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(54) MAGNETIC GAME APPARATUS AND METHOD

MAGENTISCHE SPIELVORRICHTUNG UND VERFAHREN

APPAREIL ET PROCÉDÉ DE JEU MAGNÉTIQUE

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Description

FIELD

[0001] This disclosure relates to games and in particular to a game that incorporates a magnetic member intended for picking up other items.

BACKGROUND OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0002] Games using magnets are available in a wide variety of forms, including games where players pick up game pieces without directly using their hands. For example, a "Magnetic Card Pick-up Game and Apparatus" is disclosed in U.S. patent number 5,722,663 to Avigal et al., wherein a player uses a magnet tied to an elastic cable to pick up magnetic cards.

[0003] Magnetic games can exercise the manual dexterity of the players. Magnetic games may also be used to educate players, particularly young children, about the principles of magnetism and the physics of magnetic fields. One example of a magnetic game can be found in DE19842699.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

[0004] According to one aspect, game apparatus is provided which includes a playing surface, a magnetic pickup apparatus and a plurality of ferromagnetic game pieces. The magnetic pickup apparatus has at least two spaced-apart game piece pickup regions wherein each pickup region incorporates a magnet having field strength differing than the field strength of the magnet associated with other pickup points. The magnetic pickup apparatus is capable of being manipulated by a user to magnetically pick up a ferromagnetic object using any one of the incorporated magnets. The ferromagnetic game pieces are provisioned having different colour, size and/or weight characteristics and are sized and weighted to be picked up from the playing surface by each of at least two spaced-apart game piece pickup regions on the magnetic pickup apparatus.

[0005] The magnetic pickup apparatus can be a wand having first and second opposing ends, the game piece pickup regions being located at the first and second opposing ends, respectively.

[0006] The ferromagnetic game pieces can be organized into multiple groups based on a first characteristic, with each group being organized into a series, wherein at least two of the members of each series have different weights.

[0007] The game apparatus can include a container sized to at least store the magnetic pickup apparatus and the plurality of ferromagnetic game pieces. The container can provide a defined playing surface upon which the ferromagnetic game pieces may be disposed for pickup by a user utilizing the magnetic pickup apparatus. The container can be a pouch formed from flexible material.

[0008] There is also provided, not in accordance with the present invention, a method of game play utilizing a magnetic pickup apparatus and a plurality of ferromagnetic game pieces, wherein the magnetic pickup apparatus has at least two spaced-apart game piece pickup regions, wherein each pickup region incorporates a magnet having field strength differing than the field strength of the magnet associated with other pickup points, wherein the magnetic pickup apparatus is capable of being manipulated by a user to magnetically pick up a ferromagnetic object using any one of the incorporated magnets, and wherein the plurality of ferromagnetic game pieces are organized into multiple groups based on a first characteristic, each group being organized into a series, wherein at least two of the members of each said series have different weights. The method includes: depositing the game pieces onto a defined playing area, wherein the number and size of the ferromagnetic game pieces relative to

the size of said playing area are such that there would be a reasonable likelihood of many of the ferromagnetic game pieces clumping together if the ferromagnetic game pieces were to be randomly deposited on the defined playing area; and playing a game with multiple players, where each player is assigned to a group of the ferromagnetic game pieces corresponding to a particular one of the ferromagnetic game piece characteristics, and the player's objective is to pick up only the assigned ferromagnetic game pieces.

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] The foregoing and other aspects of the invention will be more readily appreciated having reference to the drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a front view of a magnetic wand, which is an element of a first embodiment of a magnetic game apparatus.

Figure 2 is a perspective view of ferromagnetic bells of various sizes, weights, and colours; the bells constituting additional elements of the first embodiment.

Figure 3A is a side view of a series of bells of the same colour, having different sizes and weights.

Figure 3B is a top view of the series of bells shown in Figure 3A.

Figure 4 is a top view of a playing surface, which is another element of the first embodiment.

Figure 5 is a side view of a pouch, which can provide the playing surface shown in Figure 4.

