

Oct. 27, 1925.

1,558,766

F. S. SMITH
GOLF PLAYING APPARATUS
Filed Jan. 11, 1922

Fig. 1.

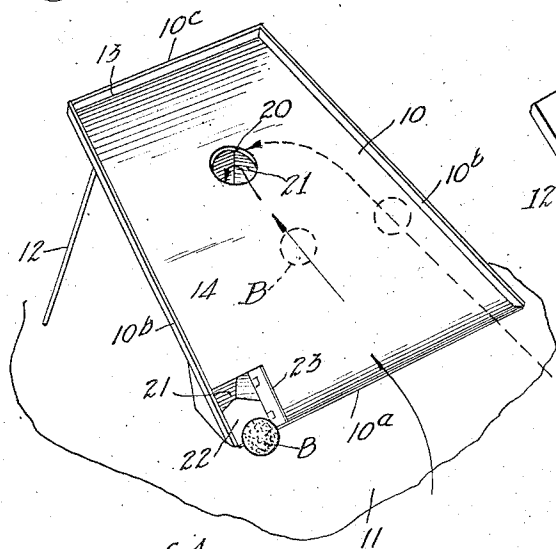
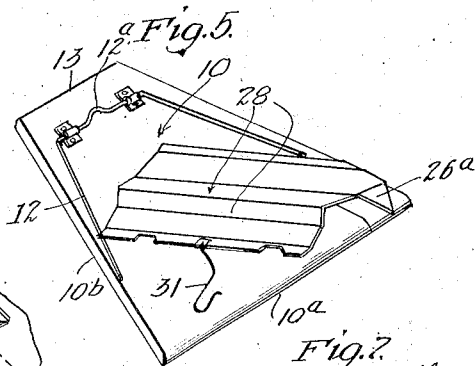


Fig. 7.

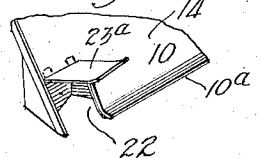


Fig. 2.

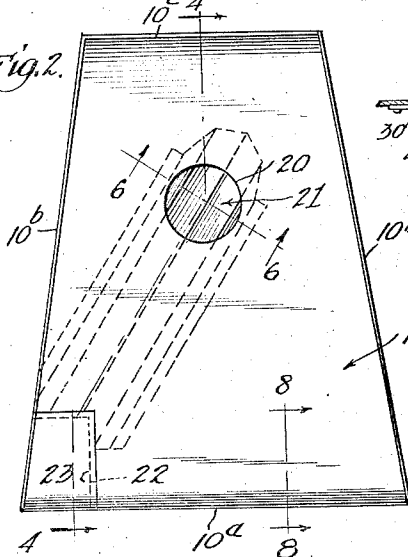


Fig. 6.

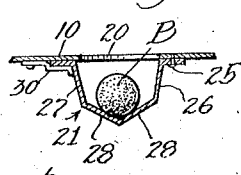


Fig. 3.

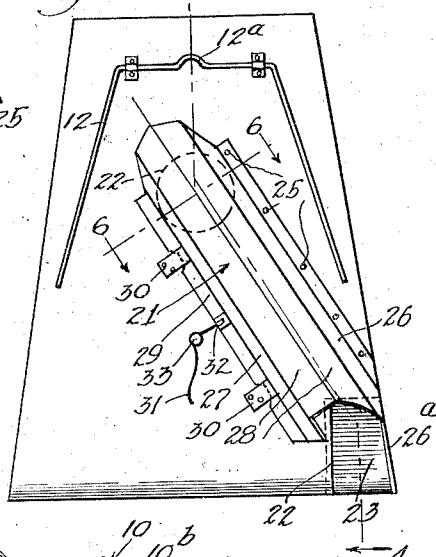


Fig. 9.

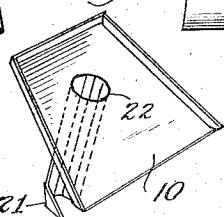


Fig. 8.

