

FIGURE 2

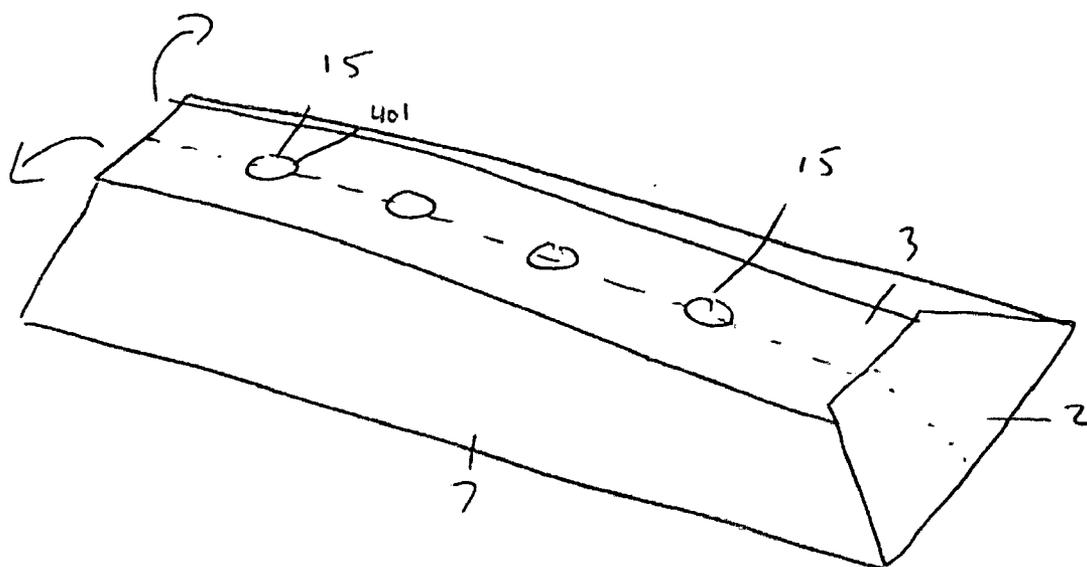


FIGURE 3

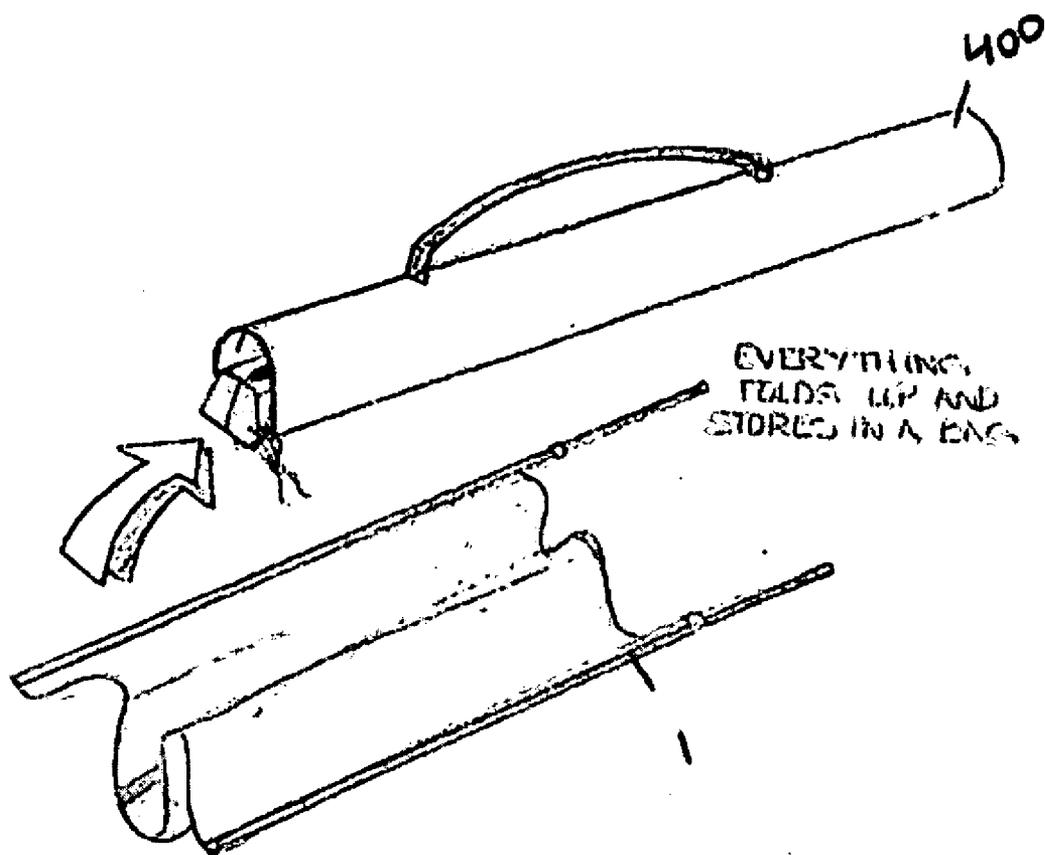


FIGURE 4

CHILD SAFETY NET

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention generally relates to a child safety net. The device may act as a barrier to prevent items, such as a basketball, from inadvertently exiting a playing area. As a result, the device may prevent a child from chasing after a ball and running into traffic. Further, the device is useful in eliminating the need to spend time chasing a ball even in a safe environment, such as a park. The device is particularly suitable for use at the end of a driveway. The device has a lightweight net which is easily installed at any location. The net may be easily rolled up for storage and transportation. The base of the device is weighted and has a plurality of female slots for receiving a plurality of posts.

[0002] Privately owned basketball nets are extremely popular in America. Most of these basketball nets are located off to the side of a driveway or secured to a garage and located over a driveway. Children and adults often play informal basketball games in their driveway. During the course of play it is almost inevitable that the basketball will get by a player and head out of bounds, often toward a street. Although playing basketball is healthy exercise for individuals, it can also lead to serious injury or death. More specifically, every year hundreds of adults and children are killed or seriously injured by being struck by motorized vehicles while the adult or child is chasing the basketball into a street. Although one of the first rules children are taught is to look both ways when entering a street, these words are often ignored or forgotten.

[0003] Some attempts have been made to provide a barrier whereby a run-away ball is prevented from entering into a street. For example, U.S. Pat. No. 6,807,999 to Brown discloses: "a retractable barrier particularly adapted to providing a readily viewable boundary across a pathway so that a child may be discouraged from wandering outside the safe zone established thereby. A main post assembly rotatably supports a net carrier for rotation about an axis. A net of substantial height is secured on one end to the net carrier and has a secondary post secured to the other end. A spring is disposed between a cap and an upper flange. The spring secures to the cap and engages the net carrier assembly to supply a retraction bias to the net carrier. A first ground sleeve is inserted in the ground and adapted to releasably engage the lower post mount. A second ground sleeve is inserted in the ground and adapted to releasably engage the second post. The barrier is moveable between a retracted configuration and a deployed configuration."