Figure 6 is a perspective view of the pouch, partially opened, showing the magnetic wand and bells con-

tained therein.

Figure 7 is a top view of the pouch, fully opened, flattened for use as the playing surface and having various bells located thereon.

Figure 8 is a view of the magnetic wand being grasped in a first orientation.

Figure 9 is view of the magnetic wand being grasped in a second orientation, opposite the first orientation.

Figure 10 is a view of the magnetic wand being grasped by a user to pick up a "string" of bells.

Figure 11 is a diagram of a pamphlet detailing rules of play for a method playing a game using the apparatus of the first embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0010] The drawings show an embodiment of a set of elements for a game (the "illustrated embodiment"). As will be discussed in greater detail below, the invention is broader in scope than the illustrated embodiment and thus the illustrated embodiment should be understood only as an example of the invention, which is defined by the scope of the appended claims.

[0011] The set of elements of the illustrated embodiment includes a magnetic pickup apparatus such as a bottle-shaped magnetic "wand" 13 (see Fig. 1), a plurality of ferromagnetic game pieces such as coloured ferromagnetic bells 14 of various sizes, weights, and colours (see Fig. 2), and an optional container such as a pouch 11 (see Fig. 5), which, in some embodiments, also can serve as a playing surface 11a (see Fig. 4).

[0012] In one potential method of play, players can take turns using the magnetic wand 13 to attempt to pick up a "string" of bells 14 of a single colour from the playing surface 11a according to detailed rules of play.

[0013] As shown in Figures 4 and 5, the pouch 11 can be semicircular and, when opened, is a circular piece of flexible material having a releasable fastener such as zipper 12 about its perimeter. The zipper 12 permits the opposing halves of the pouch 11 to be releasably attached to one another to thereby provide a closable pouch, or container, for the magnetic wand 13 and the plurality of coloured ferromagnetic bells 14, as shown in Figure 6. Preferably, the pouch 11 is made of a flexible foam material with decorative fabric attached to both sides.

[0014] The pouch 11 also serves as a playing surface 11a, as shown in Figure 7. When opened, the pouch 11 has a circular, mat-like shape that provisions the playing surface 11a. When the zipper 12 is engaged and in closed position, the pouch 11 has a semi-circular, pocket-like shape and can function as a container for the game components.

[0015] In alternative embodiments, the pouch 11 may be omitted in its entirety or replaced, for example, with a plastic dished member with a flat bottom interior surface to hold the bells 14, or with any other suitable member.

5 [0016] As shown in Figure 1, the magnetic wand 13 of the illustrated embodiment has a bottle-like shape, a first end such as top end 15, and a second end such as bottom end 16, with the wand 13 asymmetrically tapering towards the ends. The first and second ends 15 and 16 of the wand 13 are circular and have different diameters, as shown in Figure 8. The bottom end 16 has a larger diameter than the top end 15. The surfaces of the first and second ends 15 and 16 are slightly and smoothly rounded, or curved outwardly, from the ends 15 and 16 of the wand 13.

[0017] Magnets are incorporated into the wand such as magnets 17a and 17b located in each end 15 and 16 of the wand 13. Magnet 17a, which is weaker than magnet 17b, is located inside and adjacent the first end 15 of the wand 13. Magnet 17b, which is stronger than magnet 17a, is located inside and adjacent the bottom end 16 of the wand 13. The stronger magnet 17b generates a stronger magnetic field than the weaker magnet 17a. Preferably, the magnets 17 are permanent magnets.

25 [0018] In alternative embodiments, the wand 13 can have three or more magnets 17 each having a different magnetic strength. For example, a three-pointed wand may be used instead of the two-ended wand 13, wherein each of the three points of the wand has a magnet 17 having a strength that differs from the strengths of the other magnets 17.

