A game court for play of a variation of basketball includes a substantially level and smooth surface, having rectangular shape and length and width of smaller dimensions than any standard conventional basketball court, and rings vertically raised from the surface and disposed adjacent each end of the surface, each of the rings having slightly larger diameter than any standard conventional basketball. The court is integrated with access measures to limit access to the court and participation by particular persons in games at any instant. A fence or walls (of a building, shed structure of the like) can cordon off a plurality of the game courts in a particular relative location, and persons allowed to access the courts, or any one of them, can be restricted to those authorized, such as those who are members of a league or membership club. Because of the reduced size of the present game court from that of the standard conventional basketball court, less than ten players are authorized to participate in the game then being played on a particular court.
FIG. 1

FIG. 2
FIG. 4

400

402
Ascertain authorized participants

404
Select teams

406
Select 3 immediate participants for each team

408
Toss coin and select

410
Next team attempts to make goal on opposite end of court

412
Foul

414
Score

416
Out of bounds

418
Team reaches at least 25 points with 2 point lead

Winner
Ball through basket

Team at opposite end receives score

If regular play (within key)

1 = pt

Ball to non-scoring team

Lose ball to other team

If regular play (outside key)

2 = pt

Any team reaches score of at least 25 with two point lead

WINNER
Application for authority input

Application reviewed

Allowed

Authorization granted

Next participation

Authorization discerned

Authorized

Begin play of method 400 of Fig. 4

FIG. 6
VARIATIONS OF BASKETBALL SPORT GAMES
AND LEAGUE MEMBERSHIPS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This is a continuation-in-part application of U.S. application Ser. No. 10/179,614 filed on Jun. 24, 2002, of the same inventors.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The invention relates generally to new and varied systems and methods for sport games and league memberships therefor, and, more particularly, to a variation of basketball sport games, courts and facilities for play of the game, and league memberships for participants, and systems and methods therefor.

[0003] Basketball has become one of the major world sports on both the professional and amateur level. In spite of its continued growth, the game of basketball has remained essentially unchanged over the years, excepting some minor changes in rules and court lines and markings. Professional, collegiate and many amateur courts are 94 feet in length by 50 feet in width (e.g., length is longer than width) with similar placement of backboards, baskets, free throw lines and lanes at lengthwise ends of the courts, and center circles at mid-point of the length and width of the court. Many American high schools play on courts 84 feet in length and fifty feet in width (e.g., again, length is longer than width) with markings similar to the NCAA court but adapted for the smaller court length and width. Court standards for international amateur play are frequently 40 feet 2 inches width by 91 feet 10 inches in length (e.g., length greater than width). Although there are slight variations in court dimensions and markings, the standard of competition is for two teams of five players each and generally standardized rules of time periods, and dual backboards, baskets and markings at respective sides of the court along the court length.

[0004] For example, the NCAA and the NBA courts are almost identical, in that they are greater in length than width and have goals and free throw lanes and lines at respective ends of the length, but with certain minimal differences of minor court markings relating to rule variations and with the most significant being the different three point lines, 19 feet 9 inch radius for NCAA and 23 feet 9 inch radius for NBA. The court and method for playing the game was designed for the standard of ten players on the court, five per team, engaged in competition, and the court and method are as they are in order to accommodate this number of players at a time. Professional and amateur, including collegiate and Olympic, have the same fundamental characteristics and general method of play, including courts of greater in length than width have goals and free throw lanes and lines at respective ends of the length.

