of the top of the table and the opposite end of which passes through the opening 9 and is suitably secured beneath the spider. As shown in Fig. 2, the under surface of the table 11 rests upon and is supported directly by the felt pieces 8.

With the construction so far described, the table 11 is rotatably mounted on the spider 5,

and the felt pieces 8 cause the rotation to be silent. In addition, by reason of their engagement with the under surface of the table, the felt pieces 8 form a frictional resistance to rotation of the table. Stated in another way, the friction afforded by the felt pieces 8 in engaging the under surface of the table serves to hold the table in any position to which it may be rotated. The blocks 7 and the felt pieces 8 serve to space the table above the spider 5 for a purpose which will appear hereinafter. As indicated in Fig. 1, the spider preferably lies within the peripheral edge of the table 11.

Each corner of the table 11 is provided with a card holder indicated generally by the numeral 14. The card holders are thus spaced 90 degrees apart with respect to the rotation of the table, and as all the card holders have the same construction, a description of one is deemed sufficient.

Each card holder 14 is provided with a base 15 resting on the upper surface of a corner of the table 11 and also with a pin 16 (best shown in Fig. 3) depending vertically from the base 15 and received by an opening 17 in the table. The pin 16 extends below the under surface of the table so as to receive a leaf spring 18, and a horizontal pin 19 passing through an opening in the end of the pin 16 abuts the spring 18 and serves to press the ends thereof against the bottom of the table 11. With this construction the base 15 is rotatable on a vertical axis independently of the table's rotation, and yet is held firmly in place. As will be seen in Fig. 2, the spacing between the table and the spider 5 afforded by the blocks 7 and the felt pieces 8 permits the swinging of the table over the spider although the leaf spring 18 and the end of the pin 16 lie below the under surface of the table.

The upper face of the card holder base 15 is provided with a boss 20 to which is pivoted by means of a horizontal pin 21 the ears 22 formed on the lower end of an upwardly extending arm 23. As shown best in Figs. 2 and 3, the bottom of the arm 23 engages the base 15 so that the arm can not tilt backwardly. The upper end of the arm 23 is enlarged into a card-engaging portion 24, and intermediate its ends the arm 23 is provided with a pair of ears 25 to which are pivoted the ears 25a (Fig. 3) of an arm 26 by means of a horizontal pin 27.

The arm 26 is provided above its pivot point with an enlarged and preferably concavely curved portion 28 of fan shape and sufficiently long to engage the back of a suitably fanned-out hand of cards 29. Below its pivot point the arm 26 is provided with a depending finger piece 30 which may be pressed towards the arm 23 to spread the curved portion 28 and the enlarged end 24 of the arm 23 apart. A spring 31 (Fig. 3) the opposite ends of which press against the finger piece 30 and the arm 23, respectively, is mounted on the pin 27 and maintains the curved portion 28 and the arm end 24 normally engaged. The arms 23 and 26 thus cooperate to form a clip for gripping between them one or more cards, and since the pin 21 is horizontal, this clip may be swung on a horizontal axis from an upright position in which the cards can be read to a position in which the cards are more or less parallel with the plane of the table and can not be read. The lower edges of the opposite ends of the curved portion 28 may be provided with flanges or shelves 32, respectively. which function to limit the extent to which a gripped hand of cards 29 may be fanned out. By reason of the concave curvature of the arm portion 28, the fanned-out hand of cards is held by the holder in a position simulating that resulting from manual holding.

Each of the card holders is geographically marked N, E, S, or W, as the case may be, (only two of such markings being shown), in accordance with the conventional manner of designating bridge hands in diagrams. This marking is preferably placed on the enlarged end 24 of each arm 23 as indicated in Figs. 2 and 4 so as to be always in view when the cards in the holders are being read. In front of each holder 14 the table 11 may be marked with a rectangle 33 of the size of a playing card.

In using the illustrated embodiment of the present in vention to play contract bridge as solitaire, the player deals out four hands of cards, arranges them by suits and fans them out in the usual manner, and then inserts them in the proper holders 14, being guided by the conventional N, E, S, and W markings in so doing. The holders 14 are initially swung on the table 11 so as to face outwardly of the center thereof as shown in Fig. 1, the front faces of the cards held thereby thus facing outwardly also and the backs of oppositely disposed hands facing each other. With the holders 14 so arranged and with the South holder, for example, in front of the player, he can see the front faces of only South's cards. He sees merely the back of North's cards and the side edges of the East and West cards.