30 [0019] As shown in Figures 2 and 3, the plurality of coloured ferromagnetic bells 14 are generally spherical and hollow, with a hard pellet (not shown) loosely contained therein. One or more apertures 18 in the walls of the bells 14 permit the sound made by the pellet to emanate from the bells 14. Bells of this type are sometimes referred to as sleigh bells or jingle bells. The bells 14 are made of a ferromagnetic material, such as nickel, iron, or another magnetic material or alloy. Preferably, a plurality of bells 14 are provided in various sizes, weights, and colours, with an equal number of bells 14 of each size, weight, and colour. For example, four different colours of bells 14 may be provided, each colour having two large bells, having a diameter of 2.6 cm at the midpoint; three medium bells, having a diameter of 2.0 cm at the midpoint; and five small bells, having a diameter of 1.3 cm at the midpoint.

45 [0020] In alternative embodiments, other arrangements of ferromagnetic game pieces or targets are possible. Generally speaking, the ferromagnetic game pieces can have different colour, size and/or weight characteristics. For the purposes of game play whose objective is to pick up at least one and preferably a string of magnetic targets, the magnetic targets can be organized into multiple groups based on a first characteristic, such as colour or shape. For example, the magnetic targets could have one of a predefined number of shapes such as

round, square, heart, cross, etc. Each said group can be further organized into a series, wherein at least two of the members of each series have different weights. Thus, for example, the series of heart shaped targets could include four members, having small, medium, medium and large weights, respectively.

[0021] One method of game play involves a player attempting to selectively pick up bells 14 of a single colour from the plurality of bells 14 located on the playing surface 11a, using one end of the wand 13. First, the player places a plurality of bells 14 on the playing surface 11a, as shown in Figure 7. The number of different colours of bells 14 may be selected, based on the number of players. Preferably, the number and size of the bells 14 relative to the size of the playing surface 11a are such that there would be a reasonable likelihood of many bells 14 clumping together if they were to be randomly deposited onto the playing surface 11a. This increases the likelihood of magnetic interference, making the game more interesting.

[0022] Before attempting to pick up any bells 14, the player decides whether to use the weaker magnet 17a or the stronger magnet 17b and selects the desired magnet 7. The player may select the weaker magnet 17a by grasping the wand 13 by the bottom end 16, as shown in Figure 8, or may select the stronger magnet 17b by grasping the wand 13 by the top end 15, as shown in Figure 9. Using the stronger magnet 17b provides the player with a stronger magnetic field, which exerts a stronger attraction on the bells 14, thereby permitting the player to pick up more weight, for example, a long "string" of bells 14, as shown in Figure 10. Using the weaker magnet 17a provides the player with a weaker magnetic field, which exerts a weaker attraction on the bells 14, thereby permitting the player to pick up bells 14 with greater precision. For example, a player may select the weaker magnet 17a to pick up a bell 14 of his or her colour, which is surrounded by bells 14 of another colour. Alternatively, a player may select the stronger magnet 17b to pick up a number of bells 14 of his or her colour, which are grouped together and isolated from bells 14 of another colour.

[0023] Once one or more bells 14 of a single colour have been picked up using the wand 13, the player may set these bells 14 aside. Alternatively, the player may attempt to pick up additional bells 14. If the player picks up bells 14 of more than one colour, the player immediately returns all bells 14 picked up that turn to the playing surface 11a. At any time after picking up one or more bells 14 the player may stop the turn and set aside the bells 14 picked up that turn, so long as bells 14 of only a single colour have been picked up that turn.

[0024] The next player can then grasps the wand 13 and attempts to pick up bells 4 of his or her colour, as above. The players take turns until one of them has picked up all of the bells 4 of his or her colour.

[0025] The game may be played by one or more players, using one playing surface 11a, one wand 13, and a plurality of bells 14 of different colours. Preferably, the

number of players is equal to the number of different colours of bells 14.

[0026] Figure 11 shows a pamphlet detailing specific rules of play governing how players take turns and the results required to win the game. Alternative rules are also possible.

[0027] The embodiments are described herein illustratively and are not meant to limit the scope of the invention as claimed. Variations of the foregoing embodiments will be evident to a person of ordinary skill and are intended by the inventor to be encompassed by the appended claims.

