Title: MODULAR FOOTBALL TRAINING KIT

Abstract: The present invention relates to a modular kit for use in football training. The kit comprises a number of parts that may be used together in differing combinations to provide various objects that are of use in the training and assessment of footballers. The kit may be assembled and disassembled at any particular location, thereby making it portable. The kit provides elements allowing different apparatus to be assembled for the development and assessment of different football skills. Moreover, the portable nature of the kit means that the training and assessment it wholly reproducible form location to location.
— before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments

For two-letter codes and other abbreviations, refer to the "Guidance Notes on Codes and Abbreviations" appearing at the beginning of each regular issue of the PCT Gazette.
MODULAR FOOTBALL TRAINING KIT

The present invention relates to a modular kit for use in football training. The kit comprises a number of parts that may be used together in differing combinations to provide various objects that are of use in the training and assessment of footballers.

Football training involves varied exercises to develop core skills required for the game. For example, abilities in passing, shooting, control of the football (such as trapping the football and dribbling), tackling and goalkeeping are core skills that training aims to develop. Training may take the form of a game of football, or it may involve exercises that look to develop specific skills. These exercises may involve apparatus designed for that particular purpose. In addition to training, the exercises and the associated apparatus may be used in the assessment of footballers, both initially and as they develop through a training program.

It will be apparent that "football" refers to the game referred to in the UK as football, but that it is sometimes referred to as soccer. Although initially designed for football skills training, it is envisaged that in due course parts of the apparatus can be adapted for integration into aspects of skills training for sports other than football/soccer.

Although the present invention provides apparatus that may be used with a game of football, e.g. goals, the present invention is directed more to providing different apparatus suited to different training exercises. In particular, the present invention seeks to provide a flexible kit of parts
that may be used in various combinations to provide apparatus that differs according to the core skill being developed or assessed. Furthermore, the present invention seeks to provide apparatus that may be used in a variety of locations (e.g. sports halls, fields, playgrounds, car parks, etc.) rather than being restricted to use only on an existing football pitch. As a result, the present invention seeks to provide a kit of parts that is readily portable, and both quick and easy to assemble.

Against this background, and from a first aspect, the present invention resides in a portable apparatus for use in football training comprising a modular kit of parts, wherein the kit comprises parts designed for assembly to form a goal at a first venue and subsequent disassembly for transport to another venue. Thus the apparatus is readily transportable.

In order to keep the kit as lightweight as possible, a reduction in weight may be achieved by ensuring that one or more parts may be used in different ways to form different apparatus. This reduces the overall count of parts.

From a second aspect, the present invention resides in a system for assessing the ability of football players, comprising constructing one or more training apparatus from a kit of parts that form portable apparatus that may be taken from location to location and assembled to form standardised apparatus at each location, assessing players as they perform a plurality of standardised exercises using the training apparatus, and obtaining a score or rating based on the assessment of the players. Hence, players may be scored and/or rated according to a standardised scale by assessing each player using standardised training exercises using standardised apparatus. Hence, players may be assessed objectively irrespective of their location. This
allows greater samples of players to be compared to one another, and so allows large databases of players of all standards to be accumulated.

In order that the present invention may be more readily understood, preferred embodiments will now be described by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a goal from the rear;
Figure 2 is a perspective view of a goal from the front;
Figure 3 is a front perspective view of a goal including a base board configured for passing practice;
Figure 4 is a front perspective view of two goals arranged next to each other and configured for shooting practice;
Figure 5 corresponds to Figure 4 but shows an alternative distance marker;
Figure 6 is a perspective view of two goals arranged next to each together and configured for control practice;
Figure 7 is a perspective view of two goals arranged next to each together, although facing in opposite directions, and configured for control and passing practice;
Figures 8a and 8b show front views of dummy players configured for dribbling practice;
Figures 9 and 10 are perspective views of base parts shown in Figure 8a; and
Figure 11 is a front perspective view of a goal including two base parts like the one shown in Figure 10 and a rebound sheet attached to the rear face of the goal; and
Figure 12 is a perspective view of a three-way connector for use in the present invention.

In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, a
kit of parts is provided that may be assembled to form various apparatus for use in football training exercises. The kit is designed to be portable and so may comprise one or more bags in which the other parts may be carried. The kit of parts may also comprise ancillary items such as footballs, coloured bibs for players to wear, flags, whistles, etc. Advantageously, the kit includes components that may be assembled in various combinations to provide differing apparatus for training and assessing different football core skills. The kit is particularly advantageous as several of the parts fulfil more than one function and are used differently in different apparatus. The kit includes parts that may be assembled to form a pair of goals; coverings of different forms that may attach to the goals in different locations for different functions such as providing targets, obstacles or to cause the football to rebound from the goal; measuring tapes that may be used to indicate distances and dummy players that may be used as obstacles such as for dribbling practice.

