United States Patent [19]

Prochnow

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[45] **July 31, 1973**

[54] **BALL RETRIEVER ATTACHMENT**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** ..... **273/162 E,** 294/19 A, 273/DIG. 4

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63b 57/00**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/32 F, 162 E; 294/19 R, 19 A

[56] **References Cited**

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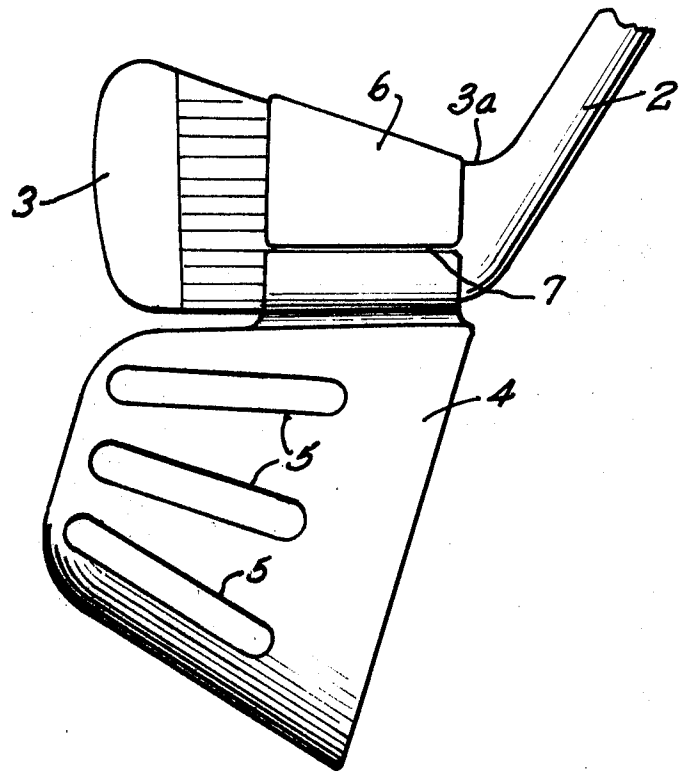
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

This invention relates to a cup-like device having drain openings therein which is made as a unitary structure by injection molding of a flexible elastic plastic such as low-density polyethylene, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), or the like. The cup may readily be secured to, or removed from, a golf club head without the use of tools and when so secured may be used to retrieve golf balls from relatively inaccessible locations or to pick up golf balls after a practice session. Attachment and removal of the cup from the golf club is accomplished by insertion or removal of the club shaft by deflecting a flexible portion of a clip member integral with the cup and then moving the clip and cup along the shaft into engagement with or detachment from the golf club head.