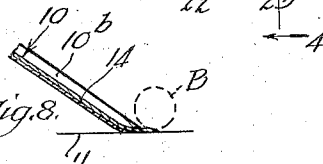
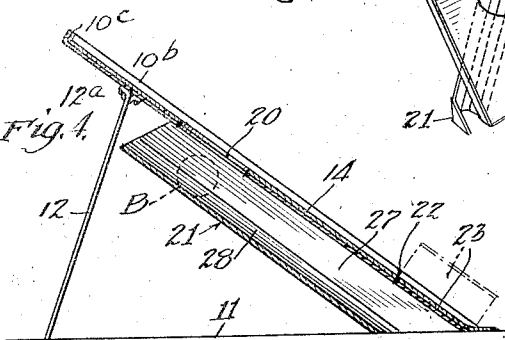


Fig. 4.



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Patented Oct. 27, 1925.

1,558,766

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

FRANK STEWART SMITH, OF LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

GOLF PLAYING APPARATUS.

Application filed January 11, 1922. Serial No. 528,438.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, FRANK STEWART SMITH, a citizen of the United States, residing at Los Angeles, county of Los Angeles, and State of California, have invented new and useful Improvements in Golf Playing Apparatus, of which the following is a full, clear, and accurate disclosure.

In the present invention I have conceived and perfected a device for playing a new game, and for the practice of golf putting. It is designed primarily for the purpose of providing a useful substitute for the golf putting green, to be used indoors or otherwise for practicing putting in the absence of a putting green; while at the same time providing the means of engaging in an interesting and entertaining form of amusement.

The new game which may be played with my device, together with regulation golf balls and putting irons, consists of a contest between any number of players to determine which can drive the ball into the hole an agreed number of times in the fewest number of strokes, and it has all the desirable features of being interesting, attractive and competitive, while at the same time resulting in valuable golf putting practice.

I have combined in this device certain features whereby results and benefits approximating those obtained in actual golf putting practice on a putting green are obtained; and which will be conducive to revealing accurately the effect of a shot, and improving the player's skill at putting, the same as would be obtained under normal circumstances upon a putting green.

I have further provided an arrangement whereby the ball, after a practice shot is made, will be returned to, or in the direction of, the player so that the ball may be recovered without the necessity of the player moving from his position to retrieve it; but permitting him to alter his position for the next shot, correcting it if the last shot was unsuccessful, thereby giving him every opportunity to closely observe the effect of slight differences of position, or stance, and thereby reaping the greatest possible benefit from such practice.

It is of equal or even greater importance that the ball return to within reach of the player when it has been successfully played into the hole, as the player may then retain his demonstratedly correct position, or

stance, and play from that position an indefinite number of shots or strokes and thus form the habit of assuming and playing from this correct position or stance.

The fact that my device returns the ball to or in the direction of the player, and within reasonable limits easily within his reach, makes this form of golf putting practice of the greatest possible benefit and value, as the player may after each unsuccessful shot alter, adjust and correct his faulty position or stance as suggested by the action of the ball on my device, or he may retain his correct stance as indicated when the ball has successfully been played into the hole.

As the ball always returns to within easy reach of the player, whether the ball enters the hole or not, if he is not more than seven feet from the hole, and most putting practice should be had within this distance, it is easily possible for a player to make twelve or even fifteen putts or plays per minute, and in three minutes he may make as many putts or plays as he should ordinarily make in playing a full round of eighteen holes on a regular golf course or links.

In feats of skill, such as golf putting, practice is said to be nine-tenths, and my device affords, and its action suggests and invites practice of the most agreeable and helpful character.

In structure the device may be made collapsible so as to be folded and packed into a compact form for transporting or storage.