Claims

1. A set of elements for a game, comprising:

a playing surface (11a);

a magnetic pickup apparatus having at least two spaced-apart game piece pickup regions, wherein each pickup region incorporates a magnet (17) having field strength differing than the field strength of the magnet (17) associated with other pickup regions, said magnetic pickup apparatus capable of being manipulated by a user to magnetically pick up a ferromagnetic object using any one of said incorporated magnets (17); and

a plurality of ferromagnetic game pieces, **characterized in that** the plurality of ferromagnetic game pieces have different colour, size and/or weight characteristics that are sized and weighted to be picked up from the playing surface (11a) by the magnet associated with each of the at least two spaced-apart game piece pickup regions on the magnetic pickup apparatus.

2. A set of elements according to claim 1, wherein the magnetic pickup apparatus is a wand (13) having first and second opposing ends (15, 16), and wherein said game piece pickup regions are located at said first and second opposing ends (15, 16), respectively.

3. A set of elements according to claim 1, wherein said plurality of ferromagnetic game pieces are organized into multiple groups based on a first characteristic, each said group being organized into a series, wherein at least two of the members of each said series have different weights.

4. A set of elements according to claim 1, including a container sized to at least store said magnetic game pickup apparatus and said plurality of ferromagnetic game pieces, said container providing the playing surface (11a) upon which said ferromagnetic game pieces may be disposed for pickup by a user utilizing

said magnetic pickup apparatus.

5. A set of elements according to claim 4, wherein said container is a pouch (11) formed from flexible material.

Patentansprüche

1. Satz von Elementen für ein Spiel, Folgendes umfassend:

eine Spielfläche (11a);
eine magnetische Aufnahmevorrichtung mit wenigstens zwei beabstandeten Spielstein-Aufnahmebereichen, wobei jeder Aufnahmebereich einen Magneten (17) mit einer Feldstärke enthält, die sich von der Feldstärke des Magneten (17), der mit anderen Aufnahmebereichen verknüpft ist, unterscheidet, wobei die magnetische Aufnahmevorrichtung geeignet ist, von einem Benutzer manipuliert zu werden, um einen ferromagnetischen Gegenstand unter Verwendung eines der enthaltenen Magneten (17) magnetisch aufzunehmen; und
mehrere ferromagnetische Spielsteine, die **dadurch gekennzeichnet sind, dass** die mehreren ferromagnetischen Spielsteine eine unterschiedliche Farbe, Größe und/oder Gewichtseigenschaften aufweisen, die so groß und gewichtet sind, dass sie von der Spielfläche (11a) von dem Magneten, der mit jedem der wenigstens zwei beabstandeten Spielstein-Aufnahmebereiche auf der magnetischen Aufnahmevorrichtung verknüpft ist, aufgenommen werden kann.

2. Satz von Elementen nach Anspruch 1, wobei die magnetische Aufnahmevorrichtung ein Stab (13) mit einem ersten und einem zweiten, gegenüberliegenden Ende (15, 16) ist und wobei die Spielstein-Aufnahmebereiche sich jeweils an dem ersten und dem zweiten, gegenüberliegenden Ende (15, 16) befinden.

3. Satz von Elementen nach Anspruch 1, wobei die mehreren ferromagnetischen Spielsteine auf der Grundlage einer ersten Eigenschaft in eine Reihe von Gruppen organisiert sind, wobei jede dieser Gruppen in einer Serie organisiert ist, wobei wenigstens zwei der Elemente aus jeder dieser Serien unterschiedliche Gewichte aufweisen.

4. Satz von Elementen nach Anspruch 1, einschließlich eines Behälters, der so groß ist, dass wenigstens die magnetische Aufnahmevorrichtung und die mehreren ferromagnetischen Spielsteine darin aufbewahrt werden können, wobei der Behälter die Spielfläche (11a) bereitstellt, auf der die ferromagneti-

schen Spielsteine zur Aufnahme durch einen Benutzer mit Hilfe der magnetischen Aufnahmevorrichtung angeordnet werden können.

