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(54) **GARMET SYSTEM AND METHOD OF CHEERING**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

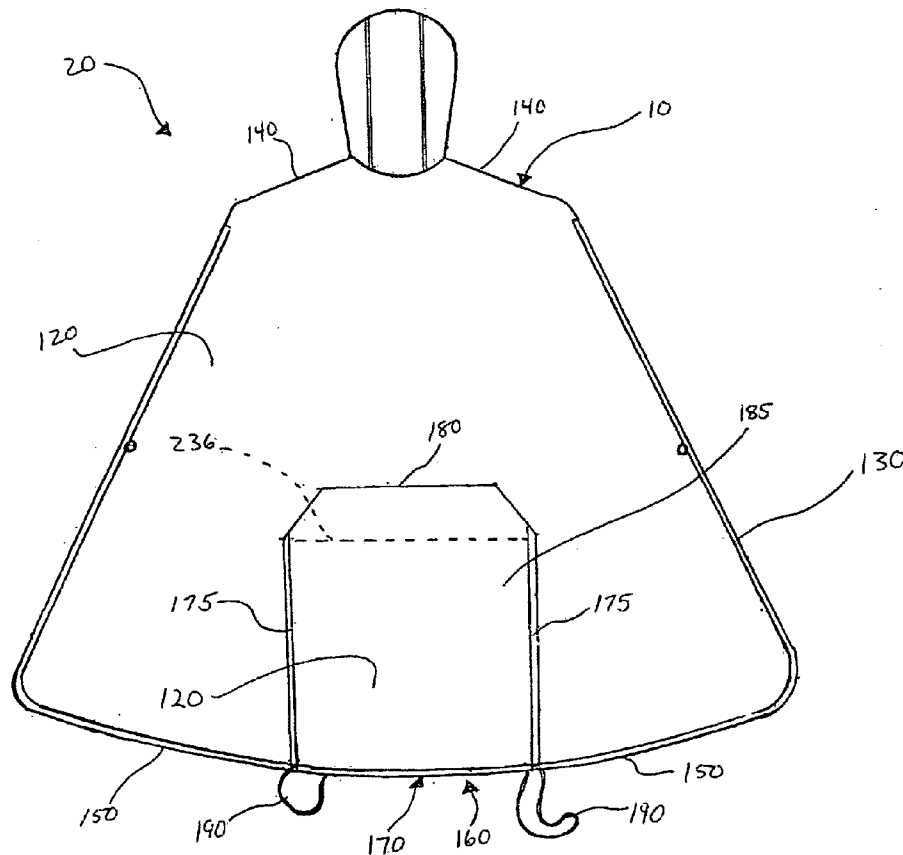
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A garment system is provided for use as a weather protective garment and padded seat cushion while sitting. The garment system can include a protective garment that carries a garment pouch within a rear panel of the protective garment, for stowing the protective garment when not in use. A padded cushion can be carried by the garment pouch so that it is positioned within the rear panel, thus protecting the cushion from the weather and aligning it for use when sitting. A hand warmer can be used by a spectator to cheer on a team or other event participant. The spectator can secure the hand warmer to a wrist and wave or otherwise move the hand warmer in a supportive manner.

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Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 60/892,333, filed on Mar. 1, 2007.