The improved features of my invention will be more fully set forth in the following specification, reference being made therein to the accompanying drawings forming a part thereof, in which;

Fig. 1 is a perspective plan view of my device; Fig. 2 is a front view thereof looking at it from the position of the player; Fig. 3 is a view of the bottom or back of the device looking at it from underneath; Fig. 4 is a longitudinal vertical section through the device, taken as indicated by the lines 4-4 of Figs. 2 and 3; Fig. 5 is a perspective view showing the manner in which the device is collapsible for packing or shipment; Fig. 6 is a fragmentary detailed view taken as indicated by the lines 6-6 of Fig. 2; Fig. 7 is a fragmentary perspective view showing a slightly modified form of a portion of the device; Fig. 8 is a fragmentary detailed view taken as indicated by the line 8-8 of

Fig. 2; Fig. 9 is a perspective view of the device showing a variation in its construction.

The arrangement I have shown in the 5
aforementioned drawings, and that which I
will describe herein as my preferred specific embodiment, comprises a plane surface member 10, for convenience hereinafter called the "table," designed to be supported 10
upon a floor or other surface—designated herein by the numeral 11—in a relatively inclined position by legs 12, or other suitable means. It may be here mentioned that the whole device may be constructed of a light, 15
thin wood, heavy cardboard, light metal, or any material suitable providing the necessary rigidity and at the same time lightness for easy transportation.

The table 10 consists of a single flat board; 20
piece of metal or other material, preferably tapered slightly towards its upper edge 13, and may, if desired, be covered over its top surface with a soft material 14, such as felt, leather, paper or other material. The degree of inclination of the table 10 relative 25
to the surface 11 may be altered to suit circumstances, but ordinarily it will be substantially 35° for best results. It is supported by the legs 12 with its wider edge 30
10^a resting upon the surface 11; being provided along its longitudinal edges with flanges 10^b; and along its upper transverse edge with a flange 10^c, to prevent the ball from rolling off except across the lower edge 35
10^a. The edge 10^a is curved slightly upward to provide, as far as possible, an unbroken juncture between the surface 11 and the surface of the table 10. This juncture may also be formed by extending the covering 40
14 slightly beyond the edge 10^a, as shown in Fig. 8.

The legs 12 may be formed of a single piece of wire bent U-shaped, and hingedly 45
secured to and foldable against the back of the table 10, as shown in Figs. 3, 4, and 5; and a stop member 12^a may be formed to engage the back of the table 10, to hold the legs in standing or supporting position, as in 50
Fig. 4.

Situated preferably in alignment with the longitudinal center of the table 10, and preferably above its transverse center, is an aperture 20, preferably circular in form and of convenient size; which aperture corresponds to the hole in a golf putting green. A chute 21 is secured to the under face of the table 10 with its upper end directly beneath the hole 20, and extending slightly 55
beyond it, while its opposite end is terminated to rest upon or near the surface 11, directly back of an aperture 22; the latter being cut through the table 10 at its lower edge, and preferably in one of its lower corners. Thus chute 21 extends diagonally 60
with reference to the longitudinal center

of the table 10. The opening 22 may be covered by a small door 23, so hingedly connected to the table 10 that the ball B rolling down the chute 21 will strike and open it outwardly, as illustrated in Fig. 1. This 70
door is arranged to lie in the plane of the table 10 so that there is presented a practically unbroken surface when it is closed.

The chute 21 may also be formed so its lower end will extend beyond the longitudinal side of the table 10—as in Fig. 9. 75
This will obviate the necessity of cutting the opening 22 in the table 10 and providing the door 23. With this construction the chute 21 may be either in the collapsible form, hereinafter described, or in a permanent or non-collapsible form rigidly secured 80
to the under face of the table 10.