[0005] Half-court basketball has been relatively popular, wherein half a court length is employed for the game and one of the basketball goals on the end of play is employed. In such play, each half (along the length) of the court can be separately used for games, therefore, two games of 5 player teams can play on each court half at the same time each using a single goal on the applicable half. The court employed in half-court basketball has been the same standard or regulation court above (wherein the length exceeds

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] Embodiments of the invention variously provide variation of conventional American basketball that demands virtually all of the athletic skills of conventional basketball, but which is faster paced, played in less space than that of the conventional basketball court, and played with fewer players than conventional games (e.g., only three players per side). In the embodiments, each team attempts to place a basketball successfully through a ringed-basket, slightly larger than the basketball, at an opposing end of court, as the other team seeks to prevent it. Moreover, embodiments provide for multiple courts at a cordoned location for simultaneous play in a single facility or housing with access to courts limited to authorized participants, and include systems and methods for authorizing participants and teams and groups of participants.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0007] The present invention is illustrated by way of example and not limitation in the accompanying figures, in which like references indicate similar elements, and in which:

[0008] FIG. 1 illustrates a court of relative scale with respect to human sport participants, according to embodiments of the present;

[0009] FIG. 2 illustrates a covered-housing system containing multiple courts of FIG. 1, according to embodiments of the present invention;

[0010] FIG. 3 illustrates the court of FIG. 1, including dual elements for sport play and competition, according to embodiments of the present invention;

[0011] FIG. 4 illustrates a method of playing a sport using the court of FIG. 1, together with the dual elements of FIG. 3, according to embodiments of the present invention;

[0012] FIG. 5 illustrates a method of scoring a sport using the court of FIG. 1, together with the dual elements of FIG. 3, according to embodiments of the present invention;

[0013] FIG. 6 illustrates a method of ascertaining proper authorization for play of the method of FIG. 5, using the court of FIG. 1, together with the dual elements of FIG. 3, according to embodiments of the present invention;

[0014] FIG. 7 illustrates a court of relative scale with respect to human sport participants, according to embodiments of the present invention; and

[0015] FIG. 8 illustrates a layout of two of the court of FIG. 1, within the confines and bounds of a traditional basketball court, according to embodiments of the present invention.

DETAIL OF DESCRIPTION

[0016] Referring to FIG. 1, a court 100 is rectangular in shape, as marked by parallel length markings 102a,b and parallel width markings 104a,b. The court 100 is a substantially level ground or surface. The court 100 can include any
of a variety of hard, resilient surface materials, including, for example, concrete, compacted soil, clay, asphalt pavement, Laykold, or other material. Throughout the surface of the court 100, the surface is consistently smooth and symmetrical, at least within the markings 102a,b and markings 104a,b.

[0017] Centrally adjacent the markings 104a,b and extending between the markings 104a,b and the markings 102a,b are oppositely disposed key portions 106a,b. The key portions 106a,b have rectangular shape and fit within each opposing half of the court 100.

[0018] At an end of each key portion 106a,b extending inward to the court 100 and centrally disposed to the court 100, the ends of each key portion 106a,b include respective semicircular portions 108a,b as outlined by markings each semi-encircling the key portions 106a,b. The court 100 is, for example, fifty feet in length and forty-seven feet in width.

[0019] The court 100, in any event, has generally rectangular shape (e.g., approaching square shape) and length of less than about 84 feet and width of less than or equal to about 49 feet, wherein the length and width are of smaller dimension than any standard conventional basketball court. The center circle and mid-court expansive typical of conventional basketball courts is not included in the court 100. The court 100, being shorter than conventional basketball courts, includes the semicircular portions 108a,b having a radius on the order of 6 foot, whereby marking of the semicircular portions 108a,b intersect the inwardly extending corners of each key portion 106a,b and terminate at the respective width markings 104a,b.

[0020] Referring to FIG. 2, the court 100, and preferably multiple ones thereof, are located in the court arena 200. In the court arena 200, the court 100, or multiple ones thereof, can be situated inside a covered housing 202, although the covered housing 202 is not absolutely required and the court 100, or multiple ones thereof, can additionally or in lieu of the covered housing 202 be located within a secured area 204. In any event the covered housing 202, or other secured area 204, secures the court 100 (or courts, as applicable) from entry by persons not properly authorized for entry, as hereinafter further discussed.