5. Satz von Elementen nach Anspruch 4, wobei der Behälter ein Beutel (11), ausgebildet aus einem flexiblen Material, ist.

Revendications

1. Ensemble d'éléments destinés à un jeu, comprenant :

une surface de jeu (11a) ;
un appareil de capture magnétique possédant au moins deux régions de saisie de pièces de jeu espacées l'une de l'autre, chaque région de saisie incorporant un aimant (17) présentant une intensité de champ différente de l'intensité de champ de l'aimant (17) associée aux autres régions de saisie, ledit appareil de saisie magnétique pouvant être manipulé par un utilisateur de manière à capturer un objet ferromagnétique à l'aide d'un desdits aimants incorporés (17) ; et
une pluralité de pièces de jeu ferromagnétiques, **caractérisé en ce que** la pluralité des pièces de jeu ferromagnétiques possède différentes caractéristiques de couleur, de dimension et/ou de poids qui sont dimensionnées et pondérées pour être saisies à partir de la surface de jeu (11a) par l'aimant associé avec chacune d'au moins deux régions de saisie de pièces de jeu espacées l'une de l'autre située sur l'appareil de saisie magnétique.

2. Ensemble d'éléments selon la revendication 1, l'appareil de saisie magnétique étant une baguette (13) ayant des première et seconde extrémités opposées (15, 16), et lesdites régions de saisie de pièces de jeu étant situées au niveau des première et seconde extrémités opposées (15, 16), respectivement.

3. Ensemble d'éléments selon la revendication 1, ladite pluralité de pièces de jeu ferromagnétiques étant organisée en plusieurs groupes en fonction d'une première caractéristique, chacun desdits groupes étant organisé en une série, au moins deux des membres de chacune desdites séries ayant des poids différents.

4. Ensemble d'éléments selon la revendication 1, comprenant un contenant dimensionné pour au moins entreposer ledit appareil de saisie de jeu magnétique et ladite pluralité de pièces de jeu ferromagnétiques, ledit contenant constituant la surface de jeu (11a) sur laquelle peuvent être disposées lesdites pièces

de jeu ferromagnétiques de manière à être saisies par un utilisateur à l'aide dudit appareil de saisie magnétique.

5. Ensemble d'éléments selon la revendication 4, ledit contenant est une poche (11) composée de matériau flexible.

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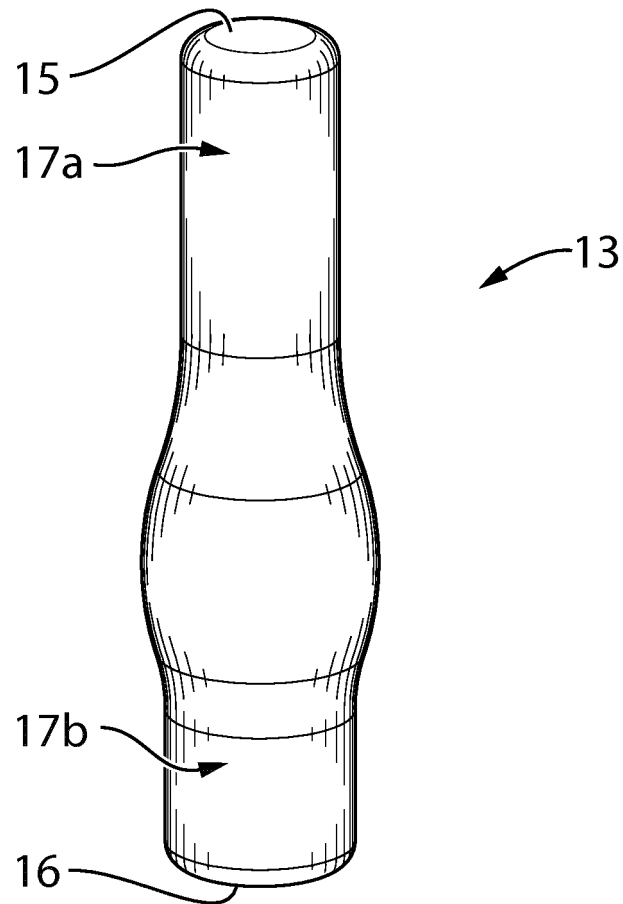