[0004] U.S. Pat. No. 5,407,178 to Long discloses: "a driveway guard for installation across a driveway to prevent playthings from going into the street. The driveway guard includes a pair of posts, a net with an apron, guy lines, tent pegs and assemblies for connecting the net to the posts. The net is long enough to span a two-car driveway and has a dividing strip separating the net into two net portions. One of the net portions has a length for spanning a one-car driveway. A pair of belts are attached to the dividing strip. To install the driveway guard across a two-car driveway, the entire length of the net is suspended across the driveway between the posts, which are staked and guyed into the ground on opposite sides of the driveway. The apron engages the driveway to prevent objects from rolling under the net into the street. For a one-car driveway, the net is rolled up from one end to the dividing strip and the belts are run around the roll and buckled. The one-car net portion is then suspended across the driveway. For storing and

carrying the net, the net is rolled up from both ends to the dividing strip and the belts are buckled around the two rolls. A handle may be attached to the dividing strip to facilitate carrying the net."

[0005] However, these devices fail to provide a safe, efficient device for preventing a ball from exiting a playing field in the manner defined in the present invention.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] The present invention generally relates to a child safety net. The device may act as a barrier to prevent items, such as a basketball, from inadvertently exiting a playing area. As a result, the device may prevent a child from chasing after a ball and running into traffic. Further, the device is useful in eliminating the need to spend time chasing a ball even in a safe environment, such as a park. The device is particularly suitable for use at the end of a driveway. The device has a lightweight net which is easily installed at any location. The net may be easily rolled up for storage and transportation. The base of the device is weighted and has a plurality of female slots for receiving a plurality of posts.