2 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures



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Fig-1

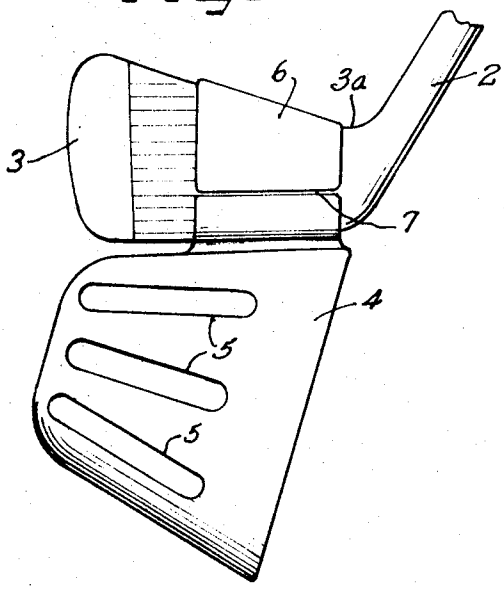


Fig-2

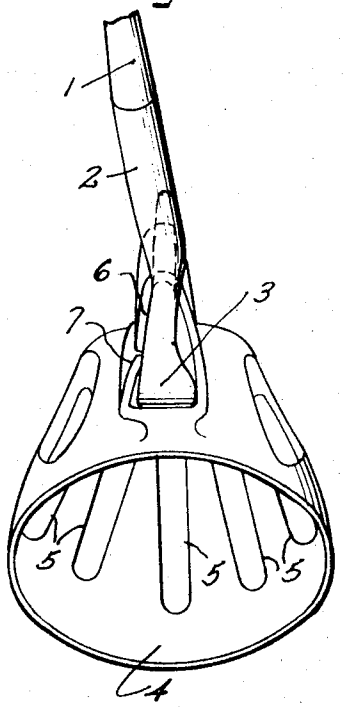


Fig-3

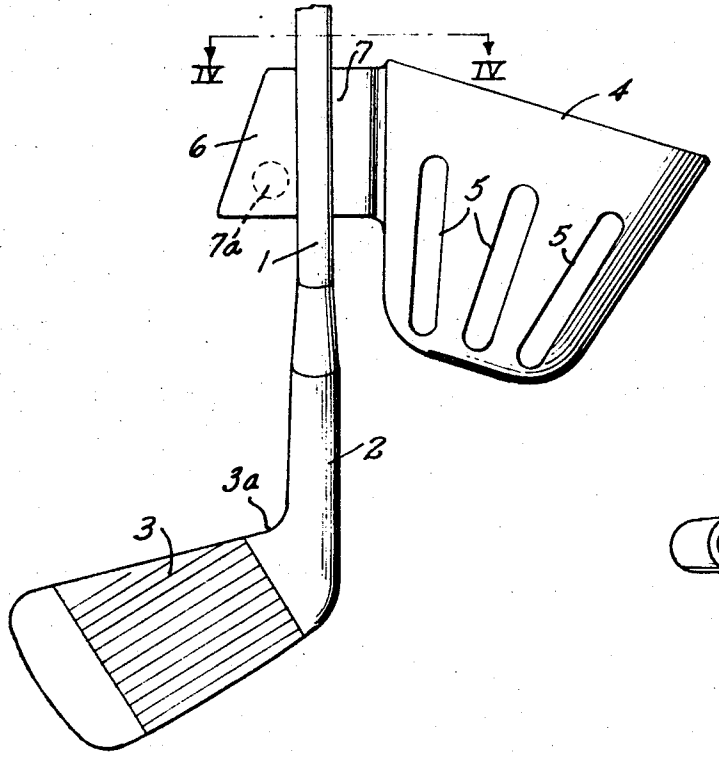
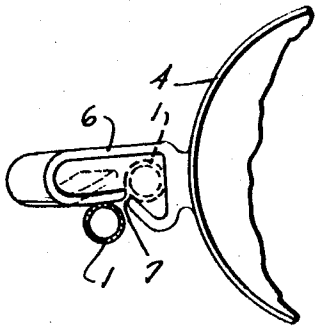


Fig-4



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BALL RETRIEVER ATTACHMENT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The desirability of providing a cup-like retriever with an elongated handle for retrieving golf balls has long been recognized. Such devices are particularly useful for retrieving golf balls from water hazards, areas of ground under repair, muddy areas, and other places difficult of access. They are also useful in picking up previously hit balls from a practice area.

While such devices previously have been provided for attachment to golf club heads, some have been objectionable in that they require operation of a thumb nut for attachment to the club head and such attaching means frequently loosen in use. In those integral retrievers previously provided, the cups have been inadequate for the required purpose or the attachment to the club has been insecure.

The present invention overcomes the disadvantages of the prior art by providing a drainable cup of ample size molded of an elastic plastic which has an integral clip member formed therewith that may be engaged between the angle between the hosel of the club and the inner end of the club head and an outer portion of the club head where it and the clip associated therewith are firmly held in position for use.