Fig. 1

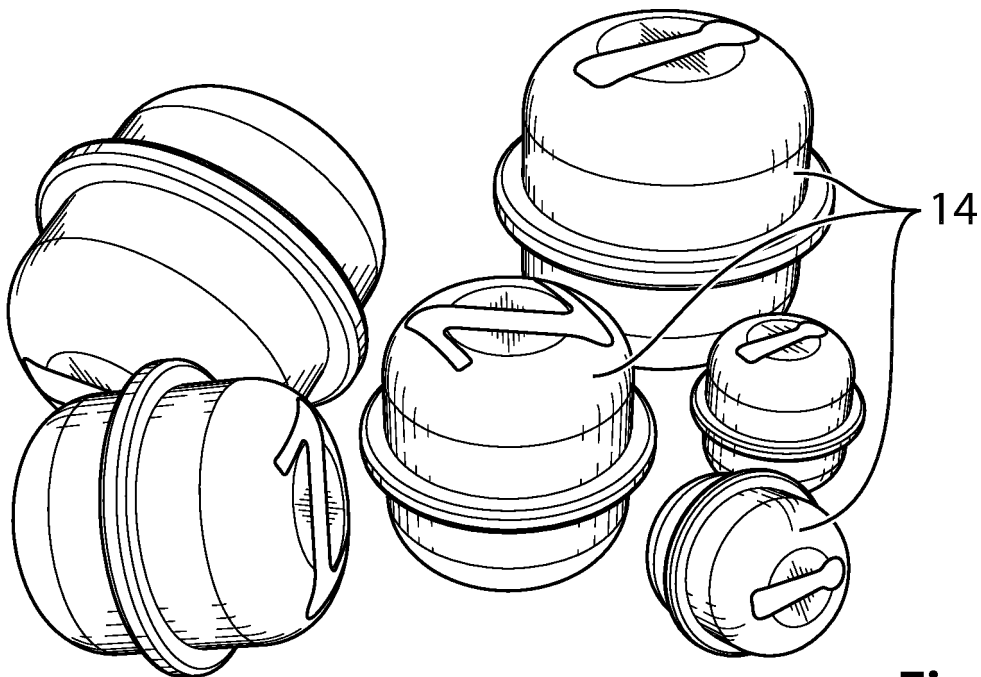


Fig. 2

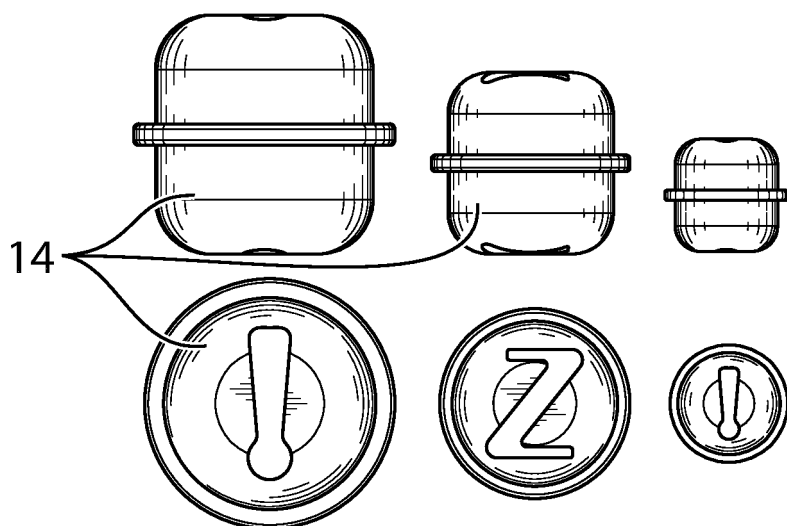


