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(54) **PORTABLE SOCCER GOAL AND FIELD APPARATUS AND METHOD**

**Publication Classification**

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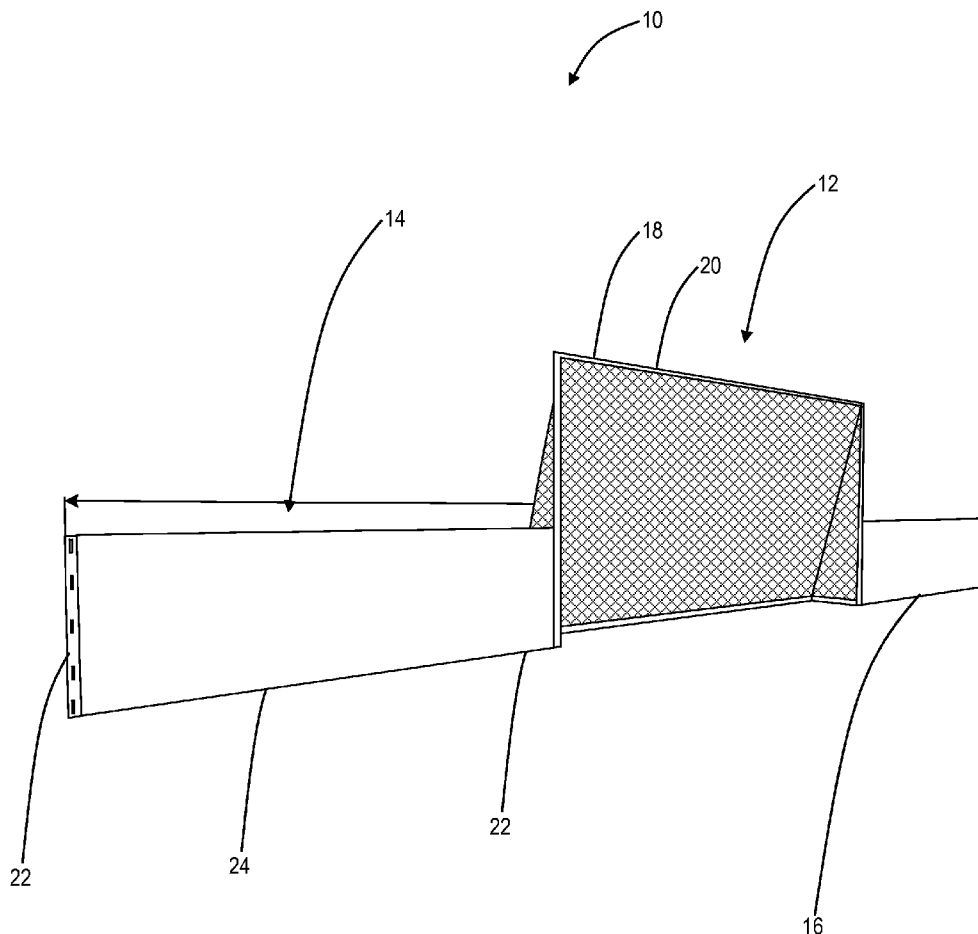
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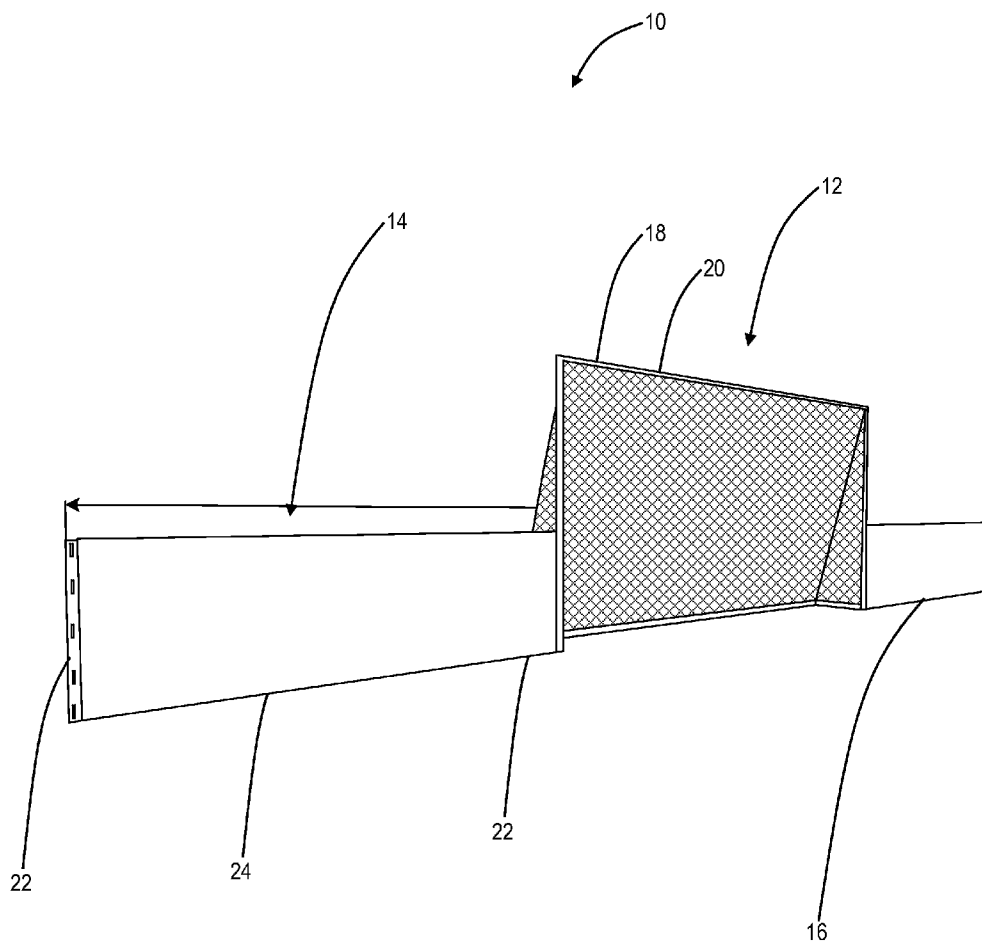
(57) **ABSTRACT**

The present disclosure relates to a portable soccer goal and field apparatus and method that include a lightweight, modular, and portable soccer goal and accompanying enclosures. The present disclosure is a portable system for a goal and various boundaries that enables a soccer field and goals to be set up and torn down on any field seamlessly, quickly, and efficiently. Further, the boundaries keep a soccer ball "in play", i.e. the boundaries provide confinement. This prevents wasted time in chasing an out-of-bounds ball and turbo charges game play. Also, the present disclosure is adaptable in that the goal may connect to any number of boundaries in a variety of configurations for game play, training, exercise, and the like.

