

[72] Inventors **Robert L. Rees;**
George E. Williams, Bartlesville, Okla.
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 [73] Assignee **Phillips Petroleum Company**
a corporation of Delaware.

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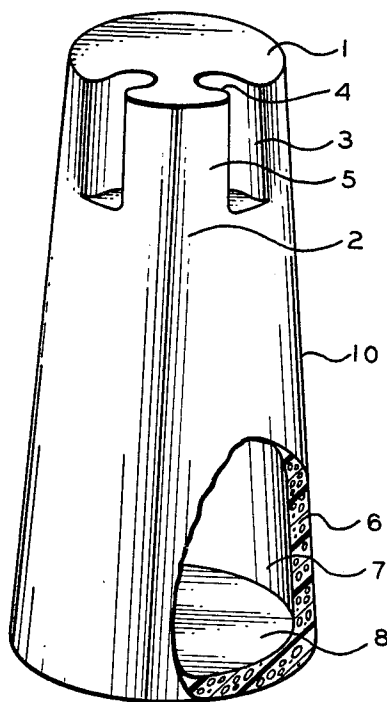
Primary Examiner—Richard C. Pinkham
Assistant Examiner—Theatrice Brown
Attorney—Young and Quigg

[54] **FOOTBALL BLOCKING DUMMY**
8 Claims, 3 Drawing Figs.

[52] U.S. Cl.....	273/55
[51] Int. Cl.....	A63b 67/00
[50] Field of Search.....	273/55, 67; 272/76

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ABSTRACT: As an article of manufacture, a football blocking dummy useful in teaching the fundamentals of blocking and tackling is provided which has in the upper portion of the article integrally positioned therein a grasping means which protects the hands, wrists, and fingers of the individual holding the dummy from injury caused by the force of another individual who blocks or tackles the dummy.



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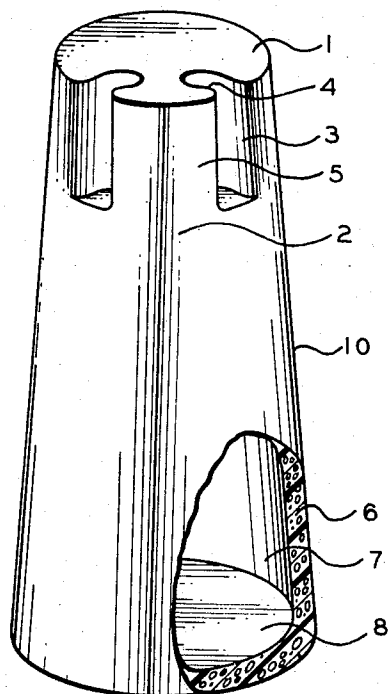


FIG. 1

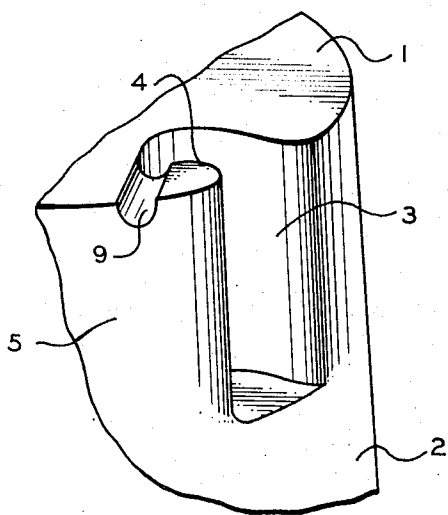


FIG. 2

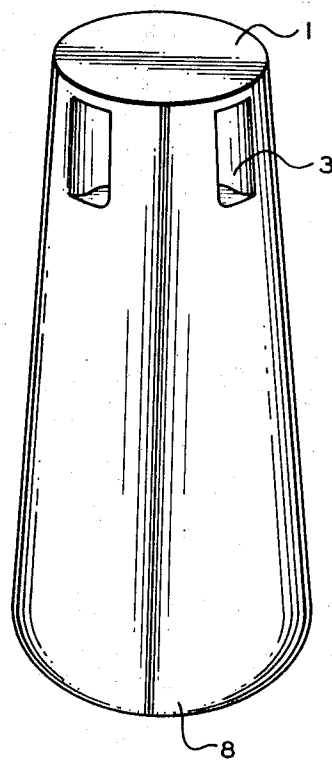


FIG. 3

INVENTORS
R.L. REES
G.E. WILLIAMS
BY *Young & Quigg*
ATTORNEYS

FOOTBALL BLOCKING DUMMY

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to an article of manufacture which comprises a tackling and blocking dummy which is utilized to teach the fundamentals of tackling and blocking for the game of football. In another aspect, this invention relates to a football dummy which has integrally positioned therein a means for grasping the dummy in such a way that it reduces the possibility of injury to an individual's hands, fingers, and wrists when holding the dummy.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