[0021] Referring to FIG. 3, the court 100, and each court if multiple courts are located within a single covered housing 202 or secured area 204, has located at adjacent ends outside the width markings 104a,b of the court 100, dual raised baskets 302a,b. Each of the raised baskets 302a,b includes an upright pole 304a,b, a backboard 306a,b affixed to the respective upright pole 304a,b at a desired location above the surface of the court 100, and a ring-basket 308a,b affixed centrally to the respective backboard 306a,b. Each ring-basket 308a,b affixed with the respective backboard 306a,b may, but need not necessarily, be variable in location along the respective upright pole 304a,b. For example, the ring-basket 308a,b affixed with backboard 306a,b can be located along the upright pole 304a,b so as to be situated at a height of 10 feet above the court 100. Alternately, the height above the court 100 can be variable from 10 feet can be securely fixed at other than 10 feet. Moreover, the backboard 306a,b can alternately be suspended or otherwise disposed at desired height and location, with or by means or structures other than the uprights pole 304a,b.

[0022] The ring-basket 308a,b is slightly larger than a conventional basketball, if a conventional basketball is to be passed therethrough. The backboard 306a,b is of sufficient size and shape to permit a conventional basketball to be selectively directed to and deflected by the backboard 306a,b from within a location above the surface of the court 100. Alternate sizing and shapes for the ring-basket 308a,b and the backboard 306a,b, together with the upright pole 304a,b, are possible depending upon the application or as otherwise desired for use of the court 100 as hereinafter discussed.

[0023] Referring to FIG. 4, the court 100 (or multiple ones thereof) contained within the covered housing 202 or other secured area 204 is useable only by an authorized participant duly authorized and participating according to the method 400. Hereinafter, the terms “authorized participant”, “participant”, “individual”, and the like are described and used primarily with respect to discussion of a single person or individual; however, the terms are intended to and should be construed in broader manner to include multiple individuals or persons, teams, groups, pools of teams or individuals, and any other combination or multiple of individuals or groups. The terms are merely chosen here for purposes of simplification of discussion, but the terms are not limited solely to single persons and should not be so construed.

[0024] In the method 400, a human individual seeks access into the covered housing 202 or other secured area 204 in a step 402. The step 402 includes ascertaining whether or not the human individual is an authorized participant (as further detailed later herein with respect to FIG. 6). If it is ascertained in the step 402 that the human individual is an authorized participant, the human individual, together with other human individuals also having been determined to be authorized participants, is included in a step 404 of selecting teams.

[0025] In the step 404 of selecting teams, all authorized participants are pooled and selections are made in a step 406 from among the pool, of at least three immediate participants. Although at least three immediate participants are selected in the step 406, more than the three immediate participants can be selected. Based on the step 406 of selecting, at least two teams comprising the at least three immediate participants are obtained.

[0026] As previously mentioned, authorization of participants can alternately or additionally take place or proceed with teams, groups, or other multiples. References herein to single individuals or persons as participants are merely intended for simplification of discussion here. In every event, the terms “participant”, “authorized participant”, as well as “individual” or “human individual”, as used herein, have the broadest possible meanings and construction in the context, and such terms include single persons, multiple persons, teams, groups, or other pools or multiples or combinations.

[0027] In a step 408, two teams from the at least two teams obtained in the step 406 participate in tossing a coin. One of the two teams elects either “heads” or “tails” for the coin, the coin is tossed, and the resulting display of the coin [as either “heads” or “tails” showing, upon the coin thereafter becoming and remaining stationary] dictates whether the electing team or the other of the two teams can choose to next attempt to make a goal.
Thereafter, in a step 410, one of the teams commences attempting to make a score (also referred to as "goal") by passing a basketball through the ring-basket 308a or b, at an opposite end of the court 100. The basketball is passable and dribbleable between and among participants of the attempting team, in conventional manner of basketball play. Participants on the team attempting to make the goal can move or locate throughout the surface of the court 100, however, participants can only be located within the key portion 106a,b of the court 100 for not in excess of 3 consecutive seconds at a time. Conventional rules of basketball apply, in which any violation by participants of remaining within the key portion 106a,b for in excess of 3 consecutive seconds at a time results in conversion of the basketball to the non-violating team (e.g., in the method 400, the occurrence of such a violation is treated as an "out of bounds" step 416, hereafter described).