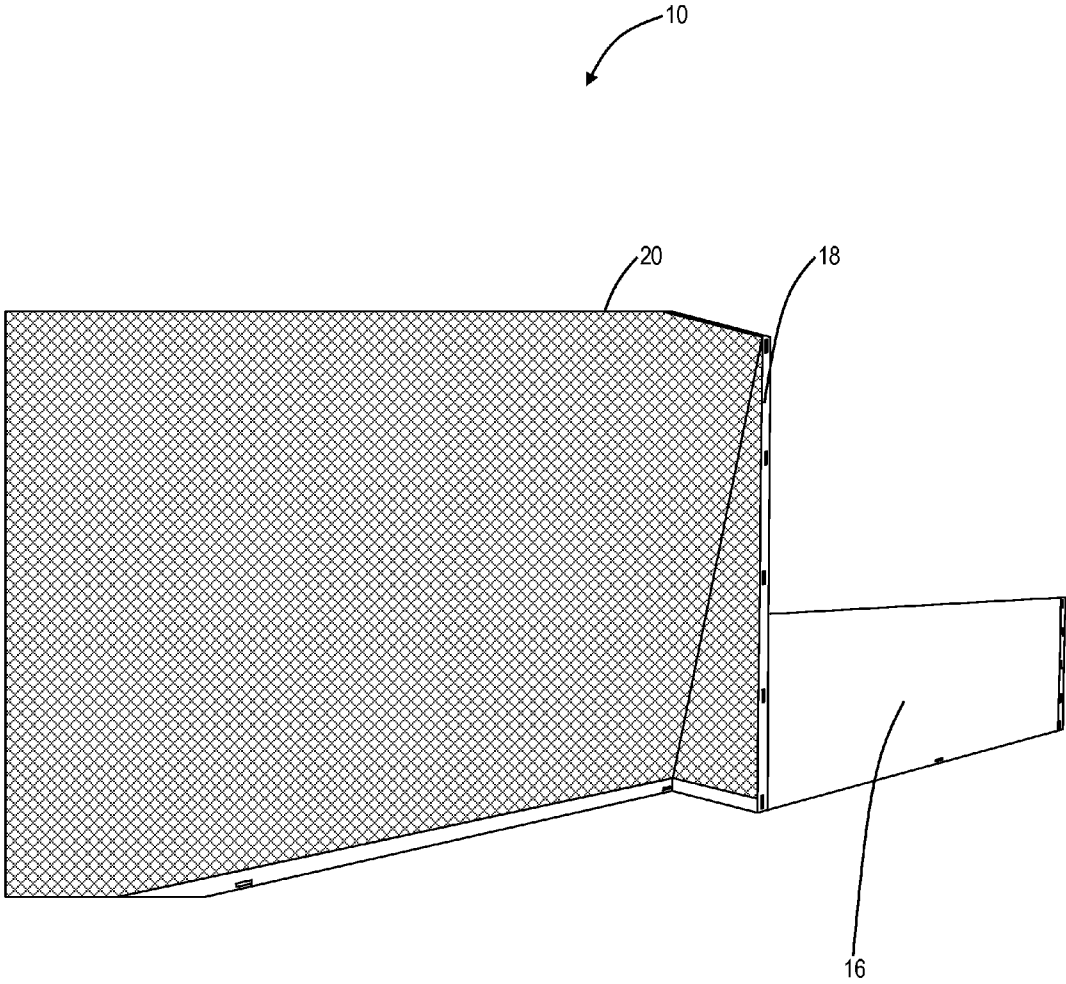
**Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 61/377,299, filed on Aug. 26, 2010.

