Oct. 11, 1960 M. L. CHANKO 2,955,823

BATTING PRACTICE DEVICE

Filed Feb. 25, 1959

FIG. 1

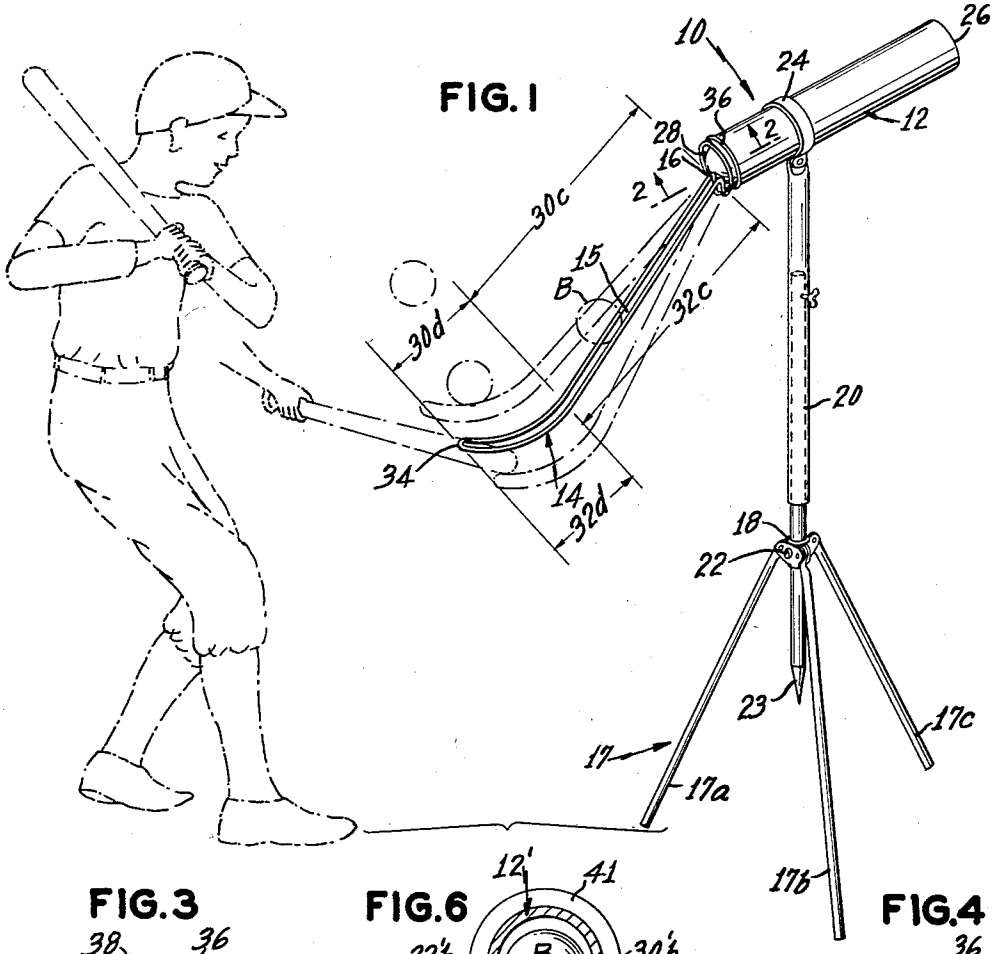


FIG. 3

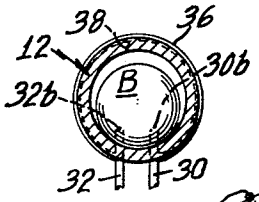


FIG. 6

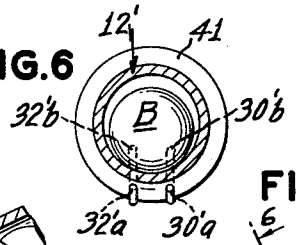


FIG. 4

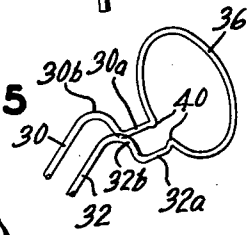


FIG. 2

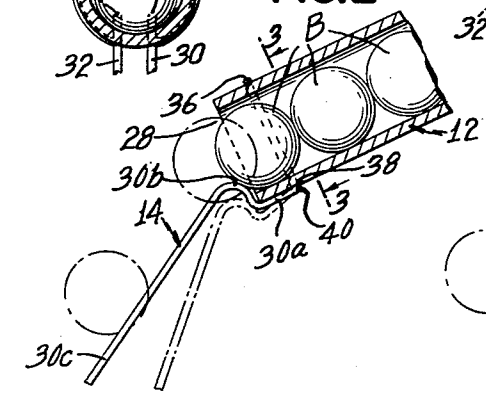
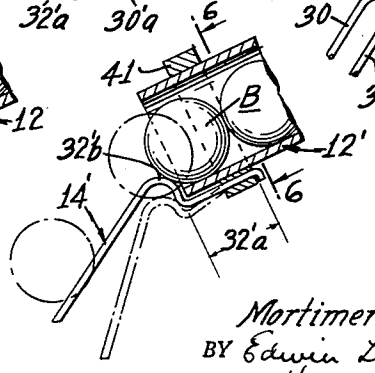


FIG. 5



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BATTING PRACTICE DEVICE

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3 Claims. (Cl. 273—26)

The present invention relates to a batting practice device.

More specifically, the present invention relates to a batting practice device wherein baseballs may be successively discharged under the control of the batter, one at the time, and which discharged balls follow a path simulating that of a pitched ball which passes through the strike zone of the batter.

It is accordingly an object of the present invention to provide an improved batting practice device of generally improved and simplified construction.

Another object of the invention is the provision of a batting practice device having means for discharging the balls from a magazine, one at the time, under the control of the batter, and having means for imparting to the discharged balls a movement along a path which simulates that of a pitched ball and which passes through the strike zone of the batter.

Another object of the invention is to provide a unitary wire-shaped formation releasably secured to the discharge opening of a magazine for guiding the discharged balls and for providing gate means so as to discharge one of said balls at the time.

The above and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will be more fully understood from the following description considered in connection with the accompanying illustrative drawings.

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of the batting practice device according to the invention in position to be utilized;

Fig. 2 is a fragmentary sectional view, on a larger scale, taken along line 2—2 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a sectional view, taken along line 3—3 of Fig. 2;