As the participants of the team attempt to make the goal in the step 410, the participants of the other team attempt to prevent the passing of the basketball through the respective ring-basket 308a,b. The participants can attempt to convert or recover the ball from the attempting team and, if successful, then the participants so converting or recovering proceed next to the step 410 of attempting to pass the basketball through the ring-basket 308a,b oppositely disposed thereto adjacent the end of the court 100.

In each instance of the step 410 performed by a team, there are three possible occurrences, each with the result that the basketball is converted or recovered by the other team which then proceeds again with the step 410 but using the oppositely disposed ring-basket 308a,b. The three possible occurrences are as follows:

Foul:

Conventional basketball games are played according to certain rules for violations referred to as "fouls", as known to those skilled in the art. In a step 412 of the method 400, one or more of these fouls occurs according to those rules. For example, a team participant attempting to prohibit the basketball from being passed through the ring-basket 308a,b by the other team’s participants bodily encounters one of the other team's participants. If the fouling in the step 412 is a first occurrence for the respective teams, then the team then performing the step 410 commences to again perform the step 410. If, however, the fouling in the step 412 is a second occurrence, then a step 420 is performed by the non-violating team in which the fouled participant attempts to pass the basketball through the ring-basket 308a,b as applicable, from the inwardmost extension of the key portion 106a or b. In the step 420, the violating team is prohibited from attempting to prohibit the step 420. If the basketball is passed through the ring-basket 308a,b in the step 420, then the violating team next converts or recovers the basketball and proceeds to the step 410 as if having passed through a step 414 of scoring. If, however, the basketball is not passed through the ring-basket 308a,b in the step 420, then a step 422 of rebounding is performed by both teams. In the step 422, both teams attempt to convert or recover the basketball and proceed to the step 410.

Score:

Another possible occurrence in the step 410 is that the attempting team is successful in passing the basketball through the appropriate opposing ring-basket 308a or b. If the basketball is so passed therethrough by a participant located outside the respective semicircular markings 108a or b, then 2 points are awarded the team of the participant. If the participant is located within the markings 108a or b, however, then 1 point is awarded the team of the participant. In either event, the method 400 proceeds to the step 410 after the step 414.

Out of Bounds:

Another possible occurrence in the step 410 is that either team knocks the basketball within the court 100 in a step 416. The basketball is thereafter converted or recovered by the team that did not cause the out of bounds in the step 416, and the method 400 proceeds to the step 410.

The method 400 continues until a step 418 of winning. In the step 418, one of the teams accumulates at least 25 points with a 2 point lead over the points accumulated by the other team. Thereafter, the method 400 (i.e., the game) is stopped and has been completed.

Referring to FIG. 5, a method 500 of scoring is performed for both teams in conjunction with the method 400 of FIG. 4. In the method 500, "pt" is initially valued 0 and "score" is also initially valued 0 for each team. A step 502 of adding the score is performed in which "pt" and "score" are summed to obtain a new "score" for each team. Thereafter, in a step 504, a team passes the basketball through the respective opposing ring-basket 308a or b. The particular team then receives a goal or score in the step 506 of receiving. In the step 506, a determination is made among three possible outcomes, as follows: (a) if the goal was made in regular play by a participant within the key portion 106a or b of the court 100, the "pt" is valued as 1; (b) if the goal was made in regular play by a participant within the key portion 106a or b of the court 100, the "pt" is valued as 2; or (c) if the goal is made by virtue of a foul shot, the "pt" is valued as 1.