Figures 1 and 2 shows an assembled goal 20, of which the kit provides two. As will be evident from the Figures, each goal 20 is made from a series of extruded pipes that are joined together by connectors. The pipes and connectors may be made of any suitable material, although a durable but lightweight plastic is preferred. Each goal 20 comprises a goal face 22 defined at its sides by a pair of uprights 24, at its top by a crossbar 26 and at its base by the ground 28. The uprights 24 are connected to the crossbar 26 by connectors 29. Stability of the goal 20 is provided by a support structure 30 at the rear of the goal 20. The support structure 30 comprises a base and diagonal struts 32.
base is in turn comprised of a pair of base sides 34 that are joined at one end to respective bases of the uprights 24 by connectors 36. The other end of the base sides 34 are connected by a base back 38 that mate together with connectors 29. The base sides 34 and base back 38 are all of the same extruded-pipe form as the uprights 24 and the crossbar 26. Although of the same general extruded form, the diagonal struts 32 are smaller in diameter than the base sides 34, base back 38, the uprights 24 and the crossbar 26. Accordingly, the goal 20 is stable in that a football striking the uprights 24 or the crossbar 26 will not cause the goal 20 to topple. The crossbar 26, diagonal struts 32 and base back 38 together form a rear face 42 of the goal 20.

The connectors 29,36 are of two types. Simple elbow connectors 36 are used to connect the base of the uprights 24 to the base sides 34. Three-way connectors 29 form the junctions between (a) the tops of the uprights 24, the ends of the crossbar 26 and the tops of the diagonal struts 32, and (b) the base sides 34, the ends of the base back 38 and the base of the diagonal struts 32. The three way connectors 29 essentially comprise an elbow connector with a further protrusion for receiving an end of the diagonal strut 32. The three-way connectors 29 come in two types: a left-handed form and a right-handed form to allow the required assembly of pieces. In an alternative embodiment, the three-way connectors 29 comprise an elbow connector with a pair of apertures 92, as shown in Figure 12. The apertures 92 are located close to the corners of the connector 29 and are oriented and sized so as to receive an end of a diagonal strut 32. Providing two apertures 92 as shown allows a single connector 29 to be used for all
junctions, thereby obviating the need to provide dedicated elbow connectors 36. Providing two apertures 92 allows both left-hand and right-hand forms of the three-way connector 29 to be made. When used to connect the base of the uprights 24 to the base sides 34, the apertures 92 that otherwise receive the diagonal strut 32 are not used.

Each connector 29,36 is provided with sockets at each of its ends that are sized to receive the ends of the various pipes as a snug fit such that assembling the goal 20 is a simple push-fit operation. Of course, other fittings may be used to fasten the parts together. An example would be bayonet type fittings or similar where the pipes and connectors are joined by a simple twist and lock movement. The pipes may require twisting through a quarter-turn to lock into place. This is advantageous as the need for a twisting action for disassembly helps prevent accidental disassembly, such as by the repetitive flexing of the pipes due to impact by footballs.

The pair of goals 20 may be used in a regular game of football, i.e. with each goal 20 placed at respective ends of a pitch to face each other. Alternatively, the goals 20 may be used with other parts to form apparatus for training exercises directed to different core skills.

Figure 3 shows a goal 20 configured for use in passing practice. A base board 44 is attached to the goal 20 so that it occupies a lower portion of the goal face 22. The bottom of the base board 44 rests against the ground 28 and the sides of the base board 44 abut the uprights 24, and fasten thereto by any convenient means. For example, the sides of the base board 44, or grooves projecting therefrom, may be received within grooves formed in the uprights. Alternatively, the base boards may be provided with flaps of
flexible material that wrap around the uprights 24. The flaps may be provided with press studs, zips, hook and loop fasteners, ties or similar to allow easy fastening.

The base board 44 bears markings. Two vertical lines 46 divide the base board 44 into equal sections, and indicia 48 provide scores associated with each section. In this example, the central section is given a score of one and the peripheral sections are each given scores of two. Thus, the exercise may be for a player to try to pass the football such that it strikes the middle of the base board 44 marked one. A less accurate pass will miss the centre of the base board 44 but strike one of the adjacent sections marked two. An inaccurate pass will go wide of the goal 20, and a pass that is too high will pass over the base board 44.

The base board 44 shown in Figure 3 occupies around a quarter of the height of the goal 20, but other sizes may be used. Indeed, different base boards 44 of different heights may be included in the kit. Obviously, the base board 44 may bear different indicia such that it is divided differently and scored differently. The reverse of the base board 44 may be blank or may also bear indicia. The indicia on the different sides may be the same or may differ.

A measuring tape 50 is also shown in Figure 3. The tape 50 is flexible to allow it to be rolled up or folded for more compact storage. The tape 50 bears equidistantly separated indicia 52 to provide an indication of distance from the goal 20. Thus, the tape 50 is placed to run along one of the base sides 34 such that it will extend perpendicularly from the goal face 22. The indicia 52 (circles in this example, although other markings may be used, or omitted altogether if desired) provide guides for how far away from the goal 20 a player should stand when
making the pass. Hence the difficulty of the pass may be increased by placing the player further away from the goal 20. For example, as that player consistently hits the middle section, the player may be moved progressively further away from the goal 20.