[0007] The child safety net of the present invention is an easy to assemble net that prevents an object, such as a basketball, from rolling into, for example, a street. The device may help prevent a child from putting himself or herself in danger by entering into a street in pursuit of the object. Although parental supervision is always encouraged, the device may ease some of the worry of parents.

[0008] The device is easily assembled in almost any location, such as the end of a driveway. When properly installed, the device creates a physical barrier between the playing field and, for example, a street.

[0009] An advantage of the present invention is to provide a child safety net which is lightweight.

[0010] An advantage of the present invention is to provide a child safety net which is easily assembled.

[0011] Another advantage of the present invention is to provide a child safety net which may vary in height.

[0012] A further advantage of the present invention is to provide a child safety net which is easily transported and stored.

[0013] A still further advantage of the present invention is to provide a child safety net which does not need a pin or stake to be inserted into the ground.

[0014] For a more complete understanding of the above listed features and advantages of the child safety net, reference should be made to the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments and to the accompanying drawings. Further, additional features and advantages of the present invention are described in, and will be apparent from, the detailed description of the preferred embodiments and from the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] FIG. 1 illustrates a side perspective view of the safety net of the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 2 illustrates a side perspective view of the safety net of the present invention.

[0017] FIG. 3 illustrates an alternative embodiment of the safety net wherein the base is split into two units.

[0018] FIG. 4 illustrates the apparatus rolled tip and inserted into a carrying case.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0019] The present invention generally relates to a child safety net. The device may act as a barrier to prevent items, such as a basketball, from inadvertently exiting a playing area. As a result, the device may prevent a child from chasing after a ball and running into traffic. Further, the device is useful in eliminating the need to spend time chasing a ball even in a safe environment, such as a park. The device is particularly suitable for use at the end of a driveway. The device has a lightweight net which is easily installed at any location. The net may be easily rolled up for storage and transportation. The base of the device is weighted and has a plurality of female slots for receiving a plurality of posts.

[0020] Referring now to FIGS. 1 and 2, the apparatus 1 may have a base 2 having a top 3, a bottom 4, a front 5, a back 6, a first side 7 and a second side 8. The top 3, the bottom 4, the front 5, the back 6, the first side 7 and the second side 8 may be generally flat in shape, although any suitable shape may be used. The base is preferably made from plastic or metal. In an embodiment, the top 3 may be smaller than the bottom 4. More specifically, the first side 7 and the second side 8 may taper upward so that the surface area of the bottom 4 is larger than the surface area of the top 3. As a result, the base 2 may more securely remain upright and may resist the unintentional overturning which may be caused by a more top-heavy base. The base 2 may have an interior 10. The interior of the base 2 may be filled with, for example, water or sand 57. More specifically, the interior may be filled through an opening 11 located on the top 3 surface of the base 2. The opening 11 may have a cover 12 to prevent the water, sand or the like from unintentionally exiting the opening 11.

[0021] Located on the top 3 of the base 2 may be a plurality of female slots 15 having a circumference 200. The female slots 15 may accept corresponding male hollow tube 21 having a slightly smaller circumference 201 than the circumference 200 of the female slots 15 so that, when inserted, the hollow tubes 21 fit snugly within the female slots 15. The hollow tubes 21 may be secured to a net 100. The hollow tubes 21 may telescopically extend over a post 16. More specifically, the posts 16 may have a circumference 301 which is slightly smaller than the circumference 201 of the hollow tube 21 so that the posts 16 may telescopically move at least partly within the interior of the hollow tube 21. A securing device 50 may be permanently attached to a first end 51 of the posts 16. The user may raise or lower the posts 16 vertically with respect to the hollow tubes 21 until the user selects a desired height of the posts 16. The user may then twist the securing device 50 so that a circumference 55 in the securing device securely grasps the hollow tube 21. Securing devices 50 which securing telescoping tubes are generally known in the art and will not be described in further detail herein.