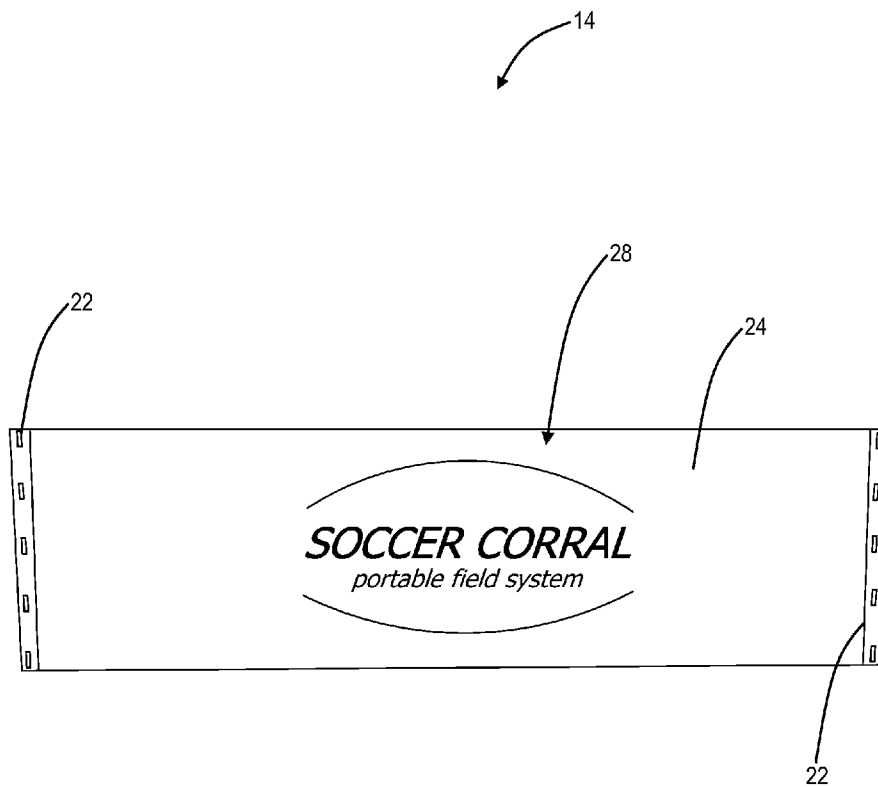




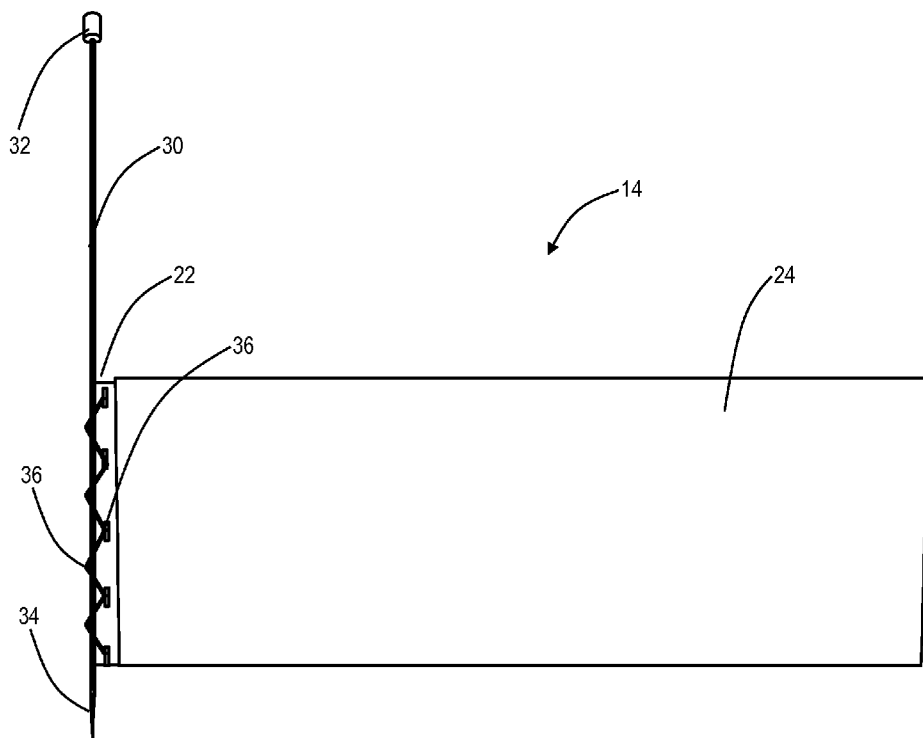
**FIG. 1**



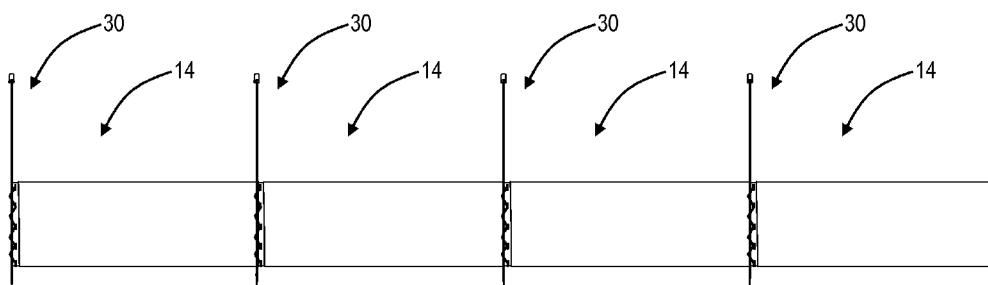
**FIG. 2**



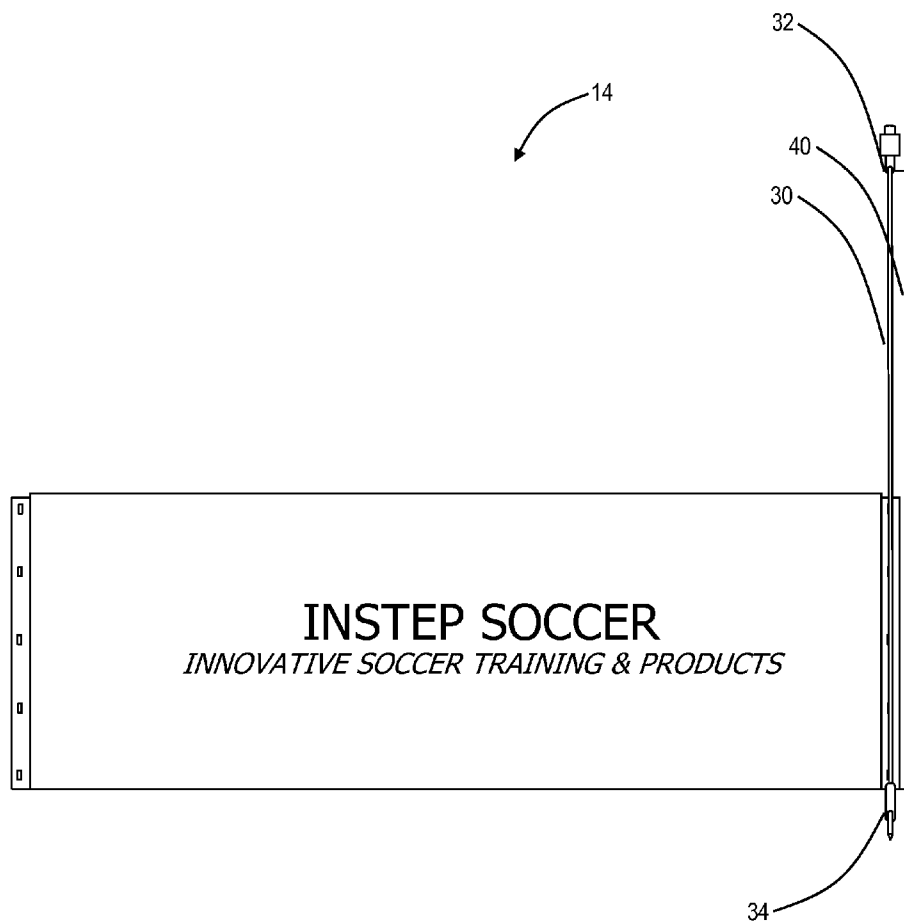
**FIG. 3**



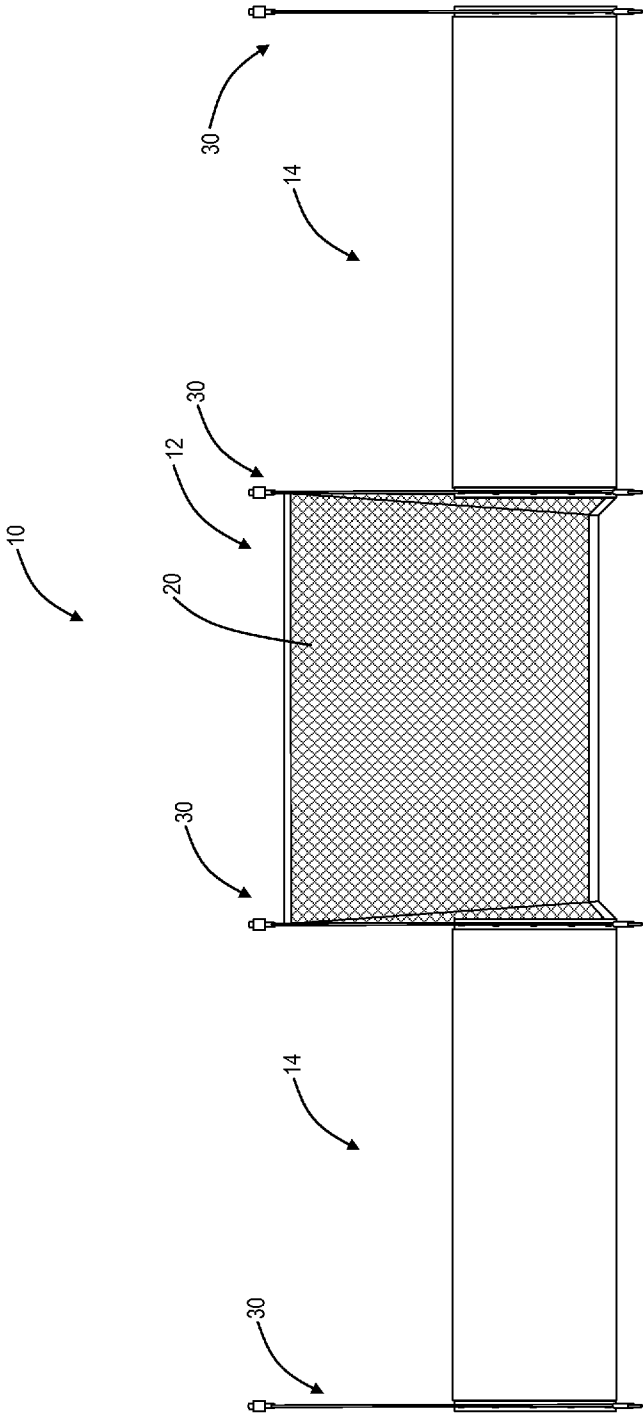
**FIG. 4**



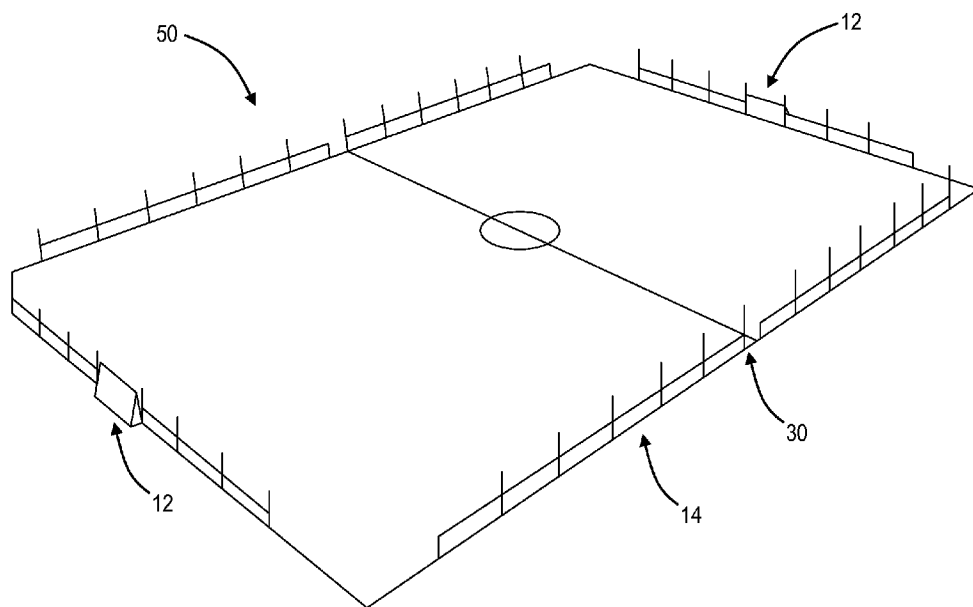