The retriever is attached to the club by insertion of a club shaft at a point above the hosel through a slot in the side of the clip, the elastic clip material being distorted during such insertion to permit the shaft to enter the clip and then returning to its original position to retain the shaft within the clip. The clip and its associated cup are then pushed downwardly over the hosel and outwardly until the clip completely engages the club head between a portion inwardly of the outer end of said club head and the curved portion where the head joins the hosel. In such position, the clip, which is formed to fit the club head, is held firmly in place on the head and the cup formed therewith firmly held in position for use. Due to the clip being held between the angle at the juncture of the hosel and the club head and the outer end of the club head, which increases in size outwardly from such angle, dislodgment of the retriever in normal use is prevented. At the same time, the retriever may be detached from the club by a reversal of the procedure above described. In removal, the clip is forced outwardly and upwardly over the angle up over the hosel and around the shaft where it may be removed by depressing the side of the clip at the slot and moving the shaft through the opening thus provided, after which the elastic material of the clip causes the depressed side portion thereof to return to its original position. Since the clip and cup are formed of flexible elastic material they may be compressed for storage in the golf bag or practice ball bag, as desired.

It is an important object, therefore, of the present invention to provide a golf ball retriever which readily may be attached to, or detached from, a golf club without the use of tools, which is inexpensive to construct, and which remains in firm association with the golf club to which it is attached for use.

Other and further important objects of this invention will be apparent from the following description and the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention (in a preferred form) is shown on the drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a side elevation showing a golf club head with the improved ball retriever of this invention attached thereto;

FIG. 2 is a perspective view looking at the structure of FIG. 1 from the left in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a side elevation of a portion of a golf club and the improved ball retriever cup of this invention in an initial position of installation; and

FIG. 4 is a view along the line IV—IV of FIG. 3.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

As shown on the drawings, the reference numeral 1 designates the shaft of a golf club to which is connected a hosel 2 that, in turn, carries a head or blade 3. Due to the construction of the so-called golf "iron" the angle of juncture between the hosel 2 and the blade 3 provides a protuberance generally at 3*a*. The retriever of this invention is designed for use with so-called "long irons" such as No. 1, No. 2 or No. 3 and since except for loft these irons have blades or heads 3 of substantially the same shape the attachment of the retriever thereto may be effectively and interchangeably accomplished with any of these clubs. This selection of the so-called "long irons" is in part due to this similarity of the head shape and also due to the fact that such "long irons" have longer handles and thus increase the distance at which the retriever may be operated.

The retriever attachment of this invention consists of a unitary structure which is injection molded of a flexible elastic plastic such as low-density polyethylene, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), or similar plastics which are well known in the art and which are capable of being molded but which when molded are relatively flexible and elastic.

The retriever cup of this invention is designated generally by the reference numeral 4. Drainage from the cup is provided by a plurality of slots 5 and also by an aperture at the bottom of the cup (not shown) which is of relatively large diameter but of a diameter smaller than the largest cross-sectional area of a golf ball to be retrieved.

Formed integrally with the cup 4 is a member 6 which I have designated generally as a clip member. This clip member 6 is provided with top and side walls and the juncture thereof with the cup provides a bottom wall, so that the clip in effect provides an open end enclosure, the area of which increases toward its open end so that it may interfit with the blade or head 3 of the golf club. One side of the clip is provided with a slot 7 which permits of the wall of the clip to be depressed above the slot by pressing thereon at a point 7*a*. This depression of the side wall as shown in dotted lines in FIG. 4 permits of insertion of the shaft 1 within the confines of the clip, after which the depressed portion snaps back into the position shown in full lines in FIG. 4 so that the clip encloses the shaft and prevents the retriever being lost in the event of improper attachment thereof to the club head.

In installing the retriever for use, the clip 6 is first depressed to permit insertion of the shaft 1 as shown in FIG. 4, at which time the parts are generally in the position shown in FIG. 3. Thereafter, the clip and its integral retriever cup 4 are moved downwardly along the

shaft, over the hosel 2 and into the position shown in FIG. 1. The angularity of the clip 6 permits the same to fit against the flare of the club head or blade 3 and the clip is then held firmly between its outer end which is in engagement with the club head or blade 3 and the protuberance at the angle 3*a* above described. Due to the flexibility and elasticity of the material from which the clip is molded, the same in the position shown in FIG. 1 provides a tight fit with the club head or blade 3 so that it is difficult to dislodge the retriever in use.