Fig. 4 is a perspective view, illustrating an end part of the wire formation according to the invention in Fig. 1;

Fig. 5 is a view similar to Fig. 2 illustrating a modification of the invention; and

Fig. 6 is a sectional view taken along line 6—6 of Fig. 5.

Referring now to the drawings, the device **10** of the present invention comprises in general a magazine **12** provided at one end thereof with a formation **14** which defines a guideway or runway **15** for the balls B in the magazine and which also defines a gate or stop **16** for said balls. The device **10** is mounted in a tilted position thereof, as shown in Fig. 1, so that the balls may be gravity fed toward the guideway **15** when stop **16** is moved out of the path of said balls. Any suitable mounting or support may be provided for mounting device **10** in said tilted position thereof. For example, and as shown in Fig. 1, there is provided a tripod **17** having legs **17***a*, **17***b*, and **17***c* pivotally connected at their upper ends, respectively, to a sleeve **18**. A standard **20** has the lower part thereof inserted in sleeve **18**, and is supported in an upwardly extending position thereof by means of a set screw **22**. The lower end of

standard **20** is provided with a spiked portion **23** so that it is adapted to be embedded into the earth thereby dispensing with the necessity of a tripod. Standard **20** is adjustable in height by means of the telescopic arrangement, as shown in Fig. 1. At the upper end of standard **20** there is provided an annular or ring-shaped member **24** which is adapted to releasably hold the magazine **12**. Ring **24** is mounted for pivotal movement about standard **20** so that it may be adjusted so as to provide any desired angle of inclination for the magazine **12**.

Magazine **12** comprises a tubular member open at the opposite ends thereof to define a loading opening **26** and a discharge opening **28**. At the discharge end of magazine **12** there is provided the previously mentioned formation **14** which defines simultaneously the stop means **16** for preventing the discharge of the balls through opening **28** and the runway **15** for guiding the movement of the discharged balls from the magazine **12**.