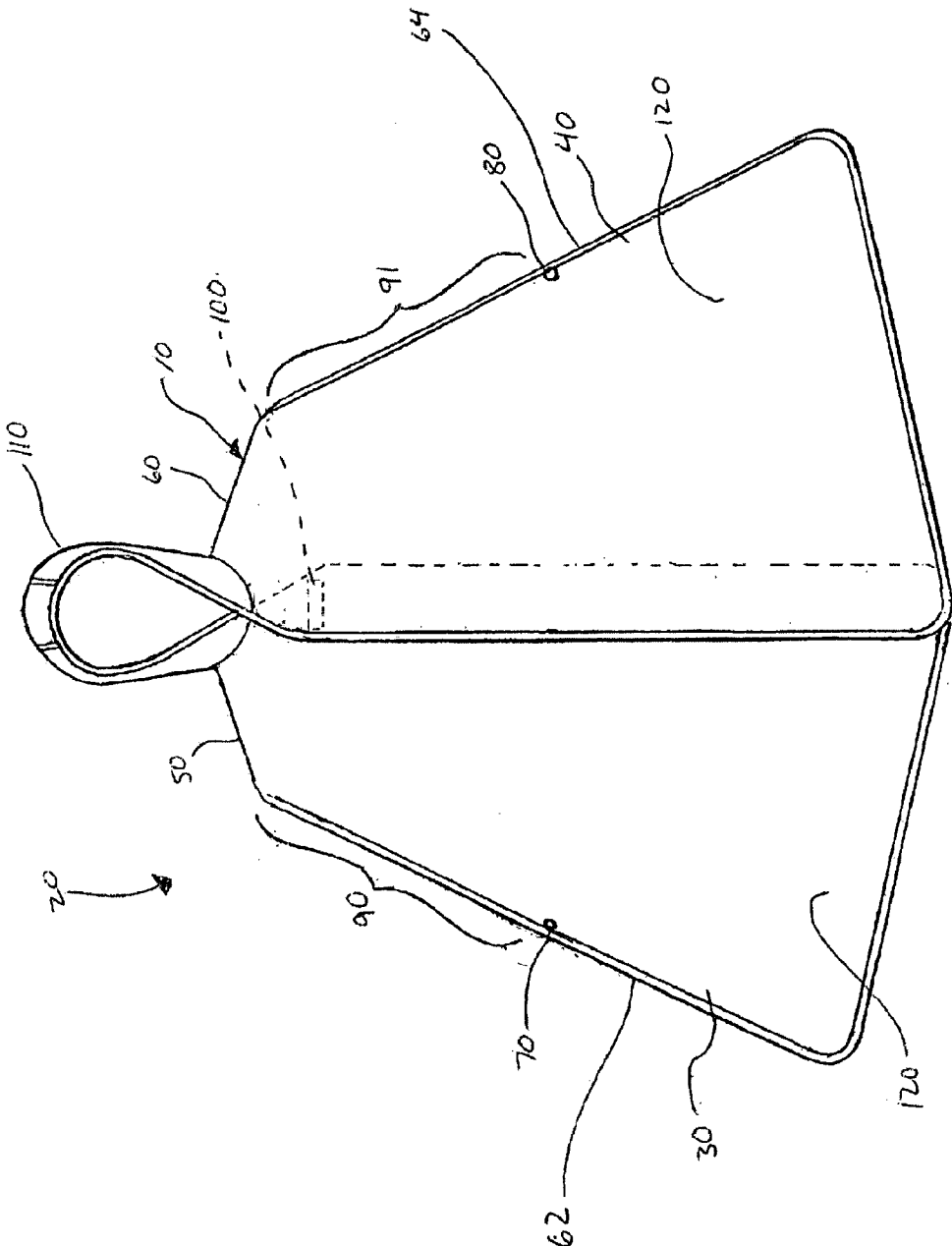
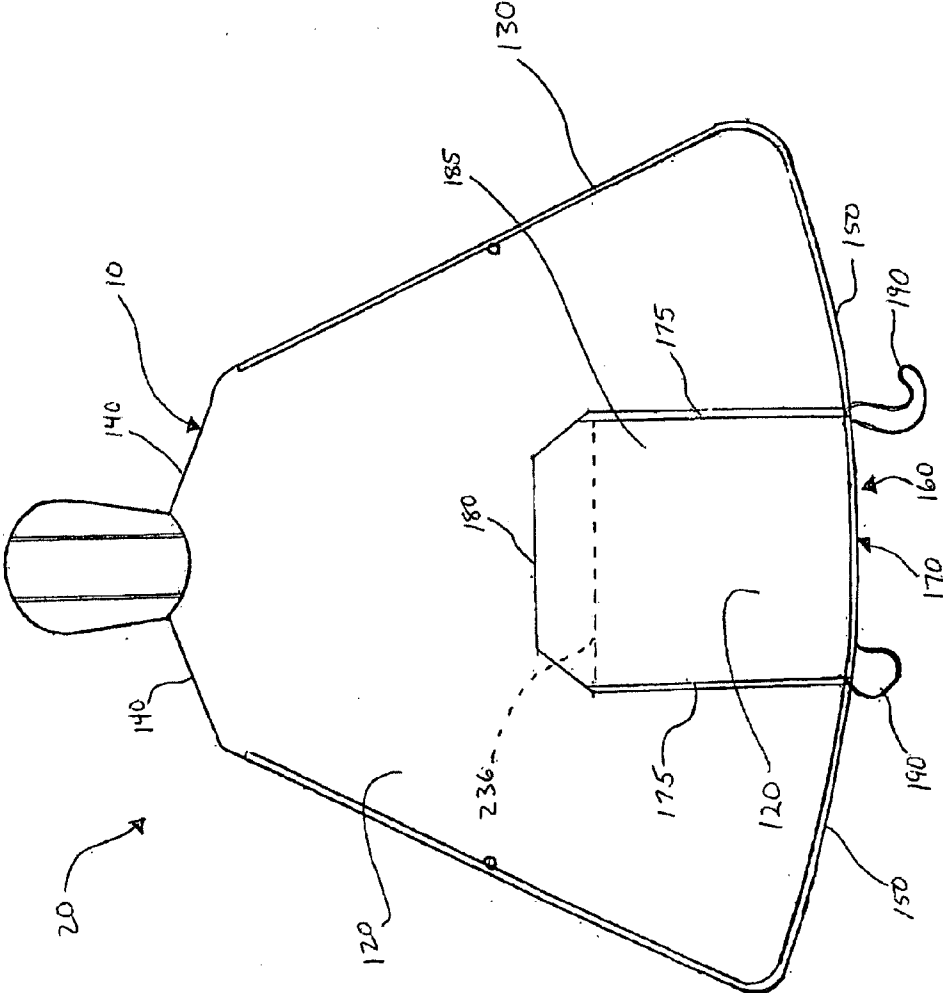