In structure the chute 21 is preferably made collapsible and comprised of a single 85
piece of material, such as heavy cardboard, metal or the like, rigidly secured along one edge to the under surface of the table 10, as by rivets 25. If the chute 21 is to be collapsible it may be formed of cardboard and creased to form sides 26 and 27, and a bottom 28; the side 27 terminating in a bent-over or flange portion 29 to form a juncture 90
with the table 10. This last mentioned flange portion is arranged to extend under and be held by clips 30, also secured to the under face of the table 10, in the manner illustrated in Fig. 3. With this arrangement the chute 21 may be collapsed flat 95
against the under face of the table 10 (as illustrated in Fig. 5) when the device as a whole is arranged for transportation or for storage. This is accomplished merely by removing the flange 29 from beneath the clips 30 and flattening the whole structure 100
out against the under surface of table 10. The flange 29 is normally held in engagement with clips 30 by means of a cord 31, secured at one end to the flange 29—as at 32—the opposite end being wound around a 105
button 33, also secured to the under surface of the member 10. The bottom 28 is preferably creased down its center to form a V-shaped groove for the ball B to roll in. This prevents transverse wobbling of the ball and 115
steadies it in its return passage.

The chute 21 is of a length sufficient to extend slightly beyond the aperture 20 (see Fig. 4); its upper end being left open and its lower so formed that when it is erected, 120
as shown in Figs. 2, 3, and 4, the bottom sections 28 at their juncture will rest upon or near the surface 11, while the side 26 is extended and bent parallel with the adjacent longitudinal side of the table 10—as at 26^a— 125
so the ball on leaving the chute strikes this portion 26^a and is directed in the direction of the player. The side member 27 is terminated at a point to sufficiently close the opposite side of the chute but so as not to 130

extend into the area of the opening 22. It is to be noted in this connection that the chute 21 extends not only in an inclined plane with the member 10, but also diagonally with reference to the latter's longitudinal center, and that the side member 26^a is extended so as to deflect the ball out through the opening 22.

The modified form of door shown in Fig. 7 is very similar to that shown in the other figures of the drawings, except that here the door 23^a instead of being hingedly connected along one of its vertical edges to the table 10, is hingedly connected across its top edge, in the opening 22, so that when the ball passes out through the opening 22 it will throw the door upwardly, as illustrated in that figure.

In the use of the device it is set up in the manner illustrated in Fig. 1, and the player stands off any desired distance, and ordinarily within a zone defined by lines projected in the planes of the flanges 10^b. He then takes the desired position or stance and with a putter or other means drives a ball with the hole 20 as his objective, the same as in the case of an actual game of golf when the player is putting for the hole upon the putting green. The ball—designated in the drawings by the letter B—will travel over the surface 11, and roll upon the inclined table 10, and if it has been given the proper impetus and the correct direction it will drop into the hole 20; but if it has not the proper direction and velocity it will stop short of the hole 20 or roll to one side or around it and back down the incline toward the player. If it misses the hole the velocity acquired by rolling back down the incline will, under ordinary circumstances, return the ball to the player so that he will not be required to move from his position to retrieve it and play it again.

In case the ball drops in the hole 20, it will fall into the chute 21, underneath the inclined table 10, roll down it and out through the opening 22 and door 23—in the manner illustrated in Fig. 1—and will in this manner be likewise returned to or in the direction of the player. This return of the ball to or in the direction of the player after it has entered hole 20 is of the greatest importance, as the player is thus enabled to repeat the shot or drive without moving from his position which the successful shot just made indicates is the correct position.

The flanges 10^b and 10^c, extending above the table 10, prevent the ball from rolling off either side or the top of this inclined surface. The opening 22 being positioned as far as possible to one side of the longitudinal center of table 10 will present substantially an unbroken surface over which the ball travels in rolling up onto the inclined table. The curving of the lower edge 10^a

of the table 10, as shown at Fig. 8, will likewise present, as far as possible, an unbroken surface between the surfaces 10 and 11.

Not only does the inclination of the surface 10 provide a means of returning the ball B to the player, either in the case of its entering the hole 20 or missing it, but being thus inclined it will require a substantial stroke or hit to make the ball travel up this surface 10, thereby presenting conditions and difficulties very similar to those encountered upon a golf putting green, and requiring the same character of stroke or hit; that is, the resistance offered approximates that ordinarily offered by the grass and rolling surface of the out door putting green. Also this inclined surface enables the player to practice curved or side-hill shots as indicated by the dotted line in Fig. 1. That is, the ball is played up onto the table 10 so as to roll side wise and into the hole 20.