Referring particularly to Figs. 1, 2, 3 and 4, it will be noted that formation **14** may comprise a continuous wire shaped so as to define a pair of parallel spaced wire portions **30**, **32** joined at one end by arcuate part **34**, and terminating at the other end in a ring-shaped part **36** which is adapted to fit into a circular groove **38** provided therefor on magazine **12** adjacent the discharge end thereof, for releasably securing ring-shaped part **36** to said magazine.

Wire formation **14** is resilient, and it is mounted onto magazine **12** by inserting or snapping part **36** in groove **38**. When the wire formation is mounted as aforedescribed, wire portions **30** and **32** extend from the bottom of part **36** along the surface of magazine **12** and define straight portions **30***a*, **32***a* respectively. At the discharge opening **28**, wire portion **30** and **32** extend upwardly and then curve outwardly to define stop portions **30***b* and **32***b*, respectively, which are normally biased as shown by the full lines in Figs. 1 and 2 to define a gate for normally preventing the discharge of the balls B from the magazine **12**. Wire portions **30** and **32** then extend forwardly of gate or stop portions **30***b* and **32***b* to define straight portions **30***c* and **32***c*, respectively, which, as shown, may be inclined from the longitudinal axis of magazine **12**. Wire portions **30** and **32** terminate in upwardly curved portions **30***d* and **32***d*, respectively, joined at their outer ends by the previously described arcuate part **34**.

In the normal position of the device, balls B are inserted in the magazine through opening **26** thereof and resilient wire formation **14** is in its normal position shown by the solid lines in Figs. 1 and 2 in which portions **30***b*, **32***b*, are biased in position to prevent the discharge of balls B. Gravity causes the balls to move downwardly through magazine **12**, and said portions **30***b*, **32***b* prevent said balls from being discharged through opening **28** of the magazine. The device **10** is now ready for its utilization. To operate the device, the batter depresses the free end of wire formation **14**, to the lower dashed position thereof shown in Figs. 1 and 2. This removes stop portions **30***b*, **32***b* from the path of the lowermost gravity biased ball B, thereby enabling the latter to roll out of magazine **12** onto the spaced wire portions **30***c*, **32***c* of wire formation **14** which define a guideway during the downward movement of said ball. It will be understood that the batter depresses the wire formation for a fractional period of time to permit only one ball to be discharged from the magazine **12**, after which he places the bat on his shoulder in position for batting practice. Due to the resiliency of wire formation **14**, upon removal of the bat, formation **14** will move to the upper dashed position shown in Fig. 1, and stop portions **30***b*, **32***b* will be biased in position to prevent the next ball from being discharged. In the meantime, the ball B

which has just been discharged rolls down the guideway **30***c*, **32***c*, picking up momentum, and the curved end portions **30***d*, **32***d* cause said ball to take on an upward motion as it leaves wire formation **14**, to follow a path or trajectory in the air which is substantially similar to that followed by a pitched ball and which passes through the strike zone of the batter who is in position to swing his bat for his batting practice. Wire formation **14** is automatically restored to its normal position shown by the full lines in Figs. 1 and 2, due to the resiliency thereof, and the same steps can be repeated for discharging the next ball from the magazine **12** which will follow substantially the same path previously described.

It will be apparent that the height of magazine **12** as well as the angle of inclination thereof can be adjusted to any desired value so that the balls which are discharged follow a predetermined path as may be desired by the batter.

Thus it is seen that the device according to the invention as described in connection with Figs. 1 through 4 enables a batter, whether a child or an adult, to engage in batting practice without requiring the assistance of another person, with the balls being discharged one at the time and following a predetermined path simulating that normally followed by a pitched ball during batting practice. Wire formation **14** may be made of one continuous length of wire shaped in the manner described above, or in any other suitable way. It will be noted that the junctions **40**—**40** between the portions **30***a*, **32***a* and ring-shaped member **36** are seated in groove **38** and define a fulcrum for wire formation **14** when the end portion thereof is depressed by the bat.