**FIG. 5**



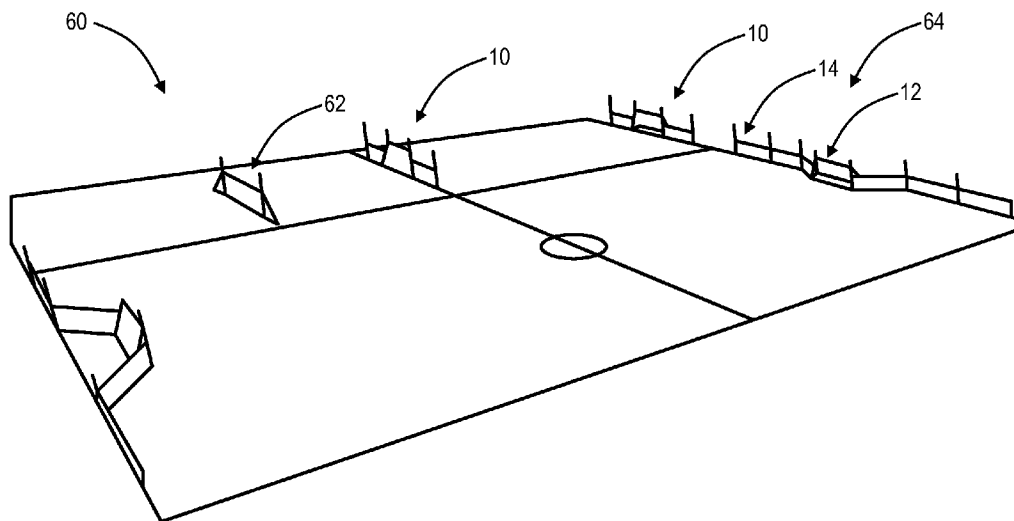
**FIG. 6**



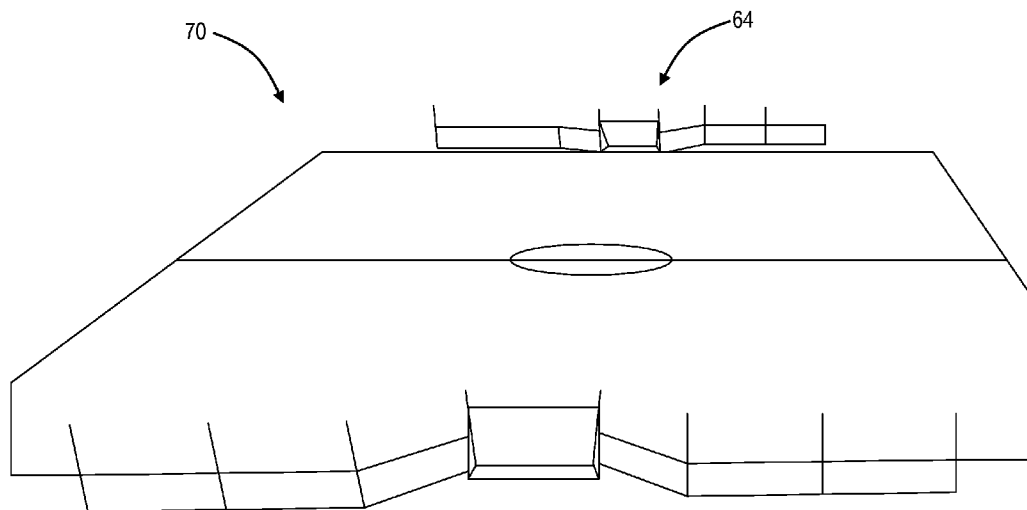
**FIG. 7**



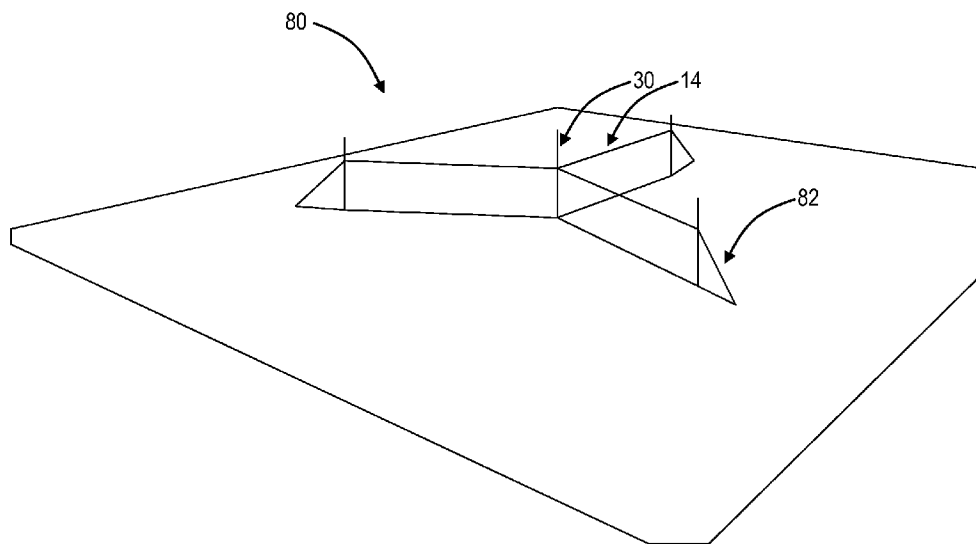
**FIG. 8**



**FIG. 9**



**FIG. 10**



**FIG. 11**

**PORTABLE SOCCER GOAL AND FIELD APPARATUS AND METHOD**

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION(S)**

[0001] The present non-provisional patent application claims priority to U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 61/377,299, filed Aug. 26, 2010, and entitled "PORTABLE SOCCER GOAL AND FIELD APPARATUS AND METHOD," which is incorporated in full by reference herein.