By reason of the pivoting of the table 11 on the spider 5, a player thus sitting at South may swing the table to transfer the card holders successively toward or away from where he is sitting, thereby bringing the front faces of the cards held by the respective holders successively into or out of view.

Viewing South's cards, the player bids. Then he swings the table 11 ninety degrees to the right, thereby transferring the front faces of West's cards into view and transferring the front faces of South's cards out of view. The player then bids West's hand and swings the table ninety degrees more to the right. North's hand is thus brought into view, while West's hand is brought out of view. The player bids again, and continues the swinging of the table and his further bidding, himself remaining in one spot, until the declaration is made.

The player always plays the declarer's hand as his own. Should the declaring hand not be located at South, the player may shift the hands so that the declaring hand is at South, or of course the table may be swung to transfer to a point in front of the player the particular holder 14 having the declaring hand, at which point the holder remains while all the cards are played.

If the declaring hand is at South, let us say, to begin play the player swings the table 11 ninety degrees to the right so that he may see West's cards and play his lead. The table is then swung ninety degrees to the left and the dummy holder 14 (North) is swung 180 degrees on the table so that the front faces of the cards held thereby may be viewed and one of them played. Then the table is swung ninety degrees to the left to bring the front faces of East's cards into view so that a card may be played, and then swung ninety degrees to the right to bring South's cards into view so that a card may be played to complete the trick. The table 11 is

then swung, if necessary, to bring before the player the hand that took the trick, whereupon the remaining cards are played and successive tricks taken in the manner explained above.

The cards played may be placed anywhere on the table, the countersinking of the pin head 13 insuring a smooth playing surface. If it is intended to reconstruct the hands, however, after all the cards have been played, it will be found convenient to place each card as it is played in the proper rectangle 33. This is a practical point in playing hands published in newspapers, periodicals, and books, and renders easy the reassembling of hands for playing duplicate bridge.

The preferred way of using the illustrated embodiment of the present invention is that explained above. The card holders may, of course, be tilted down initially so that the cards extend outwardly of the table with their front faces concealed from view. The table may then be swung with the cards in this position, the player tilting them up in order to bid or play and then tilting them down again. Moreover, after the declaration has been made and dummy brought into view with all the cards in upright position, the two remaining (opponents') card holders 14 may be swung on the table so that the front faces of their cards face the player, whereupon the holders are tilted down towards the plane of the table so their cards cannot be read. With this arrangement the table 11 need not be swung at all, the two holders 14 named being alternately lifted up and then tilted down again as cards are played. Another method of play is merely to swing the opponents' card holders on the table into and out of view as cards are played. It will be seen that the table swinging method with the cards upright as explained above is the easiest and most enjoyable, the variations being stated merely to show the possibilities of the device.

As a further point with respect to the exposure of cards in playing solitaire as described above, when a hand is momentarily exposed for play, the opposing hands are always concealed from view. Moreover, since the player plays impartially for both sides, the separate and brief exposure of a hand played for one side is harmless because it is counterbalanced by a similar exposure of a hand played for the other side. The illustrated embodiment of the present invention thus provides a conveniently operated device by which a player may play contract bridge as solitaire in accordance with all the conventions of the game. The device is always available for leisure, the player does all the bidding, makes and plays the declaration, and as a very outstanding feature, always holds and plays the best cards. In addition, in playing solitaire the player has four times the opportunities to bid that he has when four people play because the solitaire player bids all four of the hands, and the playing experience gained by the player during a game of solitaire is increased threefold over that gained by him in a game among four people since the solitaire player plays each of the opponents' hands in addition to his own.

Many game constructions are such that it is desirable that there be a box or case in which they may be placed when not in use. It is for this end that both the spider 5 and the card holders 14, when inclind so as to be more or less parallel with the table 11, lie within the peripheral edge of the table. With this construction the device can be conveniently and compactly boxed, and there are no parts projecting outside the peripheral edge of the table which might be damaged by lateral strain on the box.