FIG. 1

FIG. 2



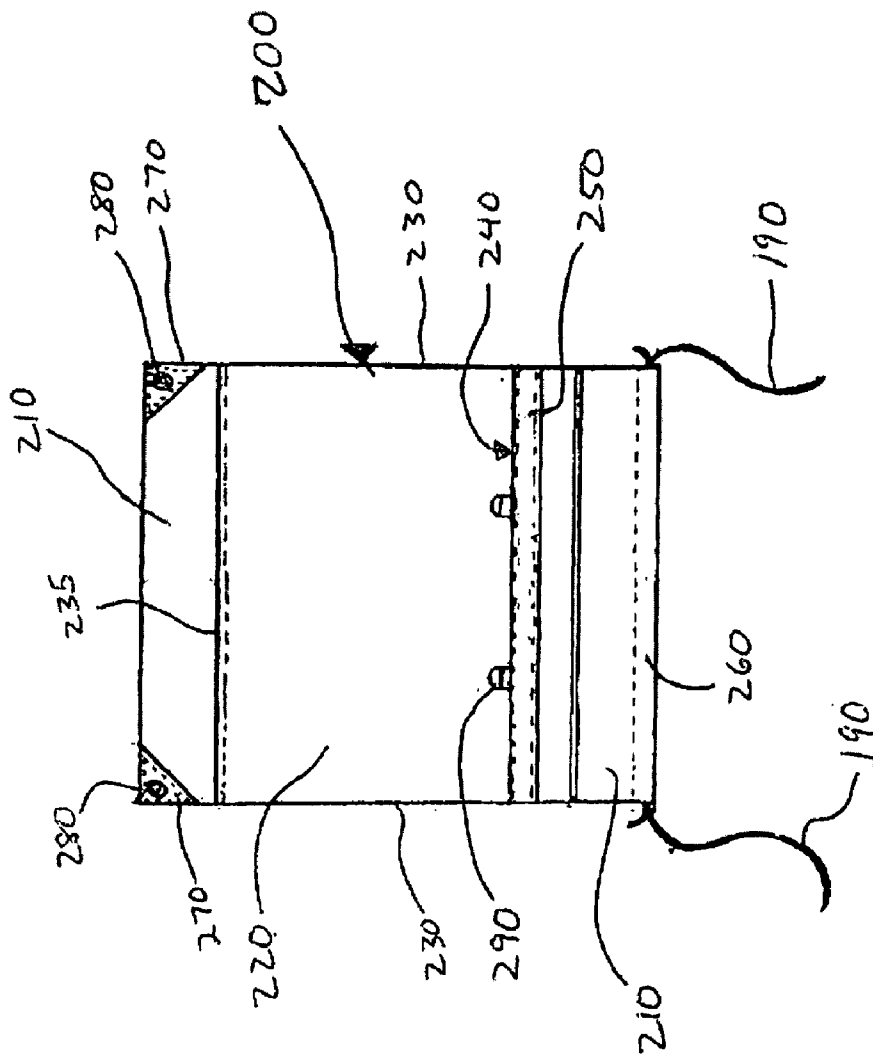


FIG. 3

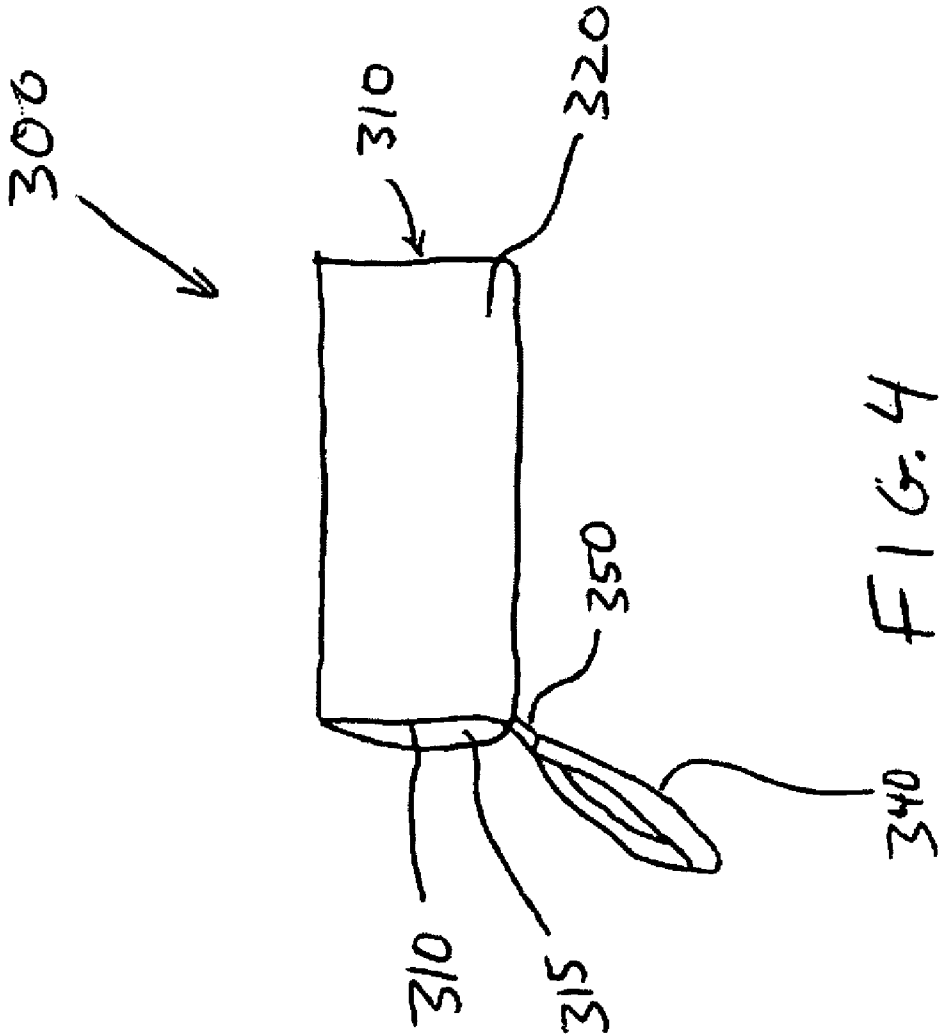


FIG. 4

GARMET SYSTEM AND METHOD OF CHEERING

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims priority from U.S. Provisional Application Ser. No. 60/892,333, filed Mar. 1, 2007, the contents of which are incorporated by reference in their entirety.

FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates generally to apparel, and more particularly to outer apparel designed to protect a person from the weather.

BACKGROUND

[0003] When attending outdoor events, spectators usually bring along items designed to make their experience more enjoyable. Among these, a spectator may bring a number of items designed to protect the spectator from inclement weather, or sudden changes in the weather. These items usually include protective garments like coats or ponchos, in addition to blankets, umbrellas, muffs, and the like, which may help keep a spectator comfortable during an unexpected downpour or cold spell.

[0004] Seating at outdoor events is usually uncomfortable at best. Seats in stadiums, outdoor arenas, or amphitheaters are often made of hard plastic, wood material, or a metal such as aluminum, or occasionally may be fashioned out of stone. These seats can be extremely uncomfortable, even numbing, for a spectator to sit on for an extended period of time. A spectator will often bring a pad or seat cushion to provide more comfortable seating, but a seat cushion only adds to the already large number of items for the spectator to transport and manage. Cushions are also used to provide dryer and warmer seats, especially when inclement weather has made the available event seating wet and cold before a spectator sits down. However, a seat cushion can become wet and cold itself if it is inadvertently left uncovered, for example, when a fan temporarily stands to cheer. In addition, seat cushions can often fall from bleachers or other seating to the ground when a fan stands to cheer. Sometimes the cushion may be irretrievably lost beneath the seating.

[0005] A muff, or other hand warmer, is often used to keep a spectator's hands warm. While they can be used in a variety of settings, they are especially well-suited for use by spectators at outdoor sporting events in cool weather. A hand warmer generally includes a cylinder-type shaped body with an aperture on one or both ends for receiving the spectator's hands. A spectator that uses a hand warmer can at times find difficulty in cheering or applauding in a conventional manner because the spectator's hands are usually within the hand warmer. For example, a spectator at times will desire to stand and clap, display a sign, or show support in another way, but will not because of the cumbersome process of removing the hand warmer, finding a place to leave the hand warmer while clapping, standing, or otherwise showing support, relocating the hand warmer, and placing the spectator's hands back within the hand warmer. In addition, the spectator may be reluctant to remove the hand warmer and cheer knowing that

the hand warmer could become displaced while the spectator's attention is focused on the event at hand.