After the step 506, the basketball is converted or recovered in a step 514, corresponding to the step 410 after the steps 412, 414, or 416 in the method 400 of FIG. 4, by or to the non-scoring team. Next, the method 500 returns to the step 502 for adding and determination of a new score for the scoring team. The method 500 continues for the non-scoring team either through the next step 504 or a step 516 of losing the basketball by conversion or recovery by the other team. If the step 516 occurs, then the method 500 thereafter returns to the step 504, albeit for the team that did not lose the basketball in the step 516.

If at any time after the step 514 any team has obtained a score of at least 25 with a 2 point lead over the score then obtained by the other team, the method 500 proceeds to the step 518. The step 518 corresponds to the step 418 of the method 400 of FIG. 4. The team obtaining the score of at least 25 with the 2 point lead is the winner.

Referring to FIG. 6, a method 600 of checking authorization of participants for entry to the court 100 of FIG. 1 is commenced with a step 602. In the step 602, a participant submits or inputs an application for authority. In a step 604, the application is reviewed and determination is made either to allow or to reject. If the determination is “rejected”, then the method 600 returns to the step 602. If the
determination is otherwise “allowed”, then the method 600 proceeds to a step 606 of granting authorization.

[0042] Once the step 606 is completed, a step 608 of next participating is performed. In the step 608 of next participating, the participant having received appropriate authorization is permitted entry to the court 100, such as for participating on a team in a basketball game. In a step 610, authorization is discerned for the entrance to the court 100. If in the step 610 it is determined that the entrance does not have authorization, then the method 600 returns to the step 602. Otherwise, the method 600 is completed and the authorized participant can be included as a performer of the method 400, for example.

[0043] Of course, the method 600 of authorizing participants can include various requirements in the step 602 of applying for authorization. Particularly, a request for adequate monies for authorization, either on a per entry basis, monthly fee basis, initiation fee basis, or other arrangement, can be included in the step 602 and the reviewing step 604. The method 600 is believed particularly desirable and applicable in use for a membership-based admission and use application, such as a health or sports club including the court 100 or multiple ones thereof.

[0044] Referring to FIG. 7, certain embodiments of the court have particular dimensions. These dimensions are listed in the Figure as 47 feet wide and 50 feet long. Each opposing lengthwise ends of the court includes a suspended goal basket. Each lengthwise half includes markings for rectangular free throw lanes. Each of the rectangular free throw lanes extends from an opposing lengthwise end of the court toward the center of the court. A respective free throw line terminates each free throw lane at the extent thereof toward the center of the court. Respective semicircular areas are marked to extend from the free throw line at each respective lengthwise end, and each have a diameter overlying and sufficient to touch respective widthwise extents of the respective free throw line. The semicircular areas lie closely proximate on the surface, such that the areas touch at the center of the court or, alternately, are otherwise within less than a length dimension of the free throw lanes towards the center of the court. Although certain specific dimensions are stated, it is to be understood that alternative, modified, varied, and other dimensions and arrangements are possible in keeping with the scope of the invention.

[0045] Referring to FIG. 8, a typical-sized basketball court 800 is marked for layout of two separate ones of the court 100 (shown in FIG. 1) as the courts 802, 804. In the embodiment, the basketball court 800 includes the court 802 on a half of the court 800, and the other of the court 804 on the other half of the court 800. It is noteworthy that each court 802, 804 is laid perpendicular to the length of the court 800. Dimensions of each court 802, 804 are as appropriate and desired for this layout.

[0046] Numerous alternatives are possible in the embodiments. For example, the conventionally recognized rules of American basketball (e.g. NBA or NCAA) can be used in the methods and systems. These rules can be altered, as appropriate, for example according to the aforementioned allowances for reduced-sized court and variation and implementation of scoring. Although each team preferably is comprised of three player participants on the court at any given time during regulation play, more or less players or possible, for example, standard NBA, NCAA, American high school, and International basketball rules require five players per team during regulation competition and similar rules can apply in the systems and methods. Furthermore, the size of the shortened court can be varied or adapted, such as the court can be halved the size of any regulation five-on-five court, for example, the court can be smaller than any NBA & NCAA, American high school, International court standard, or other conventional court.