While the illustrated embodiment of the present invention has been described as used for playing solitaire contract bridge, it will be apparent that it may be used for playing as solitaire any card game involving separate hands the cards of which are played with or without bidding, and that if desired, four people may set at the device and place their cards in the holders, otherwise playing in the usual, four player manner, or playing their cards into the rectangles 33 for easy reassembly in case they desire to play duplicate bridge. It will also be apparent that various changes and modifications may be made in the details of construction of the particular device shown for purposes of disclosure without departing from the true scope of the actual invention, characterizing features of which are set forth in the following claims.

What is claimed as new is:

1. A device for use in playing solitaire contract bridge having, in combination, a base, a table rotatably mounted thereon, a plurality of card holders each rotatably mounted on the table, and means for yieldingly maintaining each holder in place on the table in any position to which said holder may be rotated thereon.

2. A device for use in playing solitaire contract bridge having, in combination, a base, a table rotatably mounted thereon, a plurality of card holders each rotatably mounted on the table, means for yieldingly maintaining each holder in place on the table in any position to which said holder may be rotated thereon, and means for frictionally resisting rotation of the table regardless of the position thereon of the holders.

3. A device for use in playing solitaire contract bridge having, in combination, a base, a table rotatably mounted thereon, a plurality of holders, each adapted to support at least one card, mounted on the table, each of said holders being movable from a position in which a face of a held card can be read to a position in which said face is concealed, and means for yieldingly maintaining each holder in place on the table during said movement of the holder.

4. A device for use in playing solitaire contract bridge having, in combination, a base, a table rotatably mounted thereon, a plurality of holders, each adapted to support at least one card, rotatably mounted on the table, each of said holders also being movable from a position in which a face of a held card can be read to a position in which said face is concealed, and means for yieldingly maintaining each holder in place on the table during said movement of the holder regardless of the position on the table to which the holder may be rotated.

5. A device for use in playing solitaire contract bridge having, in combination, a base, a table rotatably mounted thereon, a plurality of holders, each adapted to support at least one card, rotatably mounted on the table, each of said holders also being movable from a position in which a face of a held car can be read to a position in which said face is concealed, means for yieldingly maintaining each holder in place on the table during said movement of the holder regardless of the position on the table to which the holder may be rotated, and means for frictionally resisting rotation of the table regardless of the position on the table to which the holder may be rotated or moved.

6. A device for use in playing solitaire contract bridge having, in combination, four card holders supported on a rotatable table, said card holders being spaced ninety degrees apart with respect to the rotation of the table and being independently rotatable on the table so that they may be faced inwardly or outwardly with respect to the center of the table, means for yieldingly maintaining each holder in place on the table in any position to which said holder may be rotated thereon, and means for frictionally resisting rotation of the table regardless of the position thereon of the holders.

7. A device for use in playing solitaire contract bridge having, in combination, four card holders supported on a table rotatable on its base, said card holders being spaced ninety degrees apart with respect to the rotation of the table and being independently rotatable on the table so that they may be faced inwardly or outwardly with respect to the center of the table, means for yieldingly maintaining each holder in place on the table in any position to which said holder may be rotated thereon, and means for supporting the table on its base and for frictionally resisting rotation of the table thereon regardless of the position of the card holders on the table.

8. A device for use in playing solitaire contract bridge having, in combination, four card holders supported normally in an upright position on a rotatable table, said card holders being spaced ninety degrees apart with respect to the rotation of the table and being independently rotatable on the table so that they may be faced inwardly or outwardly with respect to the center of the table, said holders also each being inclinable from their normally upright position so that a face of a card held thereby is concealed, means for yieldingly maintaining each holder in place on the table in any position to which said holder may be rotated thereon, and means for frictionally resisting rotation of the table regardless of the position of the card holders on the table.

9. A device for use in playing solitaire contract bridge having, in combination, four card holders supported normally in an upright position on a table rotatable on its base, said card holders being spaced ninety degrees apart with respect to the rotation of the table and being independently rotatable on the table so that they may be faced inwardly or outwardly with respect to the center of the table, said holders also each being inclinable from their normally upright position so that a face of a card held thereby is concealed, means for yieldingly maintaining each holder in place on the table in any position to which said holder may be rotated thereon, and means for supporting the table on its base and for frictionally resisting rotation of the table thereon regardless of the position of the card holders on the table.

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