SUMMARY

[0006] Some embodiments are directed to a garment system that can have a protective garment and a garment pouch for retaining the protective garment when not worn. The protective garment can have a rear panel with both a first and a second surface. In some embodiments, the garment pouch can be carried by the rear panel between the surfaces such that the opening of the garment pouch is formed proximate a bottom edge of the rear panel. In some embodiments, the spectator can advantageously gather the protective garment together and turn the garment pouch inside-out in order to stow the protective garment within the garment pouch. In some embodiments, a cushion compartment with a padded cushion is carried by the protective garment and/or the garment pouch so that when a spectator is wearing the protective garment, the padded cushion provides a comfortable area on which to sit. In some embodiments, the cushion compartment is also disposed between the surfaces of the rear panel when the protective garment is worn such that the padded cushion does not need to be separately carried.

[0007] In some embodiments the protective garment can have front panels attached to the rear panel. A front fastener can detachably attach the front panels together and in some embodiments side fasteners can detachably attach the front panels with the rear panel in order to further enclose the spectator. In some embodiments, the side fasteners can be zippers and/or hook and loop fasteners. For further enclosure, some exemplary garment systems can include a hood. Further, the second surface of the protective garment can be lined with a thermally insulating material and the first surface can comprise a weather-resistant material in some embodiments. The garment pouch can have one or more straps that allows the spectator to carry the garment pouch when the protective garment is stowed within the garment pouch.

[0008] Some embodiments include a garment system for both warming hands and cheering. In some embodiments, a hand warmer can be provided with an outer shell, an inner lining, and one or more apertures for receiving a spectator's hand. A wristband can be provided and the hand warmer can be attached to the wrist of the spectator, thus advantageously limiting the inadvertent loss of the hand warmer. In some embodiments, the spectator can swing the hand warmer or twirl the hand warmer above his or her head, thus allowing the spectator to express his or her emotions and/or support. In other embodiments, the hand warmer can be provided with a pocket for enclosing personal items of the spectator.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] FIG. 1 is a front elevation view of a garment system according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0010] FIG. 2 is a rear elevation view of a garment system according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0011] FIG. 3 is an elevation view of a cushion compartment according to an embodiment of the invention.

[0012] FIG. 4 is a front elevation view of a hand warmer according to an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0013] The following detailed description should be read with reference to the drawings, in which like elements in different drawings are numbered identically. The drawings, which are not necessarily to scale, depict selected embodiments and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention. Examples of constructions, materials, dimensions, and manufacturing processes are provided for selected elements. All other elements employ that which is known to those of skill in the field of the invention. Those skilled in the art will recognize that many of the examples provided have suitable alternatives that can be utilized.

[0014] FIG. 1 shows a front elevation view of a protective garment 10 as part of a garment system 20 in one embodiment of the invention. The protective garment 10 generally includes a first front panel 30, a second front panel 40, and a rear panel (not shown in FIG. 1). The first and second front panels 30, 40 can be attached to the rear panel along their respective top edges 50, 60. In some embodiments, the first and second panels can be detachably attached to the rear panel along their respective outside edges 62, 64 in order to advantageously close the protective garment 10 around a spectator. Many protective garments known in the art, such as capes, wraps, or ponchos, close around a spectator, but do not provide the flexibility of side openings for a spectator's arms. This embodiment can advantageously include both features. For example, a first side fastener 70 can detachably attach the first front panel to the rear panel and a second side fastener 80 can detachably attach the second front panel to the rear panel. These side fasteners can comprise any suitable fastener known in the art, such as, for example, snaps, buttons, and/or hook and loop fasteners. Further, any number of fasteners can be provided. In some embodiments, the first and second side fasteners 70, 80 can allow the front and rear panels to be detachably attached along respective lengths 90, 91 of their outside edges 62, 64 instead of at a single area. Those skilled in the art will appreciate this can be achieved with a variety of fasteners, such as, for example, a row of spaced snaps, a length of hook and loop fasteners or a zipper. In some embodiments, a combination of fasteners can be used. For example only, in one embodiment, snaps can be used to detachably attach the front panels with the rear panel and zippers can allow a spectator to enclose himself or herself or optionally extend his or her arms through openings created along lengths 90, 91 by the zippers.