**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

[0002] The present invention relates generally to a portable soccer goal and field apparatus and method. More particularly, the present invention relates to a portable goal which may be coupled to a plurality of portable panels forming soccer goals and the field.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

[0003] Soccer is proliferating in the U.S. at all levels from youth to adult. Typically, soccer is played on a rectangular field with goals at opposing ends and boundaries defined on the field, such as via chalk, paint, or posts. As such, soccer fields must be maintained and dedicated for playing soccer. Further, using existing boundaries on the field, such as via chalk, paint, or posts, it may be difficult to continuously keep a soccer ball "in play" meaning within the field of play since these conventional boundaries do not stop the ball. What is needed is a portable system for a goal and boundaries that may allow a soccer field and goals to be set up and torn down on any field seamlessly, quickly, and efficiently.

**BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0004] In various exemplary embodiments, the present invention relates to a portable soccer goal and field apparatus and method that include a lightweight, modular, and portable soccer goal and accompanying enclosures. The present invention is a portable system for a goal and boundaries that enables a soccer field and goals to be set up and torn down on any field seamlessly, quickly, and efficiently.

[0005] In an exemplary embodiment, a soccer field enclosure system includes a mesh goal formed through a plurality of poles; one or more panels; and a plurality of end poles for supporting the one or more panels; wherein one of the one or more panels is connected to the mesh goal; and wherein each of the mesh goal and the one or more panels are foldable and storable with the plurality of poles and the plurality of end poles in a carrying case. The one or more panels may include end portions each configured to attach to one of the plurality of end poles. The plurality of end poles may be configured to flex. The soccer field enclosure system may further include a rebound cord attached to each of the plurality of end poles, wherein the rebound cord is configured to return a panel to a substantially upright position after flexing. The soccer field enclosure system may further include an advertisement or logo on one of the one or more panels. Optionally, the advertisement or logo is printed on the one of the one or more panels. Alternatively, the advertisement or logo is attached to the one of the one or more panels. The one or more panels may be deployable in a modular configuration. Optionally, the one or more panels may include a length of four to six feet. The

plurality of end poles may include a stake portion for engaging a surface and a top portion. The top portion may include a foam cover.

[0006] In another exemplary embodiment, a soccer field kit may include one or more mesh goals; one or more banners; poles for supporting the one or more mesh goals; flexible end poles for supporting the one or more banners, the flexible end poles configured to engage a surface and to engage the one or more banners for support thereof; wherein the one or more goals and the one or more banners are modularly configurable to form a plurality of soccer field configurations. The soccer field kit may include an advertisement or logo on the one or more banners. Optionally, the advertisement or logo is printed on the one or more banners. Alternatively, the advertisement or logo is attached to the one or more banners.

[0007] In yet another exemplary embodiment, a soccer field includes at least one portable mesh goal supported by a plurality of insertable poles, the plurality of insertable poles are removable from the at least one portable mesh goal; and at least two portable panels each adjacent to the at least one portable mesh goal and supported by an end pole configured to engage a surface and to support the at least two portable panels, the at least two portable panels are removeable from the surface; wherein the at least two portable panels are configured to provide soccer ball confinement for shots toward the at least one portable mesh goal.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0008] The present invention is illustrated and described herein with reference to the various drawings, in which like reference numbers denote like method steps and/or system components, respectively, and in which:

[0009] FIGS. 1 and 2 are diagrams of a soccer goal enclosure system according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

[0010] FIG. 3 is a diagram of a panel used with the enclosure system of FIG. 1 according to an exemplary embodiment of the present invention;

[0011] FIG. 4 is a diagram of a panel with a pole disposed therethrough;

[0012] FIG. 5 is a diagram of a plural panels with poles disposed therethrough;

[0013] FIG. 6 is a diagram of a panel coupled to a pole with a rebound cord attached thereto;

[0014] FIG. 7 is a diagram of a front view of the soccer goal enclosure system of FIG. 1;

[0015] FIG. 8 is a diagram of a first exemplary deployment in which plural panels with poles are utilized to form a large field with opposing goals;

[0016] FIG. 9 is a diagram of a second exemplary deployment which may be referred to as an exemplary training field;

[0017] FIG. 10 is a diagram of a third exemplary deployment 70 which includes two end line systems over a full field; and

[0018] FIG. 11 is a diagram of a three-sided soccer tennis deployment with three panels at a center point.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION**

[0019] In various exemplary embodiments, the present invention relates to a portable soccer goal and field apparatus and method that include a lightweight, modular, and portable soccer goal and accompanying enclosures. The present invention is a portable system for a goal and various boundaries that

enables a soccer field and goals to be set up and torn down on any field seamlessly, quickly, and efficiently. Further, the boundaries help to keep a soccer ball “in play”, i.e. the boundaries provide confinement. This prevents wasted time in chasing an out-of-bounds ball and turbo charges game play. Also, the present invention is adaptable in that the goal may connect to any number of boundaries in a variety of configurations for game play, training, exercise, and the like.

**[0020]** Referring to FIGS. 1 and 2, in an exemplary embodiment, diagrams illustrate a soccer goal enclosure system 10. The enclosure system 10 includes a goal 12 connected to two panels 14, 16. The goal 12 is formed by a plurality of inter-connectable poles 18 of varying lengths and a mesh net 20. For example, the goal 12 may be formed from a total of eight poles 18—two poles 18 substantially parallel to one another and the ground forming the top and the bottom of the goal 12, two poles 18 upright from the ground forming the sides, and four poles 18 forming the interior of the goal 12. The mesh net 20 may include clips or the like to run the poles 18 through. The poles 18 may be freestanding or may include a stake to connect into in the ground. In an exemplary embodiment, the poles 18 may be a flexible material such as fiberglass, plastic, Polyvinyl chloride (PVC), and the like. The poles 18 may snap or connect to one another through various means. For example, the poles 18 may include connectors disposed at each end for attachment thereto with other poles 18. In another exemplary embodiment, the goal 12 may be formed without the poles 18 and instead include a shaped mesh forming the mesh net 20 with stakes or the like for securing to the ground.