Figure 4 shows apparatus to be used in shooting practice. The apparatus comprises both goals 20 placed side by side to present a larger, continuous goal face 22. The goals 20 may be secured together by any suitable means or may be left free-standing. Both goals 20 have base boards 44 fitted, as per described with reference to Figure 3. In addition, target panels 54 are attached to the upper portion of each goal face 22 so that the combination of base board 44 and target panel 54 covers each goal face 22.

The target panels 54 may bear indicia 56, in this example a cross hair indicating a target. The target panels 54 may be attached to any combination of the crossbar 26 and uprights 24 such that it is securely held in place and withstands the repeated impacts of footballs. Many fastening means would prove suitable to the task. For example, the target panels 54 may include flaps of flexible material at their edges that may be wrapped around the crossbar 26 or uprights 27 and held in place by press studs, hook and loop fasteners, ties, etc. The target panel 54 may be made of a flexible material such that a football readily rebounds from the target panel 54. While a composite goal face has been described comprising target panel 54 and base board 44, a single-piece covering may be provided that covers the whole goal face. This single-piece covering may bear indicia like the target panel 54 and base board 44.

A dummy player 58 comprising a suitably-shaped board is attached to the combined goal 20 to provide the impression
of a goalkeeper. The dummy player 58 attaches to one or both of the adjacent uprights 24, for example using flexible fingers provided on the back of the dummy player 58 that may grip the upright or uprights 24. The dummy player 58 may attach to both goals 20 so as to secure the goals 20 together.

A pair of measuring tapes 50 are provided to extend from the base sides 34 perpendicularly to the front of the goal 20. A further tape 60 is run between corresponding indicia 52 on the measuring tapes 50 to provide a line behind which the shots should be taken. A player takes shots at the combined goal 20 and attempts to hit the markers, for example the numerals 48 provided on the base boards 44 or the targets 56 provided on the target panels 54. The player should attempt to miss the dummy player 58 that represents a goalkeeper. The tape 60 defining the line behind which shots are taken may be moved further from the goal 20 to provide a greater level of difficulty as players progress through their training and become more adept at shooting.

Figure 5 shows an alternative method of marking where shots should be taken. A tape 62 having an enlarged head 64 at one end is extended from the centre of the combined goal 20 with the enlarged head 64 away from the goal 20. The enlarged head 64 mimics a penalty spot and so may be used for practising penalty kicks. The enlarged head 64 may serve as the penalty spot itself, or the penalty spot 66 may be marked by a spot, or the enlarged head 64 may be a hoop.

Figure 6 shows the two goals 20 being used together to form apparatus for control practice. In this exercise, players practise bringing a football under control. Each goal 20 is turned around such that the back face 42 looks
out to the playing area. A rebound panel 68 is attached to each back face 42. The rebound panel 68 may attach to any combination of the base back 38, the diagonal struts 32 and the crossbar 26 such that it is secured to the goal 20 and will not come loose when footballs strike it. The rebound panels 68 may be fastened in any convenient way. As described above, material may be wrapped around the crossbar 26 or other pipes and attach using hook and loop fasteners, ties, etc.

The rebound panel 68 is made from a resilient web of material so that a football striking the rebound panel 68 rebounds back towards the player. To enhance the elastic nature of the rebound panel 68, it may be fastened to the goal 20 using elastically fasteners. For example, in a preferred embodiment, the rebound panel 68 is provided with elastically webs of material along one edge that attach to part of the goal and help fasten the rebound panel 68 in place. Preferably, the elastically webs wrap around the crossbar 26. Elastically webs may be provided on other edges of the rebound panel. However, it is preferred that the lower edge is fixed to the base back 38.

In addition, the angle of the back face 42 is such that the football will be rebounded upwardly and so travel further towards the player. The player stands behind the line defined by the tape 60 strung between the two measuring tapes 50. The player, or someone else, either kicks the football against the rebound panel 68 or throws the football against the rebound panel 68. The player then attempts to bring the football under control as it bounces back towards him or her. The position of the tape 60 may be moved such that the football bounces more or less (or not at all) before reaching the player. Where the football does not
bounce, the height of the football when it reaches the player can be varied such that the player must use different parts of their body to bring the football under control. Obviously, the apparatus may comprise only a single goal set up with a rebound panel 68.

Figure 7 shows a variation on the control practice apparatus. Here one of the goals is reversed and bears a rebound panel 68. Hence, footballs are bounced off the back face 42 of this goal 20 back to a player who should bring the football under control. The second goal 20 is set up for passing practice so that, once the player has brought the football under control, the player makes a pass to the second goal 20 as already described above. The goals 20 may be separated or, as shown in Figure 7, the goals 20 may be arranged side by side. The goal 20 used for the passing element of this exercise is also fitted with a rebound panel 68. As a result, any footballs that are too high and pass over the base board 44 are collected by the rebound panel 68. Other combinations of the goals 20 are possible. For example, the goal 20 with a rebound panel 68 may be used in conjunction with a goal 20 having a base board 44 and target panel 54 to practise control and shooting. Again the goals 20 may be arranged side by side or separated.