[0015] In some embodiments, further protection can be provided by one or more front fasteners 100 that can detachably attach the first front panel 30 and the second front panel 40 together at one or more locations. In addition, a hood 110 can be provided for protection of the spectator's head. In some embodiments, the protective garment 10 and each panel making up the protective garment 10 can include a first surface 120 and a second surface (not shown). In some embodiments the first surface 120 and second surface can be opposing sides of a sheet of material. In other embodiments, the surfaces can be sides of sheets of different materials or multiple sheets of the same material, which are then stitched or otherwise attached together. For example only and not by way of limitation, the first surface 120 can comprise a weather-resistant material such as nylon (e.g., rip-stop nylon, PVC-coated

nylon) and the second surface can comprise a thermally insulating material such as fleece, so that a spectator wearing the protective garment is both warm and shielded from rain, wind, and other unwanted weather. The thermally insulating material may provide varying degrees of insulation. For example, a relatively heavy-weight, or alternatively, relatively light-weight, fleece material may be used depending upon the desired application. Or, the second surface may provide little or no insulation, such as in the case of a mesh liner which may be more appropriate in warmer climates. Those skilled in the art will appreciate these materials as illustrative only and recognize that numerous materials can be used depending upon the application.

[0016] FIG. 2 shows a rear elevation view of the protective garment 10 and the garment system 20. The rear panel 130 previously discussed includes side edges, a top edge 140, a bottom edge 150, the first surface 120, and the second surface (not shown). The rear panel 130 can carry a garment pouch 160 that is adapted to stow the protective garment 10 when it is not being worn. For example, the garment pouch 160 can be disposed within or attached to the rear panel. In some embodiments, the garment pouch 160 can be located between the first surface 120 and the second surface of the rear panel. A garment pouch opening 170 can be positioned proximate to the bottom edge 150 of the rear panel 130. In some embodiments, the garment pouch 160 can be a separate pouch or bag that is attached to the protective garment 10 solely around the garment pouch opening 170, thus providing a garment pouch that can be easily pulled out from within the rear panel 130. In some embodiments, the garment pouch 160 is a separate pouch or bag that is attached to one or more of the first surface 120 and/or second surface of the rear panel 130 by a fastener. In the embodiment depicted in FIG. 2, the garment pouch 160 can be defined by the first surface 120 and an intermediate third surface of the rear panel (not shown in FIG. 2) that is disposed between the first and second surfaces. In some embodiments, the garment pouch 160 can be formed between a separate sheet 185 of material and one or more opposing sheets of material opposite the separate sheet 185. In this embodiment, the outer surface of the separate sheet 185 is considered part of the first surface 120 and one of the one or more opposing sheets of material comprises the second surface. A fastener such as stitching alongside seam lines 175 and a top seam line 180 can define the perimeter of the garment pouch.

[0017] In operation, a spectator or other user of the garment system 20 can transform the garment system 20 from a first state in which the protective garment 10 is stowed within the garment pouch 160 to a second state in which the protective garment 10 is removed from the garment pouch 160 and ready to wear by the spectator. In some embodiments, the spectator can transform the garment system 20 from the first state into the second state by turning the garment pouch 160 inside-out and deploying the protective garment 10. The protective garment 10 can then be deployed by unfolding and/or spreading out the protective garment 10. In order to transform the garment system 20 back into the first state in some embodiments, the protective garment 10 can be gathered proximate to the garment pouch location, and the garment pouch 160 can be turned inside-out, thus stowing the protective garment 10 within the garment pouch 160. For example, the protective garment 10 can be folded, rolled, and/or bunched proximate the garment pouch 160. In some embodiments, one or more straps 190 can be provided in order to carry the garment

pouch **160** when stowing the protective garment **10**. In some embodiments, the straps **190** can comprise drawstrings that can additionally allow the garment pouch opening **170** to be closed.

[0018] The garment pouch **160** provides a convenient and easy-to-use mechanism for stowing the protective garment **10** when not in use. Gathering the protective garment **10** near the garment pouch and then turning the garment pouch inside-out can easily and quickly be accomplished as opposed to systems where a protective garment must first be neatly folded or rolled, or where the garment pouch must be removed before the protective garment can be stowed. The garment pouch also advantageously provides a secure and protective enclosure for the protective garment, especially when compared with known systems in which the protective garment is rolled and only secured with a strap or sheet. Embodiments in which a drawstring can cinch the garment pouch closed provide even greater security and protection from the weather. In some embodiments, the protective garment and/or garment pouch can be provided with specific indicia or colors normally associated with the event or participant the spectator wishes to support.