For many years the game of football has been taught to individuals utilizing various types of blocking and tackling dummies to teach the fundamentals of the game. Due to the roughness of the sport, it has been a primary concern of coaches and players alike to provide equipment which minimizes the opportunity for injuries to the participants. In recent years, the utilization of an upright standing, generally frustoconical shaped blocking dummy has become extensive in teaching the fundamentals of the sport.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

This type of dummy is usually approximately 3 to 4 feet high, and ranges from approximately 1 foot to 3 feet in diameter at its top, with an increasing diameter at its base. The upstanding dummy is utilized in football practice session in the following manner. A holding player grasps the dummy and provides an opposite force against the force to be exerted by the player who will block or tackle the dummy. Therefore, there is provided upon the dummy a grasping means which heretofore has consisted of handles which protrude from the outer edges of the upper portion of the dummy. The holding player grasps the handles which allows him to move the dummy about the practice field, and to provide an opposite force to that force which is exerted by the blocking or tackling player.

However, this type of dummy has caused a problem which this invention seeks to alleviate. That is, that the protruding handles must be grasped with the hands of the holding player in such a manner that when a twisting motion is imparted to the dummy by the impact of the tackling player, the dummy tends to be wrenched from the holding players hands causing injury to the player's hands or fingers. This problem occurs even if the protruding handles are relatively close together, as for example in U. S. Pat. No. 2,904,337, J. R. Canning, issued Sept. 15, 1959. Furthermore, a blow to the dummy by the tackling player which imparts a directly forward motion to the dummy oftentimes results in a bruising of the knuckles or other portions of the hands and wrists of the holding player. In the case of the Canning patent, this is because the direct impact against the dummy is absorbed by the knuckles of the player. Moreover, if the handles on the blocking dummies of the prior art are farther apart than those described in the Canning patent, the usual result is that the impact upon the dummy is absorbed by the holding player's thumbs which often results in serious injury to thumbs, in particular the joints of the thumbs.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Accordingly, we have discovered that an upstanding blocking dummy can be so constructed as to protect the holding players hands, wrists, and fingers from injury by incorporating into the dummy a grasping means which allows the force of impact on the dummy to be absorbed by the palm of the hand of the holding player rather than to his knuckles, fingers, or thumbs. This materially reduces the chances of injury to the holding player's hands.

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

Accordingly, it is an object of this invention to provide a blocking dummy for use in football practice sessions which substantially reduces the chance of injury to the football players.

Other objects and advantages of the present invention will become more readily apparent from a reading of the following disclosure, claims, and the drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the blocking dummy of the invention which is partly in section;

FIG. 2 is a cutaway perspective view of the upper portion of the blocking dummy of the invention showing a preferred embodiment thereof; and

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the improved blocking dummy showing another preferred embodiment of the invention.

DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Referring to FIG. 1 of the drawing, a perspective view of the blocking dummy of the invention is provided. The dummy 10 has a generally frustoconical shape which is wider at its base than at the top. The top 1 of the dummy is generally flat. In the upper portion thereof, there is provided indentations 3 which extend inwardly from the outer surface 2 of the blocking dummy. The outer surface 4 of indentation 3 is preferably curved so as to provide a resting place for the curved fingers of the holding player's hand. The curvature of the outer surface 4 of the indentation 3 enables the holding player to obtain a better grip on the dummy. Accordingly, the grasping means of the invention is provided by the outer surface 4 of indentation 3 and the outer surface 5 of wall 2. The palm of the hand rests on surface 5, while the fingers of the hand are inserted into indentations 3, the palm side of the fingers of the hand resting against surface 4.

Contraction of the muscles of the forearm, wrist, hand and fingers provides pressure against surface 4 and surface 5 thereby allowing the holding player to grasp the dummy firmly. Isometric force exerted by both arms, wrists, hands and fingers prevents rotational movement of the dummy; and further, the force exerted by the blow of a blocking or tackling player is absorbed into the palms of the hands, rather than the knuckles, thumbs or fingers.

Generally the height of indentation 3 as well as the width thereof may be regulated to anticipate the size of the player's hand which will be holding the dummy. That is to say, if the dummy is to be used primarily by younger boys, then the depth of indentations 3 as well as the distance between surface 4 and the outer surface 5 of wall 2 may be regulated so that they may easily grasp the dummy. In addition, the diameter of the upper portion of the dummy and the diameter of the base of the dummy may be regulated in accordance with its height to provide various sizes in accordance with the use contemplated for the dummy.

The cutaway portion of FIG. 1 also illustrates the hollow nature of the blocking dummy of the invention. The upstanding wall 2 of the dummy is shown to have a thickness which is illustrated by numeral 6 in the drawing. The internal cavity 7 of the dummy may be partitioned into sections which allows various filler materials to occupy various portions of the dummy. In addition, in order to provide some stability to the dummy, cavity 7 may be filled with water, sand, or any other heavy material which will allow the blocking dummy to have stability at its base. In one embodiment of the invention as shown in FIG. 1 the base 8 of the drawing is flat.