[0047] In the foregoing specification, the invention has been described with reference to specific embodiments. However, one of ordinary skill in the art appreciates that various modifications and changes can be made without departing from the scope of the present invention as set forth in the claims below. Accordingly, the specification and figures are to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense, and all such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of the present invention.

[0048] Benefits, other advantages, and solutions to problems have been described above with regard to specific embodiments. However, the benefits, advantages, solutions to problems and any element(s) that may cause any benefit, advantage, or solution to occur or become more pronounced are not to be construed as a critical, required, or essential feature or element of any or all the claims. As used herein, the terms "comprises," "comprising," or any other variation thereof, are intended to cover a non-exclusive inclusion, such that a process, method, article, or apparatus that comprises a list of elements does not include only those elements but may include other elements not expressly listed or inherent to such process, method, article, or apparatus.

What is claimed is:

1. A system for game play, comprising:
   a substantially level and smooth surface, having rectangular shape and length of less than about 84 feet and width of less than or equal to about 49 feet, wherein the length and width are of smaller dimension than any standard conventional basketball court;
   a first ring vertically raised from the surface and disposed adjacent a lengthwise end of the surface;
   a second ring vertically raised from the surface and disposed adjacent another lengthwise end of the surface;
   access restrictor outside of the surface and set-off from the periphery of the surface to limit access to the surface to authorized participants in game play on the surface;
   wherein each of the rings having slightly larger diameter than any standard conventional basketball.
2. The system of claim 1, wherein the width dimension compares to the length dimension in a ratio of about 47:50.
3. The system of claim 1, wherein the surface accommodates two teams of 3 persons each for basketball games in accordance with conventional dribbling, shooting, foul and penalty rules, at each lengthwise half of the surface.
4. The system of claim 1, further comprising:
   a logical discernor connected to the access restrictor for controlling the access restrictor to limit access to the surface solely to authorized participants.
5. A basketball game surface, comprising:

- a generally rectangular floor having a center and opposing ends;
- two goal baskets, each of the goal baskets suspended at an opposing end of the generally rectangular floor;
- two generally rectangular free throw lanes, each of the lanes extending from an opposing end of the generally rectangular floor toward the center thereof, each of the lanes terminating at a free throw line;
- two generally semicircular areas, each area extending circumscribing a free throw line and contacting ends of the free throw;
- the floor having dimensions on the order of about 50 feet long and about 47 feet wide;
- wherein the semicircular areas lie in close proximity to one another.

6. The game surface of claim 5, wherein the semicircular areas contact but do not overlap.

7. The game surface of claim 5, wherein each opposing lengthwise half of the surface is adapted for play by teams of less than five players.

8. The game surface of claim 7, wherein each of the goal baskets are substantially the same diameter of less than any conventional standard basketball for organized play of basketball.

9. The game surface of claim 7, further comprising:

- an organizer connected to the surface, for permitting access to the surface by only certain persons to participate as players during play by teams.

10. The game surface of claim 9, further comprising, further comprising:

- an organizer operably connected with and integrated for control of the authorizer, for logically determining which persons to permit access to the surface as players during play by teams.

11. A game for human physical participation, comprising:

- a plurality of generally rectangular surfaces in close proximity, each having opposing ends, and each of the plurality having dimensions of ratio of length to width on the order of 50:47 and length of less than about 84 feet;
- a suspended goal basket at the respective ones of the opposing ends; and
- a restrictor operably connected to the plurality for limiting access to any of the plurality to only certain persons authorized to participate in the game.

12. The game of claim 11, wherein the certain persons authorized to participate consist of an even number of persons that is less than ten persons, forming two teams with equal numbers of the persons to each team.

13. The of claim 11, further comprising:

- an organizer operably connected to the restrictor, for logically determining which, among multiple ones of the persons authorized to participate, are at any instant to be playing on any particular one of the plurality.

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