[0019] Some embodiments of the present invention can include a padded cushion carried by the protective garment and/or garment pouch such that the padded cushion is positioned beneath a spectator wearing the protective garment when the spectator sits down. The padded cushion can include any suitable material known in the art. For example only, the padded cushion can comprise a closed cell polyurethane foam. It should be appreciated that the padded cushion can have any thickness or shape suitable for the application. For example, the padded cushion can be a rectangular piece of foam having a thickness of about 6 millimeters. In some embodiments the padded cushion can be disposed between the first and second surfaces of the protective garment when the spectator wearing the protective garment is sitting, standing, walking, or in other positions. Referring to FIG. 2, in some embodiments, the padded cushion can be disposed between the first surface **120** and the second surface of the rear panel **130**, proximate the bottom edge **150** and within the side seam lines **175**. The location of the padded cushion is preferably approximately below the buttocks of the spectator when standing so that when the spectator sits down, the padded cushion will be properly positioned below the spectator.

[0020] FIG. 3 shows a cushion compartment **200** for retaining the padded cushion. The cushion compartment **200** can be defined by an underlying sheet **210** and a cover sheet **220** attached at one or more edges to form the compartment for the padded cushion. In some embodiments, the cover sheet **220** can be attached to the underlying sheet on all sides after the padded cushion has been inserted, thus ensuring that the padded cushion is not removed or misplaced from the cushion compartment **200**. In the embodiment depicted in FIG. 3, the cover sheet is attached at side edges **230** and a first end edge **235** to the underlying sheet **210**, thus allowing the padded cushion to be removably inserted into the cushion compartment **200**. In some embodiments, a detachable fastener can be used to close off the cushion compartment along a second end edge **240** of the cover sheet **220**. FIG. 3 shows an additional embodiment in which a flap sheet **250** conceals the second end edge **240** and the detachable fastener in order to present an overall aesthetic and pleasing appearance.

[0021] The cushion compartment can be disposed between the first and second surfaces of the rear panel of the protective

garment. In some embodiments, the cushion compartment **200** can be carried by a portion of the garment pouch. In some embodiments, the cushion compartment can be attached to the garment pouch. In some embodiments, the underlying sheet **210** can comprise a portion of the garment pouch such that the cushion compartment **200** is defined by the cover sheet **220** and the garment pouch. In some embodiments, the cover sheet **220** is attached to the surface of the garment pouch that is the outside surface when the garment pouch is configured to stow the protective garment. Then, when the garment pouch is inverted in order to wear the protective garment, the cover sheet **220** and the cushion compartment **200** are conveniently concealed within the rear panel of the protective garment, between the first and second surfaces.

[0022] In this embodiment, the location of the cushion compartment between the first and second surfaces further protects the cushion compartment from the weather and thus advantageously provides a dry seat for a spectator whenever the spectator sits down. Because the cushion compartment is carried by the rear panel and/or garment pouch, the cushion compartment will not be left on a bench and exposed to the weather when a spectator stands up. Instead, the cushion compartment remains dry and protected from the weather as it is retained within the protective garment as the spectator repeatedly stands, sits, or walks about. In addition, the location of the cushion compartment between the first and second surfaces advantageously limits the motion of the cushion compartment and cushion as the spectator moves, especially when compared with garment systems in which the cushion/compartment merely hangs loosely from a surface of a protective garment.

[0023] In some embodiments, the cushion compartment is carried by the garment pouch **160** in between the first surface **120** and the second surface of the rear panel **130** when the protective garment **10** is extracted from the garment pouch **160**. The cover sheet **220** can be attached directly to the garment pouch **160** to define the cushion compartment. The cover sheet **220** can be attached by any fastener, but in some embodiments the cover sheet is attached along its side edges **230** by stitching along seam lines **175**, and along its first end edge **235** by stitching along a top seam line **236**. Although FIG. 2 shows the top seam line **236** positioned on a surface other than the first surface, the top seam line **236** can also be positioned upon the first surface **120**.

[0024] FIG. 3 shows additional features of the garment pouch that are included in some embodiments of the garment system. One or more straps **190** can be provided in order to carry the garment pouch as previously discussed. In embodiments where the straps **190** comprise drawstrings, the straps can be positioned within a channel **260** in order to cinch the top of the garment pouch using techniques known in the art. In some embodiments, the straps can be tied off on one or more tabs **270** and rings **280** in order to provide a backpack configuration. Additionally, some embodiments include rings **290** for attaching personal items to the garment pouch in ways well known in the art.

[0025] FIG. 4 is a front elevation view of a hand warmer **300** according to an embodiment of the invention. The hand warmer **300** can be included as part of a garment system in embodiments of the invention in order to provide further protection from the weather. The hand warmer **300** can be generally cylindrical in shape, although those skilled in the art will appreciate that various shapes and sizes can be used. The hand warmer **300** includes hand-receiving apertures **310**, an

outer shell 320, and an inner lining 315. In some embodiments, the outer shell 320 can be constructed from a weather-resistant material such as, for example, nylon, and the inner lining 315 can be constructed from a thermally insulating material such as fleece. In some embodiments, the shell and lining can comprise the same material. Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the shell and lining can include various configurations and materials other than those examples mentioned here.