**[0021]** The panels 14, 16 may include end portions 22 and a banner 24 disposed between the end portions 22. The end portions 22 are connected or formed to the banner 24. The end portions 22 and the banner 24 may include a flexible material such as cloth, nylon, polyester, etc. The end portions 22 may include means to connect to a pole or the like for supporting the panels 14, 16. For example, the end portions 22 may include a plurality of openings to receive a cord or the like to attach the end portions 22 to a pole. In another example, the end portions 22 may include an opening through which a pole is slid. Alternatively, the end portions 22 may include clasps, ties, hooks, etc. to connect to a pole. Also, the end portion 22 abutting the goal 12 may connect to the goal 12 through the pole 18 or the like.

**[0022]** Referring to FIG. 3, in an exemplary embodiment, a diagram illustrates a single panel 14 for use with the enclosure system 10. Note, FIG. 1 illustrates the goal 12 with two panels 14, 16. Each of the panels 14, 16 is substantially the same, and the enclosure system 10 may include any number of panels 14 forming a variety of different field configurations. That is, each of the end portions 22 may be configured to connect to another end portion 22 or adjacent banners 24 may be configured to share a single end portion 22. Further, the banner 24 may include a logo 28, such as an advertisement, emblem, logo, or the like. Importantly, the banner 24 may provide both an advertisement/logo 28 as well as being a boundary for the field simultaneously. This gives the opportunity for a local game to have a similar look and feel as a professional field. The advertisement/logo 28 may be directly printed on the banner 24 or may be attached to the banner 24 through a variety of means, e.g. hook and clasp, buttons, adhesive, ties, etc. Note, each end of the end portions 22 may include a plurality of button holes on each side through which poles or the like may be inserted for support thereof.

**[0023]** The enclosure system 10 may form a portable kit that may include any number of goals 12 and panels 14 to form various soccer field configurations. In particular, each of the components in the goals 12 and the panels 14 are configured to roll up and be stored in a substantially cylindrical carrying device. For example, the mesh net 20 may fold around the poles 18 and the banner 24 may fold around the end poles 22 with the folded parts then slid into the substantially cylindrical carrying device.

**[0024]** Referring to FIG. 4, in an exemplary embodiment, a panel 14 is illustrated with a pole 30 disposed therethrough. In this example, the pole 30 includes a top portion 32 and a stake portion 34. The stake portion 34 is configured to be placed within the ground to provide support for the pole 30 and the banner 24. The top portion 32 may include a banner, a sign, a post, a lamp, etc. The top portion 32 may also include protection such as a foam covering to prevent injury. The end portion 22 includes a plurality of openings 36 through which an attachment cord 38 couples the end portion 22 to the pole 30. The pole 30 may be a flexible material such as fiberglass, plastic, Polyvinyl chloride (PVC), and the like. In an exemplary embodiment, the pole 30 may be 3 to 6 feet in length. Also, the banner 24 may be 4 to 6 feet in length, such as 5 feet, for example.

**[0025]** Referring to FIG. 5, in an exemplary embodiment, plural panels 14 are illustrated with poles 30 disposed therethrough. Advantageously, the panels 14 may be interconnected via the end portions 22 with each end portion 22 sharing a common pole 30 between adjacent panels 14. Thus, the present invention enables a variety of differing field configurations by adding addition panels 14. Specifically, the panels 14 are configurable in a modular fashion to form any type of confinement or boundaries as required. The panels 14 may be approximately 4 to 6 feet in length, such as 5 feet, for example. It has been determined that length of approximately 5 feet provides adequate support and field coverage.

**[0026]** Referring to FIG. 6, in an exemplary embodiment, a panel 14 is illustrated coupled to a pole 30 with a rebound cord 40. As described herein, the panel 14 and the pole 30 may be flexible. For safety purposes, the panel 14 and the pole 30 may be configured to provide significant flexibility. For example, a person may be able to step on the panel 14 and the panel 14 and the pole 30 will flex such that the panel 14 is a soft boundary in case the person runs into the panel, i.e. the panel 14 will provide give upon flexing. The rebound cord 40 may be disposed on the pole between the stake portion 34 and the top portion 32 enabling the panel 14 to return to a substantially upright configuration after being flexed. For example, the rebound cord 40 may be elastic, e.g. bungee cord. In an exemplary embodiment, the pole 30 may be configured to flex completely from the top portion 32 to the ground or the stake portion 34 without breaking, i.e. 360 degree flexibility, and the rebound cord 40 may provide a mechanism for the panel 14 to retain its shape. In another exemplary embodiment, any spring like mechanism may be utilized with the panel 14 for returning the panel 14 to a substantially upright position after the pole has flexed. Note, the poles 30 may be configured to return themselves to the upright position upon flexing.

**[0027]** Referring to FIG. 7, in an exemplary embodiment, a front view illustrates the soccer goal enclosure system 10 with poles 30 disposed between the panels 14 and the goal 12. As described herein, the system 10 provides a convenient and portable system for ball confinement in soccer. The system 10

is portable, lightweight, modular, etc. and may be used in a plurality of field configurations only limited by a number of panels **14**.

[0028] Referring to FIGS. **8-12**, in various exemplary embodiments, diagrams illustrate example deployments of the enclosure system **10**. FIG. **8** illustrates a first exemplary deployment **50** in which plural panels **14** with poles **30** are utilized to form a large field with opposing goals **12**. This may be a fully enclosed soccer field or may include several openings (as shown in FIG. **8**) for players to ingress and egress the playing field. Such configuration may be advantageous in youth games or the like, i.e. keeping the ball in play for faster play. The deployment **50** may be a 30 yd×20 yd field, for example.

[0029] FIG. **9** illustrates a deployment **60** which may be referred to as an exemplary training field. The deployment **60** includes two systems **10** in a miniature field configurations, e.g. for 1v1, 2v2, etc. games. The deployment **60** further includes a soccer tennis **62** configuration which includes one panel **14** and fins attached thereto. The soccer tennis **62** may be utilized for 1v1 training exercises. Finally, the deployment **60** two end line systems **64** which include the goal **12** which panels **14** attached thereto in such a manner that the goal **12** is in front of the panels **14**, i.e. the panels **14** directly attached to the goal **12** extend diagonally away from the goal **12**. This provides a backstop like configuration.