Apparatus for practising dribbling skills is shown in Figure 8a. The apparatus broadly corresponds to a dummy player 58 around which a player must dribble the football by passing the football through a hoop 70. The dummy player 58 is attached to a pole 24, for example one of the uprights 24 from a goal 20. Hence, the method of attachment may be the same as described with respect to Figure 5. The pole 24 is supported on a base cone 72 such that it stands upright. Shapes other than cones may used for the bases, e.g.
cylindrical, block-like or other regular or irregular shapes may be used. The hoop 70 is formed by placing an L-shaped pipe 74 adjacent the dummy player 58. The L-shaped pipe may be formed from part of the goal 20, e.g. an upright 24 and a base side 34 joined with an elbow connector 36. The short part 34 of the L-shaped pipe 74 is received within another base cone 72 such that the longer part 24 is held substantially flat above the ground 28. The longer part 24 is arranged to overlap with the pole 24 that supports the dummy player 58 so as to form the hoop 70.

The dribbling exercise involves a player dribbling the football towards the dummy player 58, passing the football through the hoop 70 and continuing to dribble the football beyond the dummy player 58, keeping the football under close control at all times. The size of the hoop 70 can be varied by moving the L-shaped pipe 74 as indicated by the arrow 16 in Figure 8a. Also, the L-shaped pipe 74 may be rotated about the pipe 24 supporting the dummy player 58 such that the size of the hoop 70 presented to a player facing the dummy player 58 varies.

The long part 24 of the L-shaped pipe 74 may be attached to the pipe 24 supporting the dummy player 58 if desired and by any suitable means. For example a hole may be formed in the support pipe 24 to receive the L-shaped pipe 74.

More than one such dribbling apparatus may be formed and arranged in any suitable formation such that a player must dribble a football successively past each dummy player 58.

Figures 9 and 10 show different designs of base cones 72 that may be used with the dribbling apparatus of Figure 8a. The base cone 72a of Figure 9 is relatively
simple and comprises a frustro-conically shaped side 78. The base cone 72a is truncated at its top, and the top includes a hole 80 to form a socket for receiving either the pole 24 that supports the dummy player 58 or the L-shaped leg 74. The hole 80 is slightly wider than the poles 24, 74 such that the pole 24, 74 may be slid into the hole 80 until it touches the ground 28. The pole 24, 74 may fasten to the base cone 72a using a twist and lock mechanism, such as a bayonet fitting. The base cone 72a may be made of any suitable material such as plastic or metal. In this embodiment, the base cone 72a is made of plastic and is shown in Figure 8a where it receives the L-shaped leg 74.

An alternative design of base cone 72 is shown in Figure 10. This base cone 72b corresponds substantially with that of Figure 9, but is made from metal to increase its weight and is provided with cut-outs 82 at the base of its side 78. This base cone 72b is shown in Figure 8a where it receives the pole 24 supporting the dummy player 58.

The cut-outs 82 are of corresponding size and shape, and face each other from opposite sides of the base cone 72b. The size of the cut-outs 82 is such that they can receive one of the pipes forming the goals 20. As shown in Figure 11, the base cones 72b can then be used as anchors to weigh down a goal 20 by placing a base cone 72b over both base sides 34 of the goal 20. The base cones 72b may be used in other arrangements, e.g. over only one base side 34, and/or over the base back 38. The goal 20 of Figure 11 also shows a rebound panel 68. Thus, a football passing into the goal 20 will strike the rebound panel 68 that will stop the football. The base cones 72b anchor the goal 20 down and stop the goal 20 from tipping over as a result of the football striking the rebound panel 68. A further
contemplated variation is a base cone 72 that is provided with two pairs of aligned cut-outs, arranged so as to receive two parallel pipes forming goals 20. In this way, a base cone 72 may be used both to anchor down and to fasten together two side-by-side goals 20 like those shown in Figures 4 to 7. This is achieved by placing such a base cone 72 over the adjacent sides 34.

Heavier materials are preferred for the base cones 72 so as to provide some stability to the dummy player 58. Alternatively, the base cones 72 may be made of a lighter material, but contain means for allowing the base cone 72 to be weighed down. For example, the base cone 72 may define an enclosed volume to surround the hole 80 that may be filled with water, sand or similar in situ to weigh the cone down. As noted above, the base cones 72 need not be conical, but can be of any shape.

The base cones 72 may be used in other ways. They may be used as markers, e.g. to indicate the corners of a pitch, or they may be used as obstacles, e.g. placed to be separated along a line such that a player must dribble a football alternately to the left and right of the base cones 72.