FIG. 2 of the drawing illustrates another embodiment of the invention wherein the indentation 3 is connected to the outer portion 5 of wall 2 by slot 9. This slot provides a resting place for the holding player's thumb when his hand grasps the dummy by way of the grasping means which is provided by surfaces 4 and 5. This eliminates any possibility of the thumb being exposed and susceptible to injury when the hand grasps the grasping means as mentioned above.

FIG. 3 of the drawing is a perspective view showing two other embodiments of the invention. As is shown therein, base 8 is seen to be rounded thereby providing a means whereby the dummy may be lifted into an upright position easily after it has been knocked down by a blocking player. Furthermore, it is within the scope of this invention to provide a counterweight within cavity 7 which will allow the dummy to return to an upright position without assistance from a player. The counterweight may be of liquid or solid material which exerts a force upon the base of the dummy when it is placed in a horizontal position, said force thereby causing the dummy to right itself to the vertical position. FIG. 3 also illustrates an embodiment of the invention wherein the indentations 3 do not extend into the open surface of top 1. This embodiment has the advantage of protecting the exposed surface of the hand from any contact by a blocking or tackling player since top 1 extends over indentations 3 and therefore, prevent the hands of the holding player from being injured.

The material utilized to form the dummy of the invention is preferably any thermoplastic material which has a high impact strength and moderate resiliency after fabrication. Generally, those polymers and copolymers of 1-olefins which are classified as low or medium density polymers or copolymers having 2 to 8 carbon atoms per molecule, can be employed as the material from which the blocking dummy of the invention is made. Preferably, the dummy is prepared from a polyethylene resin having a density of about 0.910 to 0.940 grams/cc. by the ASTM D-1505-63T method. This resin is perfectly suitable for blow molding or rotational molding operations. Polymers which are particularly suited for the material utilized in making the improved blocking dummy are polymers or copolymers of 1-olefins with vinyl esters, such as vinyl acetate; or with acrylates, such as ethyl acrylate. Another type of polymer which can be employed is the vinyl plastisols, such as plasticized poly(vinyl chloride). Furthermore, it is within the scope of the invention to utilize other materials such as canvas; natural and synthetic films, such as leathers, etc. to form the impact surface of the dummy.

Other modifications and variations in the invention from this disclosure are possible without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. The shape of the dummy can be other than frustoconical. It can be generally cylindrical, crescent shaped, pyramidal, conical, or combinations of these. In particular, it is within the scope of the invention to have a blocking dummy which is substantially crescent shaped. This dummy may be held by the holding player against his body and off of the ground. The crescent-shaped dummies are conventionally called "scrimmage dummies", and the grasping means of this invention are located at the midportion of the body of the dummy.

We claim:

1. As an article of manufacture, a football blocking dummy having an upstanding wall and positioned in said wall a pair of

internally directed indentations which extend toward each other from the outer surface of said wall, the outer surface of said wall intermediate said indentations and the surface of said indentations directly opposite said outer wall providing a grasping means whereby said outer surface of said wall receives the palm portion of the human hand and the surface of said indentations opposite said outer wall receive the fingers of said hand, said grasping means being such that it protects the hands, wrists and fingers from injury when said article is struck, blocked or tackled.

2. An article of manufacture according to claim 1 wherein said indentations and said grasping means are located in the upper portion of said article.

3. An article of manufacture according to claim 2 wherein said football blocking dummy has a substantially frustoconical shape, and said surface of said indentations directly opposite said outer wall is curved thereby permitting the hands of a player holding said dummy to obtain a better grip on said grasping means.

4. An article of manufacture according to claim 3 wherein said indentations additionally open on the flat upper surface of said dummy.

5. An article of manufacture according to claim 4 wherein a slot is provided in said flat upper surface between each of said indentations and the outer surface of said wall, thereby forming a resting means for the thumb of the human hand when the hand grasps said grasping means.

6. An article of manufacture, a football blocking dummy having a substantially frustoconical shape which includes an upstanding wall, and positioned in said wall a pair of curved, internally directed indentations which extend toward each other from the outer surface of said wall, the outer surface of said wall and the surface of said indentations directly opposite said outer wall providing a grasping means whereby said outer surfaces of said wall receive the palm portion of the human hand and the surface of said indentations opposite said outer wall receives the finger of said hand, said indentations and said grasping means being located in the upper portion of said article in open communication with the upper surface of said article, and further including a slot in said upper surface between each of said indentations and the outer surface of said wall, thereby forming a resting means for the thumb of the human hand when the hand grasps said grasping means.

7. An article of manufacture according to claim 6 wherein said dummy is provided with a rounded base which allows said dummy to be easily raised to an upright vertical position after being placed in a horizontal position.

8. An article of manufacture according to claim 6 wherein the lower portion of said dummy is filled with a material which allows said dummy to automatically return to an upright vertical position after said dummy has been placed in a horizontal position.