[0030] FIG. **10** illustrates a deployment **70** which includes the two end line systems **64** over a full field. Here, the two end line systems **64** provide a backstop like configuration for full field play. Finally, FIG. **11** illustrates a three-sided soccer tennis deployment **80** with three panels **14** at a center point. Each of the panels **14** includes a fin **82**. The three-sided soccer tennis deployment **80** may be utilized for multi-directional play and training between three or more people. At the center, in an exemplary embodiment, the panels **14** do not share a single pole **30** in this set up, but there may be three poles **30** held together in the center by a shock cord.

[0031] The panels **14** may be different colors, e.g. the panels **14** immediately adjacent to the goal **12** may be a different color than the other panels **14**. The panels **14** and the goals **12** may be configured in any number of configurations for practice, training, game play, and the like. Further, smaller fields may be used for one-on-one, two-on-two, three-on-three, and the like game play.

[0032] The enclosure system **10** may be provided as a kit. In a first deluxe kit, the enclosure system **10** may include 16 “stepflex” safety poles, 12 stretch panels, 2 mesh goals, and carry bag. Here, an enclosed field size is approximately 32'×18' which is good for a three-on-three game (or more for younger players). This system is a detachable system where the various components may be detached from one another, i.e. detachable panels **14**. The “Deluxe” portable model can be separated into 2 sections in order to increase overall playing space.

[0033] Another kit may include a Non-detachable portable model with 12 “stepflex” safety poles, 10 stretch panels, 2 mesh goals, and carry bag. Here, all of the panels **14** and the goal **12** are physically connected and fold up together. This may include a Field size of 16'×20'. This portable model, while not being detachable, can be used for endless, skill building activities, and be shaped to resemble a rectangle, a pentagon, an oval, a square etc.

[0034] Also, another kit may include a pair of portable end sections with 8 stepflex safety poles, 4 stretch panels, 2 mesh

goals, and carry bag. Here, each end section is a goal attached to two panels with a width of each end section of 14' wide each. This “Micro” portable model can be added to the “Deluxe” model in order to create 4 scoring areas within the Soccer Corral. Detach and place sideline panels just outside of a striped line in the grass, so if the ball rolls over the line it will not go far. A portable model can be added to the “Deluxe” model in order to create 4 scoring areas within the enclosure system **10**. Detach and place sideline panels just outside of a striped line in the grass, so if the ball rolls over the line it won't go far.

[0035] In an exemplary embodiment, the banner **24** may be 5'×20" stretchable fabric, the poles **18**, **22** may be 45" “stepflex” safety poles, and the mesh net **20** a 30"×4' rebounder mesh goals with depth, and carry bag.

[0036] Although the present invention has been illustrated and described herein with reference to preferred embodiments and specific examples thereof, it will be readily apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art that other embodiments and examples may perform similar functions and/or achieve like results. All such equivalent embodiments and examples are within the spirit and scope of the present invention and are intended to be covered by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A soccer field enclosure system, comprising:
  - a mesh goal formed through a plurality of poles; one or more panels; and
  - a plurality of end poles for supporting the one or more panels;
  - wherein one of the one or more panels is connected to the mesh goal; and
  - wherein each of the mesh goal and the one or more panels are foldable and storable with the plurality of poles and the plurality of end poles in a carrying case.
2. The soccer field enclosure system of claim 1, wherein the one or more panels comprise end portions each configured to attach to one of the plurality of end poles.
3. The soccer field enclosure system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of end poles are configured to flex.
4. The soccer field enclosure system of claim 3, further comprising a rebound cord attached to each of the plurality of end poles, wherein the rebound cord is configured to return a panel to a substantially upright position after flexing.
5. The soccer field enclosure system of claim 3, further comprising a spring like mechanism, wherein the spring like mechanism is configured to return a panel to a substantially upright position after flexing.
6. The soccer field enclosure system of claim 1, further comprising:
  - an advertisement or logo on one of the one or more panels.
7. The soccer field enclosure system of claim 6, wherein the advertisement or logo is printed on the one of the one or more panels.
8. The soccer field enclosure system of claim 6, wherein the advertisement or logo is attached to the one of the one or more panels.
9. The soccer field enclosure system of claim 1, wherein the one or more panels are deployable in a modular configuration.
10. The soccer field enclosure system of claim 1, wherein the one or more panels comprise a length of four to six feet.
11. The soccer field enclosure system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of end poles comprise a stake portion for engaging a surface and a top portion.

**12.** The soccer field enclosure system of claim **11**, wherein the top portion comprises a foam cover.

**13.** A soccer field kit, comprising:

one or more mesh goals;

one or more banners;

poles for supporting the one or more mesh goals;

flexible end poles for supporting the one or more banners,

the flexible end poles configured to engage a surface and

to engage the one or more banners for support thereof;

wherein the one or more goals and the one or more banners are modularly configurable to form a plurality of soccer field configurations.

**14.** The soccer field kit of claim **13**, further comprising:

an advertisement or logo on the one or more banners.

**15.** The soccer field kit of claim **14**, wherein the advertisement or logo is printed on the one or more banners.

**16.** The soccer field kit of claim **14**, wherein the advertisement or logo is attached to the one or more banners.

**17.** A soccer field, comprising:

at least one portable mesh goal supported by a plurality of insertable poles, the plurality of insertable poles are removable from the at least one portable mesh goal; and at least two portable panels each adjacent to the at least one portable mesh goal and supported by an end pole configured to engage a surface and to support the at least two portable panels, the at least two portable panels are removable from the surface;

wherein the at least two portable panels are configured to provide soccer ball confinement for shots toward the at least one portable mesh goal.

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