A further embodiment of apparatus for dribbling practice is shown in Figure 8b. Again, the apparatus comprises a dummy player 58 supported on a base 100, with a pole 102 connecting base to dummy player 58. A L-shaped leg 104 forms the hoop 70 through which the football is passed. In this embodiment, a separate base 72 is not provided for the L-shaped leg 104 that merely rests against the ground 28. The L-shaped leg 104 is joined to the pole 102 by a hinged joint 106. The hinge 108 is provided such that the L-shaped leg 104 may be lifted clear of the ground 28. The
L-shaped leg 104 can thus be rotated so that it is substantially hidden behind the dummy player 58. The joint 106 fits loosely around the pole 102 such that it may be rotated relative to the dummy figure 58. A number of indexed positions are provided as follows. A peg 110 is provided that passes through a hole 112 provided in the joint 106 and into one of a series of holes 114 provided in the top of the base 100. The series of holes 114 are equally spaced around the circumference of base 100, thereby providing a number of indexed angular positions for the hoop 70.

As will be appreciated, the above-described embodiment of the present invention shows how a flexible kit may be provided for use in football training. A basic set of parts allows various combinations to be assembled to form apparatus suited to different training and assessment exercises. Moreover, several parts may be used in several different functions, thereby reducing the total quantity of parts. This is highly beneficial as the kit is intended to be portable. Of course, the kit may be taken to any suitable location in kit form, and then assembled and used as desired.

The kit may be used as part of a structured training and assessment program. For example, players may be enrolled on training courses where they are assessed and developed. An advantage of the portable nature of the apparatus is that it allows a standardised approach to training and assessment that can be used anywhere. Accordingly, players may be assessed, scored and rated on an absolute scale no matter where they are. Put another way, the apparatus may be taken from venue to venue, and the players at each venue may be assessed and scored in exactly
the same objective manner. Hence, players from different backgrounds and from all areas can be rated on the same scale and meaningful comparisons made therebetween. The ratings and scoring may be derived from assessments based on the different training exercises described above.

A database may be compiled in respect of the players enrolled on training programs that relates to their skills and progression. For example, the database may record the players proficiency at each exercise and the configuration of the apparatus for that player, e.g. the target to be hit and distance from the goal a pass or shot should be taken.

As will be readily apparent to the person skilled in the art, variation can be made to the embodiment described above without departing from the scope of the invention defined by the appended claims. For example, details of how the various parts fix together may be varied, and may include any of the possibilities mentioned above as well as others not mentioned. Materials and sizes and shapes of the various parts may be varied without departing from the scope of the invention. In particular, the materials used for the coverings (i.e. the base boards, target panels and rebound panels) may be varied. Preferred materials include boards, webs, nets, meshes and films that may be arranged to give a suitable response, e.g. a net may be loosely strung so that it captures a football or it may be tightly strung so that a football will bounce off it. Other elements may be used to mark out target areas, such as colours, in addition to or as an alternative to the indicia described above.

As will be apparent, other parts may be used to secure the goals to the ground as alternatives or in addition to the base cones 72 described above. For example, hoops may be used that may be secured to the ground, e.g. by driving
the hoops into the ground 28 when the goal 20 is positioned on mud or turf. Systems of guy ropes may also be used. In addition, the goal 20 itself may be made more stable by making the base parts heavier relative to the top parts.

For example, the base sides 34 and base back 38 may be solid whereas the uprights 24 and crossbar 26 may be hollow. Alternatively, the base sides 34 and base back 38 may be hollow, but provided with holes so as to allow them to be filled with water, sand or similar.
CLAIMS

1. Portable apparatus for use in football training comprising a modular kit of parts, wherein the kit comprises parts designed for assembly to form a goal at a first venue and subsequent disassembly for transport to another venue.

2. Portable apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising coverings to cover selectively part of the goal.

3. Portable apparatus according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein at least one part can be used in different ways to form different apparatus.

4. Portable apparatus according to any preceding claim, wherein the parts that form a goal comprise a pair of uprights to form the sides of the goal, and a crossbar adapted to join the uprights between respective upper connectors and to define the top of the goal, the crossbar and uprights defining the goal face.

5. Portable apparatus according to claim 4, further comprising a covering arranged to attach to the uprights and to extend along only respective parts of the uprights such that the covering covers only part of the goal face.

6. Portable apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the covering is a base covering adapted to be attached to the uprights so as to extend to ground level and to leave an upper part of the goal face unobstructed.
7. Portable apparatus according to claim 6, wherein the base covering bears indicia dividing the covering into respective portions.

8. Portable apparatus according to claim 7, wherein the portions are disposed side by side.

9. Portable apparatus according to claim 8, wherein each portion is marked with a score.

10. Portable apparatus according to any of claims 5 to 9, wherein the covering is an upper covering adapted to be attached to the uprights so as to extend to the crossbar and to leave a lower part of the goal face unobstructed.

11. Portable apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the upper covering is adapted to be attached to the crossbar.

