Jan. 10, 1928. 1,655,599

W. J. DOLAN, JR

FOOTBALL

Filed June 21, 1923

Fig. 2.

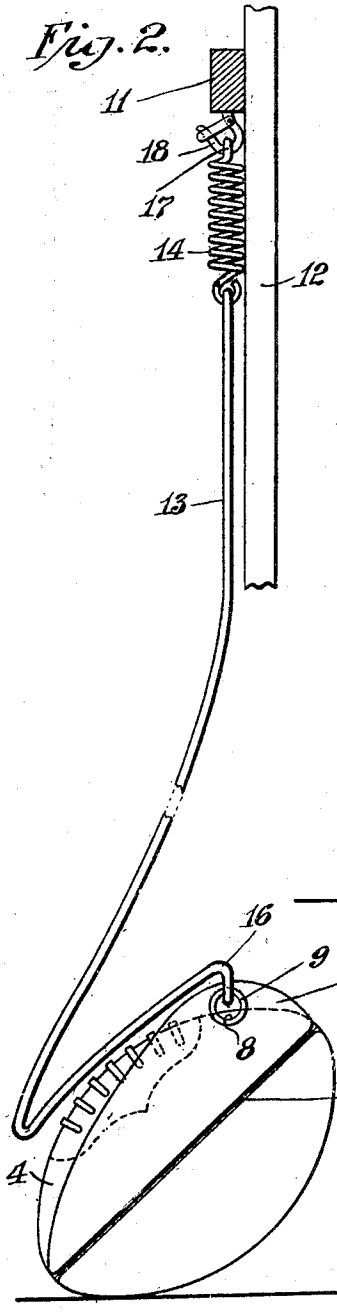
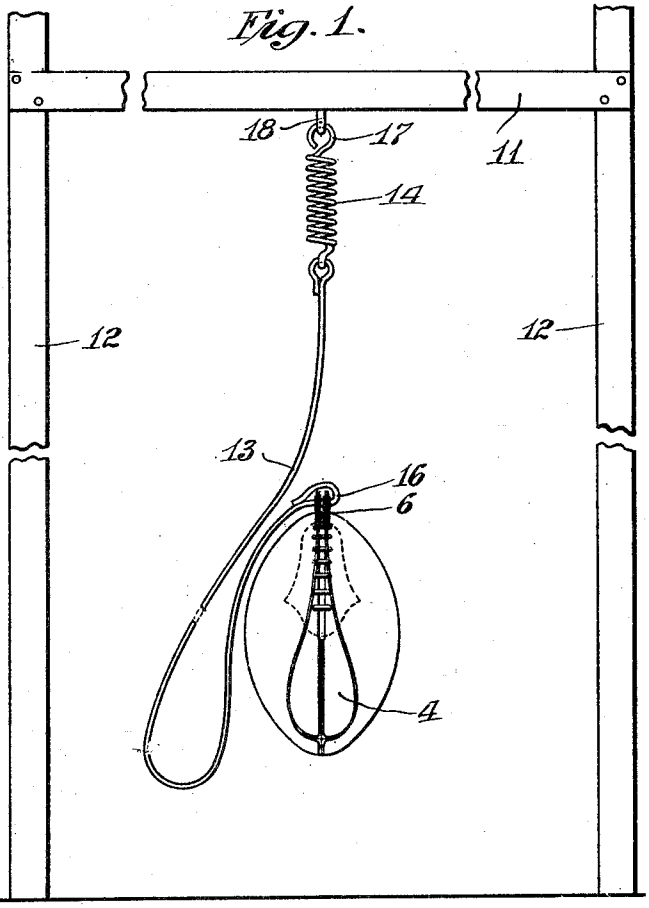


Fig. 1.



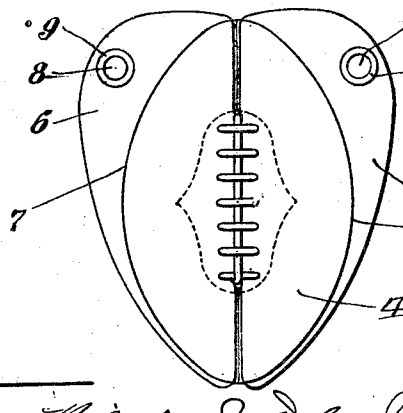


Fig. 3.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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FOOTBALL.

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The invention relates to foot balls and has for an object the provision of means whereby a foot ball may be tethered or held captive for practice kicking.

In the game of foot ball as at present developed, kicking the ball plays a most important part, and in practice much time is spent in developing the skill of the players in this feature of the game. A great deal of valuable time, however, is wasted because of the necessity for retrieving the ball after it has been kicked. In practicing "drop kicking", for example, the player, who holds the ball in a suitable position before him, after dropping and kicking the ball, must either retrieve it himself, or the services of another person must be enlisted for that purpose. To avoid this waste of time on the part of the player or the employment of the services of extra people to retrieve the ball, the invention contemplates the provision of means for tethering the ball or holding it captive, so that the player may place it in any desired position with relation to his body, said tethering means to be of such a nature that the ball, after its flight has been arrested will be returned to position near the player.

The invention consists in the novel improvements, combinations and features of construction herein shown and described.