[0022] Within the female slots 15 may be a generally circular concave ring 150 which extends slightly outside of the circumference of the female slots 15. The hollow tubes 21 may have a corresponding convex ring 151 which may fit snugly within the concave ring 150 of the female slots 15 when the hollow tubes 21 are inserted into the female slots 15. When inserting the hollow tubes 21 into the female slots 15 the user may apply a light to moderate force to overcome the friction caused by the convex ring 151 of the hollow tubes 21

being pushed through the female slots 16. Once properly inserted, the hollow tubes 21 may remain securely located within the female slots 15 by, for example friction and gravity, until such time as the user elects to disassemble the device. To disassemble the device, the user simply pulls upward on the hollow tubes 21 to overcome the friction caused by the convex rings 151 of the hollow tubes 21.

[0023] Referring now to FIG. 3, in an embodiment, the base 2 of the device 1 may be split into two separate units. Preferably, the base 2 may split along the length of the base 2. The two units may then snap together to form the functional base 2. Splitting the base 2 into two units may allow the user to transport and store the device 1 in an easier manner. Each of the two units may have an indentation 401 which, when brought together as the functional base 2, form the female slots 16.

[0024] When in use, a plurality of bases 2 may be implemented. More specifically, a user may line up numerous bases 2 end to end along, for example, the end of a driveway, such that a single net may have male posts 16 inserted into numerous female slots 15 located on different bases 2. As such, the user may easily adjust the total length of the device 1 to accommodate varying driveway lengths.

[0025] Attached to the hollow tubes 21 and/or the posts 16 may be a net 100. The net 100 may have a length 101 and a height 102. The length 101 of the net 100 may be at least as long as the width of a typical driveway. As stated above, a plurality of hollow tubes 21 may be located along the length 101 of the net 100. The hollow tubes 21 are generally perpendicular with respect to the net 100. More specifically, when in use, the hollow tubes 21 are generally vertical with respect to the ground whereas the net 100 is generally parallel with respect to the ground. Preferably, a plurality of hollow tubes 21 are secured to the net 100. The distance between the hollow tubes 21 may vary, but typically the distance between the hollow tubes 21 would be between 1 foot and 5 feet. Locating the hollow tubes more than five feet apart may reduce the amount of force the net 100 may safely absorb. Preferably, the number of hollow tubes 21 corresponds directly with the number of male posts 16 so that each hollow tube 21 is inserted over a post 16.

[0026] In an embodiment, the height 102 of the net 100 may remain constant while an overall height 200 of the device 1 may vary. More specifically, if the user prefers the overall device 1 to have a small height 200, the user may cover a large portion of the posts 16 with the hollow tube 21 before securing the hollow tube 21 to the posts 16. A portion of the height 102 of the net 100 may then extend below the top 3 of the base 2 such that a portion of the net 100 may actually touch the ground. In this position there may be no opening between the bottom of the net 100 and the top 3 of the base. Alternatively, if the user prefers the overall height 200 of the device 1 to be high the user may reduce the amount of posts 16 which the hollow tubes 21 cover to a minimum before securing the hollow tube 21 to the posts 16. In this extended position, an opening may be present between the bottom of the net 100 and the top 3 of the base 2.

[0027] Referring now to FIG. 4, the apparatus 1 may be rolled up and inserted into a carrying case 400.

[0028] Although embodiments of the present invention are shown and described therein, it should be understood that various changes and modifications to the presently preferred embodiments will be apparent to those skilled in the art. Such changes and modifications may be made without departing

from the spirit and scope of the present invention and without diminishing its attendant advantages. It is, therefore, intended that such changes and modifications be covered by the appended claims.

I claim:

1) A safety net for preventing an object from escaping a location comprising:

a base having a top, a bottom, a front, a back, a first side, a second side and an interior;

a plurality of openings on the top side wherein the openings extend downward within the interior of the base and

wherein the openings create a cavity and wherein a concave ring is located within the cavity;
a plurality of hollow tubes removable inserted through the plurality of openings into the cavities wherein the plurality of hollow tubes have a convex ring with correspondingly fits within the concave ring of the cavity;
a plurality of posts inserted within the plurality of hollow tubes wherein the posts telescopically adjustable extend within at least a part of an interior of the hollow tube; and
a net attached to the post.

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