To remove the retriever from the golf club a reversal of the procedure above described is followed. The clip is forced outwardly and upwardly over the angle protuberance 3*a* and the hosel 2 until it again encircles the shaft as shown in FIG. 3. At this point the top portion of the clip 6 above the slot 7 is depressed by pressing on the clip approximately at the area shown at 7*a* so that the clip again assumes the dotted line position shown in FIG. 4, the shaft may be moved out of the clip, and the retriever is stored for subsequent use. Due to its flexibility and elasticity, the retriever may be readily compressed for packing within the pocket of a golf club bag or other container such as a golf ball bag used by the golfer.

As will be apparent from the foregoing description, this invention provides a convenient retriever device which may be carried in a golf club bag, ball bag, or the like and readily installed on a "long iron" for use when it is desired to retrieve a golf ball from an inaccessible area, such as a water hazard, ground under repair, muddy water, poison ivy, thick vegetation, bushes and thorny thickets where the golfer either cannot reach the ball or would be injured or poisoned in so doing.

The retriever of this invention is inexpensive, cannot become lost even if improperly installed, is provided with ample drain area for the draining of water therefrom, and convenient to use in the picking up of golf balls under the foregoing circumstances or after a practice session, eliminating the necessity of the laborious effort of bending over to pick up the balls.

I am aware that details of construction may be varied and I, therefore, do not purpose limiting the patent hereon granted other than as indicated by the scope of the appended claims.

I claim:

1. In combination, a golf ball retriever and a golf club having a shaft, a head on the free end portion of said shaft having a hosel fitting about the free end portion of said shaft, and a tapered metal blade extending from said hosel with a front striking face and a rear face, having a sole adapted to lie parallel to the ground, a top surface tapering outwardly with respect to the sole as it extends from the hosel, and a blade tapering to converge from the sole to the top surface thereof,

a foldable plastic cup molded of flexible plastic material having a flat bottom of the general diameter of a golf ball and an annular side wall tapering upwardly from said bottom and terminating into an opening of a size to accommodate the ready scooping of a golf ball from water and the like,

said side wall having a plurality of slots extending therealong for the drainage of water from the cup, and having an integral clip extending radially outwardly of said side wall at the angle of taper thereof,

said clip being in the form of an open loop having a bottom surface extending along the outside of said side wall and having generally plane surfaces converging relative to said bottom surface from opposite sides of said bottom surface as they extend outwardly therefrom and having a rounded outer end portion tapering outwardly from the upper end of said clip to the lower end thereof to correspondingly mate with said top surface of the blade of the golf club, and with said bottom surface engaging said sole of the club head, said open loop being formed by one of said converging plane surfaces, said one converging plane surface having a top flange portion extending from said rounded outer end portion, a slot extending along its entire surface, and a bottom inturned flange portion extending from said bottom surface, wherein said top and bottom flange portions engage one of said faces of said blade,

said inturned portion forming a face adapted to be engaged by the shaft of a golf club and accommodating said clip to be depressed by pressing against the shaft of a golf club and fit said clip over the shaft to be slidably moved along said shaft and hosel to fit along the blade of the golf club and support said cup to be positively retained to depend from the blade of the golf club in relatively rigid relation with respect thereto by the form of said clip and the elasticity of the material from which said cup is made, to position said cup to scoop up a ball by movement of the club head with the hosel leading the blade of the club head, the foldability of said cup enabling said cup to be readily carried in the pocket of a golf bag.

2. The golf ball retriever of claim 1, wherein the plastic material is a low density polyethylene of sufficient elasticity and flexibility to snap into firm engagement with the blade of the club head and still enable the retriever to be folded to a compact size.

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