12. Portable apparatus according to claim 10 or claim 11, wherein the upper covering is marked with a target.

13. Portable apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the target is a cross-hair.

14. Portable apparatus according to any of claims 4 to 13, further comprising a support structure adapted to support the goal on the ground such that the goal face is substantially upright, and wherein the support structure forms a back face extending substantially from the crossbar to the level of the bases of the uprights but offset back from the base of the uprights such that, when the goal is supported on the ground, the back face is angled upwardly.
15. Portable apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the support structure comprises base sides and a base back, wherein the base sides are arranged to extend the bases of the uprights from lower front connectors, and wherein the base back is arranged to join the base sides between lower back connectors.

16. Portable apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising diagonal struts arranged to extend between the lower back connectors and the upper connectors.

17. Portable apparatus according to any of claims 14 to 16, comprising a back covering adapted to attach to the goal to extend across the back face.

18. Portable apparatus according to claim 17, wherein the back covering extends from the crossbar to the ground.

19. Portable apparatus according to claim 18, wherein the back covering is adapted to attach to the crossbar.

20. Portable apparatus according to claim 18 or claim 19, wherein the further covering is adapted to attach to the base sides.

21. Portable apparatus according to any of claims 18 to 20, wherein the further covering is adapted to attach to the base back.
22. Portable apparatus according to any of claims 18 to 21, wherein the further covering is adapted to attach to the diagonal struts.

23. Portable apparatus according to any of claims 5 to 22, wherein the covering and/or back covering is a board, a net or a film.

24. Portable apparatus according to any of claims 5 to 23, wherein the covering and/or back covering is provided with marginal portions for attaching the covering/back covering to the uprights and, optionally, to the crossbar by wrapping the marginal portions around the uprights/crossbar.

25. Portable apparatus according to claim 24, wherein the covering/back covering is provided with fastening means for securing the covering/back covering to the uprights and, optionally the crossbar, at least a part of the fastening means being provided on the marginal portions.

26. Portable apparatus according to claim 25, wherein the fastening means comprises a hook and loop fastener, one part of which is provided on the marginal portion.

27. Portable apparatus according to claim 25 or claim 26, wherein fastening means is elasticated.

28. Portable apparatus according to any of claims 4 to 27, wherein any of the uprights, crossbar, the side bases, back base or diagonal members are tubular.
29. Portable apparatus according to claim 28, wherein any of the uprights, crossbar, the side bases, back base or diagonal members are tubular extrusions.

30. Portable apparatus according to claim 28 or claim 29, wherein the upper connectors are integral with the uprights and comprise a socket to receive the cross bar or vice versa.

31. Portable apparatus according to any of claims 28 to 30, wherein each of the two upper connectors is an elbow connector that comprises a pair of sockets to receive an end of one of the uprights and an end of the crossbar.

32. Portable apparatus according to any of claims 28 to 30, wherein each of the two upper connectors is a three-way connector that comprises three sockets arranged to receive an end of one of the uprights, an end of the crossbar and an end of a diagonal strut.

33. Portable apparatus according to any of claims 4 to 32, wherein any of the upper connectors or lower front connectors or lower back connectors are arranged to connect to their associated parts using a twisting action.

34. Portable apparatus according to claim 33, wherein any of the upper connectors or lower front connectors or lower back connectors are arranged to connect to their associated parts using a twist and lock action.

35. Portable apparatus according to any preceding claim, further comprising a tape marked with indicia to indicate distances.
36. Portable apparatus according to any preceding claim, further comprising a dummy player adapted to attach to an upright.

37. Portable apparatus according to claim 36, further comprising a second like goal, wherein first and second goals are arranged side by side to form a continuous goal face, the first and second goals having respective base coverings and respective upper coverings and wherein the human-shaped piece is attached to an upright at the centre of the combined goal.

38. Portable apparatus according to any preceding claim, further comprising a second like goal, wherein the first and second goals are arranged side by side but facing in opposite directions, the first goal having a rear covering and the second goal further having a base covering adapted to be attached to the uprights so as to extend to ground level and bearing indicia dividing the covering into respective portions.

39. Portable apparatus according to claim 38, wherein the second goal further comprises an upper covering adapted to be attached to the uprights so as to extend to the crossbar and to extend to meet the base covering.

40. Portable apparatus according to claim 36, further comprising apparatus for practising dribbling comprising: a body including the dummy player and a support adapted to support the dummy player on the ground and to hold the dummy player in a substantially upright position; and an L-shaped leg adapted to be supported by the ground to provide an
upright section and a flat section.

41. Portable apparatus according to claim 40, wherein the L-shaped leg is placed such that the flat section overlaps the body thereby defining an aperture of sufficient size to allow passage of a football.

42. Portable apparatus according to claim 41, further comprising co-operating coupling means operable to couple the body to the L-shaped leg, the coupling means allowing relative movement of the body and the L-shaped leg such that the size of the aperture can be varied when viewed from the front of the body.