Referring to Figs. 5 and 6, there is shown another embodiment of the batting practice device according to the invention in which a different wire formation **14'** is used. As shown, magazine **12'** is provided adjacent the discharge end thereof with a collar **41**. Wire formation **14'**, in this embodiment, has portions **30'***a* and **32'***a* thereof secured to said collar, at the bottom part thereof, instead of terminating in a ring-shaped member as in the embodiment of Figs. 1 through 4. Wire formation **14'** is in all other respects shaped similarly to wire formation **14** of Figs. 1 to 4 and is resiliently biased so as to provide stop portions **30'***b*, **32'***b* normally biased for preventing the discharge of balls B from magazine **12'**.

Thus it is seen that the batting practice device described above is eminently well suited to accomplish the objects of the invention.

While I have shown and described the preferred embodiments of my invention, it will be understood that various changes may be made in the idea or principles of the invention within the scope of the appended claims.

Having thus described my invention, what I claim and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. A batting practice device comprising, housing means for balls of the type adapted to be hit by a batter, said housing means being provided with an opening for discharging said ball, means for biasing balls contained in said housing means toward said discharge opening, and resilient means releasably secured to said housing means and extending therefrom, said resilient means having one part normally biased in a closing position thereof in which its prevents the discharge of said balls through said opening and having another part extending from said one part and defining a guideway for the balls discharged through said opening, said resilient means being movable under the control of the batter for moving said one part from said closing position thereof whereby to permit the discharge of said balls, one at the time, from said housing onto said guideway, said resilient means comprising a one-piece wire formation shaped so as to define a pair of spaced parallel wire portions having a bent part confronting said discharge opening and defining said one part thereof, and having a straight part extending from said bent part and an upwardly curved part extending from said straight part, said straight part and said upwardly curved part together defining said guideway.

2. A batting practice device comprising, housing means for balls of the type adapted to be hit by a batter, said housing means comprising an open ended tubular member mounted in an inclined disposition for gravity biasing balls contained therein toward the lower open end thereof which defines a discharge opening for said balls, and resilient means releasably secured to said housing means and extending therefrom, said resilient means having one part normally biased in a closing position thereof in which it prevents the discharge of said balls through said opening and having another part extending from said one part and defining a guideway for the balls discharged through said opening, said resilient means being movable under the control of the batter for moving said one part from said closing position thereof whereby to permit the discharge of said balls, one at the time, from said housing onto said guideway, said resilient means comprising a one-piece wire formation terminating at one end thereof in a ring-shaped portion snap-engaged in a groove provided therefor on said tubular member adjacent said discharge opening thereof, said wire formation further comprising spaced parallel wire portions extending from the bottom of said ring-shaped portion toward said discharge opening and bent upwardly at said opening to define said one part normally biased in position to prevent the discharge of said balls, said wire portions being bent outwardly and downwardly at the upper end of said one part to define said guideway for guiding balls discharged from said tubular member and imparting thereto a trajectory passing through the strike zone of the batter.

3. A batting practice device comprising, housing means for balls of the type adapted to be hit by a batter, said housing means comprising an open ended tubular member mounted in an inclined disposition for gravity biasing balls contained therein toward the lower open end thereof which defines a discharge opening for said balls, and resilient means releasably secured to said housing means and extending therefrom, said resilient means having one part normally biased in a closing position thereof in which it prevents the discharge of said balls through said opening and having another part extending from said one part and defining a guideway for the balls discharged through said opening, said resilient means being movable under the control of the batter for moving said one part from said closing position thereof whereby to permit the discharge of said balls, one at the time, from said housing onto said guideway, said resilient means comprising a one-piece wire formation defining a pair of parallel spaced wire portions joined together at one end of said formation and releasably secured to said tubular member at the other end of the formation, said parallel spaced wire portions being bent upwardly in confronting relation with said discharge opening to define said one part normally biased in position to prevent the discharge of said balls through said opening, said parallel spaced wire portions being bent outwardly and downwardly at the upper end of said one part to define said guideway for guiding balls discharged from said tubular member and imparting thereto a trajectory passing through the strike zone of the batter.

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