[0026] In some embodiments, the hand warmer can incorporate a pocket for receiving personal items of a spectator, such as, for example, keys, a mobile phone, and other small items the spectator wishes to keep free from exposure. The pocket opening can in some embodiments be secured with a detachable fastener. For example, strips of hook and loop fasteners or a zipper can be used to detachably fasten the opening closed.

[0027] In some embodiments, one or more wristbands 340 can be incorporated in the hand warmer 300 for securing the hand warmer around a spectator's wrist(s). The wristbands 340 can in some embodiments also act through respective channels to cinch the hand-receiving apertures closed in order to further enclose the spectator's hands within the hand warmer 300. In some embodiments, the cinching and/or securing can be facilitated by one or more stops as is known in the art. In some embodiments, elastic can be incorporated around the hand-receiving apertures to provide a similar effect. In some embodiments, the one or more wristbands can be attached to the hand warmer with a swivel 350, which can advantageously allow the hand warmer to rotate with respect to the spectator's wrist(s) without becoming tangled.

[0028] In some embodiments of the garment system, the hand warmer 300 of FIG. 4 can be used by a spectator to cheer and/or show support in other ways for a participant in an event. For example only, and not by way of limitation, a spectator can secure the hand warmer 300 to one of the spectator's wrists with a wristband 340 and then wave the hand warmer 300 through the air as a sign of support for the participant. In some embodiments, the spectator can swing the hand warmer back and forth and/or twirl the hand warmer over the spectator's head. In some embodiments the movement can be facilitated by the swivel 350 as previously discussed. The hand warmer can be provided with specific indicia or colors normally associated with the event or participant the spectator wishes to support. With such a hand warmer, a spectator can alternatively cheer on a participant/team and warm the spectator's hands.

[0029] Numerous characteristics and advantages of the invention covered by this document have been set forth in the foregoing description. It will be understood, however, that this disclosure is, in many respects, only illustrative. Changes may be made in details, particularly in matters of shape, size and ordering of steps without exceeding the spirit of the invention and the scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

- 1. A garment system comprising:
 - a protective garment having a rear panel, wherein the rear panel comprises a first surface, a second surface, and a bottom edge;
 - a garment pouch carried by the rear panel between the first and second surfaces, wherein the garment pouch com-

prises a garment pouch opening proximate the bottom edge of the rear panel and wherein the garment pouch is adapted to stow the protective garment when the protective garment is not being worn;

a cushion compartment disposed between the first and second surfaces of the rear panel; and
a padded cushion disposed within the cushion compartment.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the cushion compartment is carried by the garment pouch.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the garment pouch is adapted to turn inside-out in order to stow the protective garment.

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the rear panel further comprises a top edge and the protective garment further comprises a first front panel attached to the top edge of the rear panel, a second front panel attached to the top edge of the rear panel, and a front fastener for detachably attaching the first front panel to the second front panel.

5. The system of claim 4, wherein the protective garment further comprises a first side fastener for detachably attaching the first front panel to the rear panel and a second side fastener for detachably attaching the second front panel to the rear panel.

6. The system of claim 5, wherein the first and second side fasteners comprise zippers.

7. The system of claim 1, further comprising at least one strap for carrying the garment pouch when the protective garment is stowed in the garment pouch.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the second surface of the protective garment comprises a thermally insulating material and the first surface comprises a weather-resistant material.

9. The system of claim 8, wherein the protective garment further comprises a hood.

10. A method of using a protective garment, comprising: providing a protective garment in a first state wherein the protective garment is stowed within a pouch carried by the protective garment and wherein the protective garment comprises a rear panel;

providing a cushion compartment carried by the pouch; providing a cushion within the cushion compartment; turning the pouch inside-out so as to ready the protective garment for wearing in a second state; and

retaining the pouch and the cushion compartment within the rear panel of the protective garment in the second state.

11. A method of cheering, comprising: providing a hand warmer comprising an outer shell, an inner lining, at least one hand-receiving aperture, and a wristband attached to one end of the hand warmer; attaching the hand warmer to a wrist of a user by securing the wristband around the wrist of the user; and swinging the hand warmer.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein swinging the hand warmer comprises twirling the hand warmer above a head of the user.

13. The method of claim 12, further comprising attaching the wristband to the hand warmer with a swivel.

14. The method of claim 11, further comprising providing a pocket within the hand warmer.

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