43. Portable apparatus according to claim 42, wherein the L-shaped leg is arranged to be rotated relative to the body thereby to allow the size of the aperture to vary when viewed from in front of the body.

44. Portable apparatus according to claim 43, wherein the L-shaped leg is arranged to rotate about a substantially upright axis, thereby allowing the width of the aperture to be varied when viewed from in front of the body.

45. Portable apparatus according to claim 44, wherein indexing means are provided to allow the L-shaped leg to be set in one of a plurality of indexed angular positions.

46. Portable apparatus according to claim 45, wherein the indexing means comprises a member to join the L-shaped leg to a base of the body in one of a plurality of positions.
47. Portable apparatus according to claim 46, wherein the indexing means comprises a peg that may be inserted through a hole provide in the L-shaped leg to be received in one of a plurality of holes provided in the base of the body.

5. Portable apparatus according to any claims of 40 to 47, wherein the L-shaped leg is arranged to rotate about a substantially horizontal axis, such that the L-shaped leg may be raised from the ground into an upright position.

48. Portable apparatus according to claim 42, wherein the L-shaped leg is arranged to slide relative to the body.

50. Portable apparatus according to any of claims 40 to 49, wherein the support comprises an upright of the goal and a base.

51. Portable apparatus according to claim 50, wherein the base has a hole provided for receiving the base of the upright.

52. Portable apparatus according to claim 51, wherein the base is provided with a void sized to receive a base side of the goal such that the base can be used to weigh down the goal.

53. Portable apparatus according to claim 52, further comprising a like void positioned relative to the void such that the void and further void may receive two adjacent parallel base sides.
54. Portable apparatus according to any of claims 40 to 53, wherein the L-shaped leg comprises an upright and a base side of the goal.

55. Portable apparatus according to claim 54, wherein the upright and base side are joined by a connector.

56. Portable apparatus according to claim 54 or claim 55, wherein the base side forms the upright part and the upright forms the flat part.

57. Portable apparatus according to claim 56, wherein the L-shaped leg is supported by a base.

58. Portable apparatus according to claim 57, wherein the base side is received within a hole provided in the base.

59. Apparatus for practising dribbling in football comprising: a body, a support adapted to support the body on the ground and to hold the body in a substantially upright position, and an L-shaped leg adapted to be supported by the ground to provide an upright section and a flat section.

60. Apparatus according to claim 59, wherein the L-shaped leg is placed such that the flat section overlaps the body thereby defining an aperture of sufficient size to allow passage of a football.

61. Apparatus according to claim 60, further comprising co-operating coupling means operable to couple the body to the L-shaped leg, the coupling means allowing relative movement of the body and the L-shaped leg such that the size of the
aperture can be varied when viewed from the front of the body.

62. Apparatus according to claim 61, wherein the L-shaped leg is arranged to be rotated relative to the body thereby to allow the size of the aperture to vary when viewed from in front of the body.

63. Apparatus according to claim 62, wherein the L-shaped leg is arranged to rotate about a substantially upright axis, thereby allowing the width of the aperture to be adjusted.

64. Apparatus according to claim 63, wherein indexing means are provided to allow the L-shaped leg to be set in one of a plurality of indexed angular positions.

65. Apparatus according to claim 64, wherein the indexing means comprises a member to join the L-shaped leg to a base of the body in one of a plurality of positions.

66. Apparatus according to claim 65, wherein the indexing means comprises a peg that may be inserted through a hole provide in the L-shaped leg to be received in one of a plurality of holes provided in the base of the body.

67. Apparatus according to any claims of 59 to 66, wherein the L-shaped leg is arranged to rotate about a substantially horizontal axis, such that the L-shaped leg may be raised from the ground into an upright position.
68. Apparatus according to claim 59, wherein the L-shaped leg is arranged to slide relative to the body.

69. A system for assessing the ability of football players, comprising constructing one or more training apparatus from a kit of parts that form portable apparatus that may be taken from location to location and assembled to form standardised apparatus at each location, assessing players as they perform a plurality of standardised exercises using the training apparatus, and obtaining a score or rating based on the assessment of the players.

70. The system of claim 69, comprising using the portable apparatus of any of claims 1 to 58.
## INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

**International application No**

PCT/GB2007/000866

### A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

**INV. A63B63/00 A63B69/34**

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

### B. FIELDS SEARCHED

**A63B**

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

**EPO-Internal, WPI Data**

### C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages</th>
<th>Relevant to claim No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2,3, 5-13, 36, 41-43, 49-62, 68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>page 2, line 4 - line 16; figures 1-4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>DE 203 03 146 U1 (WOLF ARMIN [DE]) 24 July 2003 (2003-07-24) abstract; figure 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>US 4 286 786 A (PAPADOPOULOS ANDREAS T) 1 September 1981 (1981-09-01) abstract; figure 1-3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**X** Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C **X** See patent family annex