Thus, I have provided a simple and compact arrangement for the practicing of putting, in the game of golf, and for playing a new and interesting game, and it is readily discernible that my device will be very inexpensive to manufacture and may be very easily transported from place to place, and as easily set up for use.

While I have herein shown and described the preferred specific embodiment of my device, it is nevertheless to be understood that I reserve the right to make any changes or modifications in structure which will properly come within the scope of the appended claims.

Having described a preferred form of my invention, I claim:—

1. In a device of the class described, the combination of a table; members hingedly connected to said table for supporting it in an inclined position with its bottom edge upon the floor; an aperture in said table to receive a ball; and means for returning the ball to the player after it has passed through said apertures, said means comprising a collapsible chute secured to the underside of said surface.

2. In a device of the class described, the combination of a table adapted to be supported in an inclined position with one edge upon the floor, an aperture in said table to receive a ball, a discharge aperture in said table adjacent its lower edge, and means for returning the ball to the player after it has passed through the first mentioned aperture, said means comprising a chute extending under the table and communicating with both said apertures.

3. In a device of the class described, the combination of a table adapted to be supported in an inclined position with one edge upon the floor, an aperture in said table to receive a ball, a discharge aperture in said

table, and means to return the ball in the direction of the player after it has passed through the first mentioned aperture, said means comprising a chute on the under side of the table communicating with both said apertures.

4. In a device of the class described, the combination of a table adapted to be supported in an inclined position with one edge upon the floor, an aperture in said table to receive a ball, a discharge aperture in said table, and means to return the ball in the direction of the player after it has passed through the first mentioned aperture, said means comprising a chute on the under side of the table communicating with both said apertures, said discharge aperture having a normally closed door, coplanar with the upper face of the table, adapted to be opened by a ball as it discharges from the chute.

5. In device of the class described, the combination of a table having a plane surface, adapted to be supported in an inclined position with one edge upon the floor, an aperture situated centrally in said table to receive a ball, a discharge aperture in said table adjacent one of its lower corners, and means to return the ball in the direction of the player after it has passed through the first mentioned aperture, said means comprising an inclined chute on the under side of the table connecting at opposite ends with both of said apertures, said discharge aperture having a normally closed door, coplanar with the table surface, adapted to be opened by a ball as it discharges from the chute.

6. In a device of the class described, the combination of a table adapted to be supported in an inclined position with one edge upon the floor, a frictional surface on said table, an aperture in said table to receive a ball, a discharge aperture in said table ad-

jacent its lower edge, and means for returning the ball to the player after it has passed through the first mentioned aperture, said means comprising a chute extending under the table and communicating with both said apertures.

7. In a device of the class described, the combination of a table adapted to be supported in an inclined position with one edge upon the floor, the floor engaging edge being curved to make a tangential juncture therewith, a frictional surface on said table, an aperture in said table to receive a ball, a discharge aperture in said table adjacent its lower edge, and means for returning the ball to the player after it has passed through the first mentioned aperture, said means comprising a chute extending under the table and communicating with both said apertures.

8. In a device of the class described, the combination of a table having a plane surface, adapted to be supported in an inclined position with one edge upon the floor, the floor engaging edge being curved to make a tangential juncture therewith, a frictional surface on said table, an aperture situated centrally in said table to receive a ball, a discharge aperture in said table adjacent one of its lower corners, and means to return the ball in the direction of the player after it has passed through the first mentioned aperture, said means comprising an inclined collapsible chute on the under side of the table connecting at opposite ends with both of said apertures, said discharge aperture having a normally closed door, coplanar with the table surface, adapted to be opened by a ball as it discharges from the chute.

In witness that I claim the foregoing I have hereunto subscribed my name this 5th day of January 1922.

FRANK STEWART SMITH.