In the accompanying drawing is shown a preferred embodiment of the invention, the same illustrating the principles by which the invention is carried into effect.

Of the drawing:

Fig. 1 is a front view partly in perspective, parts being broken away, and shows a foot ball and tether made in accordance with the invention, the tether being engaged at one end to a bar between the uprights of goal posts, and the ball being shown in a position in which it would be held by the player for a drop kick, and facing in the direction of its proposed flight;

Fig. 2 is a side view of the same with the ball in position on the ground;

Fig. 3 is a front view of the ball, showing certain parts thereof in open or spread position.

Referring now in detail to the drawing, there is illustrated a preferred embodiment of the invention, the same, as shown, comprising a foot ball 4 of of unusual construction, having an outer covering of four sections fastened together, there being added thereto means by which the ball may be engaged with a tether and held captive. While said means may be constructed in various ways, preferably they should be of such nature as to distribute throughout the body of the ball the shock caused by the tether's arrest of the flight of the ball when kicked.

In the embodiment of the invention shown in the drawings, therefore, said means comprise a pair of flaps or wings 6 extending from the body of the ball. Each wing is an integral part of a section of the cover and is a continuation thereof, being formed by and extending from the seam 7 where the section is sewn to its adjoining section. Each wing, also, and as shown, is at the said seam 7 co-extensive in length, with the section of which it forms an integral part. Furthermore, each wing 6 is preferably made narrow at one end and gradually increased in width to the other end where it is formed with an orifice 8 at a point where it approaches the other wing. The leather or fabric surrounding the orifice is reenforced by a metal eyelet 9 to prevent rupture of the body of the wing. Through these orifices 8, as will presently be explained, the tether is engaged with the ball. With the wings constructed and the orifices located as described, the shock above referred to is distributed throughout the body of the ball. Also, deformation of the ball is avoided, the usual outer surface of the ball is preserved, and interference with handling the ball is avoided.

Means are provided for tethering the ball, and while the ball may be tethered to any suitable standard or support, as illustrated, the ball is shown as tethered to the cross bar 11 of a pair of goal posts 12. Preferably, also, the tether should be of an elastic nature so that when the ball is kicked, the sudden shock, above referred to, caused by the arrest of the flight of the ball by the tether may be taken up in part by the stretching or giving of the tether, in this way undue wear of the ball and tether being avoided. In the embodiment of the invention illustrated, therefore, the tether is shown as being made of a strap 13 having in one portion of its extent, preferably at one end, a spring 14 of suitable size and strength. The tether is also provided at one end with a clasp 16 which engages, as shown, the pierced ends of the

wings 6, and at the other end with a clasp 17 which engages a hook 18 fastened to the cross bar 11.

It is to be noted that in the game of foot ball as now commonly played, there are several accepted methods of kicking, including "punting," "place kicking," and "drop kicking." In placement kicking the ball is usually held end up on the ground at a slight angle from the perpendicular, and in drop kicking this angle is somewhat increased. To permit placement and drop kicking, therefore, the tether is made of a length preferably exceeding the distance between the cross bar 11 and the ground, and may be made longer, as desired. This greater length of the tether, also, will permit free dropping of the ball by the player so that in practicing drop kicking he must depend upon his own skill to place the ball in the proper position at an angle from the perpendicular. Furthermore, this greater length of the tether will provide sufficient slack to allow the ball to take a natural flight, when kicked for the purpose of ascertaining the accuracy of the kick. It will be seen, also, that by locating the orifices in the positions in the respective wings, as described, the center of gravity of the ball need not be affected by the weight of the slack of the tether. For example, when the ball is dropped for a drop kick, the tether will not prevent the ball striking the ground in the position intended, as clearly shown in Fig. 2. Also, the tether will not affect the proper use of the ball in the other styles of kicking.

It will be seen that a foot ball and tether constructed in accordance with the invention, as described, will carry out the objects of the invention, as set forth, and will permit a player to become more quickly proficient in kicking because of permitting concentration of practice, that is, performing a greatly increased number of kicks in a given interval of time. Other advantages will be apparent to those skilled in the art.

Many changes may be made in the details of the invention without departing from the main principles thereof, and without sacrificing its chief advantages.

I claim:

1. The combination of a player's foot ball, and an elastic tether attached at one end to said ball and at the other end to a point of anchorage, said tether being of such length that said ball while held captive may be kicked by the player for practice purposes as if entirely free.

2. The combination of a player's foot ball and an elastic tether attached at one end to said ball and at the other end to a point of suspension above, said tether being of such length that said ball while held captive may be kicked by the player for practice purposes as if entirely free.

3. The combination of a player's foot ball, and an elastic tether attached at one end to said ball and at the other end to a point of anchorage adjacent the kicking point, said tether being of such length that said ball while held captive may be kicked by a player for practice purposes as if entirely free.

4. The combination of a player's foot ball, and an elastic tether attached at one end to said ball and at the other end to a point of suspension above, said tether being of a greater length than the distance from said point of suspension to the kicking point so that said ball while held captive may be kicked by the player for practice purposes as if entirely free.

In testimony whereof, I have affixed my signature hereto.

WILLIAM J. DOLAN, JR.