- Special categories of cited documents
  - "A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance
  - "E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date
  - "L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)
  - "O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means
  - "P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed
  - "T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention
  - "X" document of particular relevance, the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is taken alone
  - "Y" document of particular relevance, the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art
  - "A" document member of the same patent family

**Date of the actual completion of the international search**

2 August 2007

**Date of mailing of the international search report**

09/08/2007

**Name and mailing address of the ISA/ European Patent Office, P B 5818 Patentlaan 2 NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk Tel (+31-70) 340-2040 Tx 31651 epo nl, Fax (+31-70) 340-3016**

**Authorized officer**

Michel s, Norbert
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages</th>
<th>Relevant to claim No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>FR 2 815 262 A (SNT SARL [FR]) 19 April 2002 (2002-04-19) abstract ; figures 1,5</td>
<td>10-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>WO 95/24948 A (PATERSON DARREN HUGH [AU]) 21 September 1995 (1995-09-21) page 1, line 3 - line 8 page 4, line 13 - page 5, line 5; figures 1,2</td>
<td>1,4, 14-24, 28-32, 69,70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>US 5 580 064 A (CHILDERS JR ROBERT L [US]) 3 December 1996 (1996-12-03) column 2, line 21 - line 41; figures 1-3</td>
<td>1,4, 14-25, 27-32, 69,70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>US 5 928 093 A (LAI KONG THOMAS [HK]) 27 Ouly 1999 (1999-07-27) column 8, line 58 - line 63; figures 2,10 ,14</td>
<td>36, 40-43, 49-62,68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>GB 2 328 617 A (CHEN CHARLENE [TW]) 3 March 1999 (1999-03-03)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Box II  Observations where certain claims were found unsearchable (Continuation of item 2 of first sheet)

This international Search Report has not been established in respect of certain claims under Article 17(2)(a) for the following reasons:

1. □ Claims Nos.: because they relate to subject matter not required to be searched by this Authority, namely.

2. □ Claims Nos.: because they relate to parts of the International Application that do not comply with the prescribed requirements to such an extent that no meaningful International Search can be earned out, specifically:

3. □ Claims Nos.: because they are dependent claims and are not drafted in accordance with the second and third sentences of Rule 6.4(a)

Box III  Observations where unity of invention is lacking (Continuation of item 3 of first sheet)

This International Searching Authority found multiple inventions in this international application, as follows:

see additional sheet

1. ☑ As all required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers all searchable claims.

2. □ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, this Authority did not invite payment of any additional fee.

3. □ As only some of the required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant, this International Search Report covers only those claims for which fees were paid, specifically claims Nos:

4. □ No required additional search fees were timely paid by the applicant. Consequently, this International Search Report is restricted to the invention first mentioned in the claims; it is covered by claims Nos..

Remark on Protest  □ The additional search fees were accompanied by the applicant's protest.

☒ No protest accompanied the payment of additional search fees
This International Searching Authority found multiple (groups of) inventions in this international application, as follows:

1. claims: 1, 4, 14-35, 37-39, 69, 70

   Portable football training goal consisting of a kit of tubular parts for assembly at the location of use

1.1. claims: 1-3, 4-13

   Portable football training goal consisting of a kit of tubular parts and a means to cover the goal face partially

2. claims: 1, 36, 40-68

   A football dummy player comprising a ground support member and a L-shaped leg, respectively a portable football training goal consisting of an kit of tubular parts in combination with a football dummy player comprising a ground support member and a L-shaped leg
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patent document cited in search report</th>
<th>Publication date</th>
<th>Patent family member(s)</th>
<th>Publication date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FR 2551982 A1</td>
<td>22-03-1985</td>
<td>BE 900559 A1</td>
<td>02-01-1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>DE 3434034 A1</td>
<td>09-05-1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DE 20303146 U1</td>
<td>24-07-2003</td>
<td></td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 4286786 A</td>
<td>01-09-1981</td>
<td></td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FR 2815262 A</td>
<td>19-04-2002</td>
<td></td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 2004072635 A1</td>
<td>15-04-2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WO 9524948 A</td>
<td>21-09-1995</td>
<td></td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 5580064 A</td>
<td>03-12-1996</td>
<td>CA 2245150 A1</td>
<td>11-06-1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CN 1213980 A</td>
<td>14-04-1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>WO 9824520 A1</td>
<td>11-06-1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 5928093 A</td>
<td>27-07-1999</td>
<td></td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BR PI0417752 A</td>
<td>10-04-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CA 2550334 A1</td>
<td>14-07-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CN 1894437 A</td>
<td>10-01-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EP 1697557 A1</td>
<td>06-09-2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>JP 2007515226 T</td>
<td>14-06-2007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>US 2005159250 A1</td>
<td>21-07-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>WO 2005064039 A1</td>
<td>14-07-2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB 2328617 A</td>
<td>03-03-1999</td>
<td></td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 2004127309 A1</td>
<td>01-07-2004</td>
<td></td>
<td>NONE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>