Fig. 3

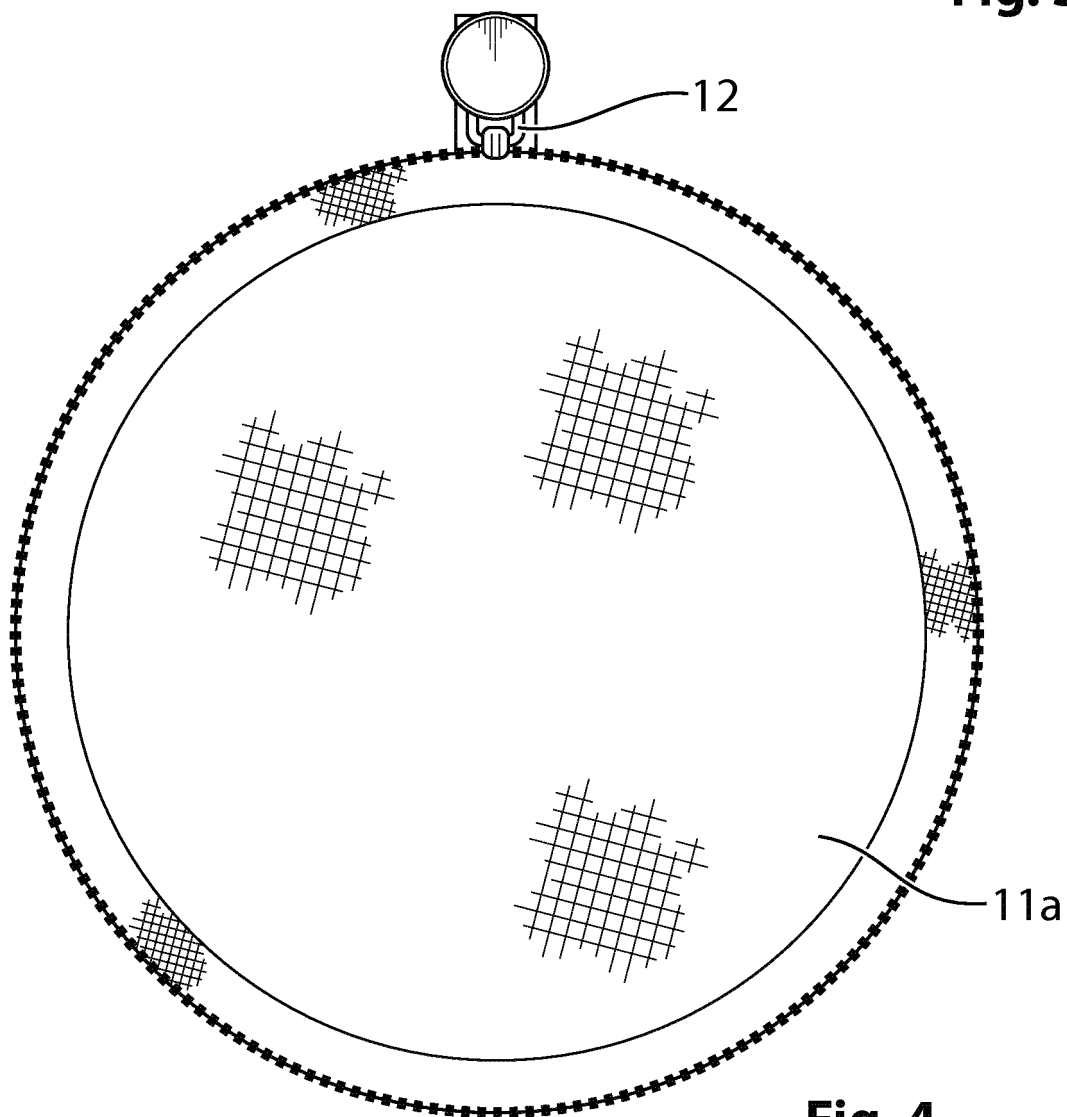


Fig. 4

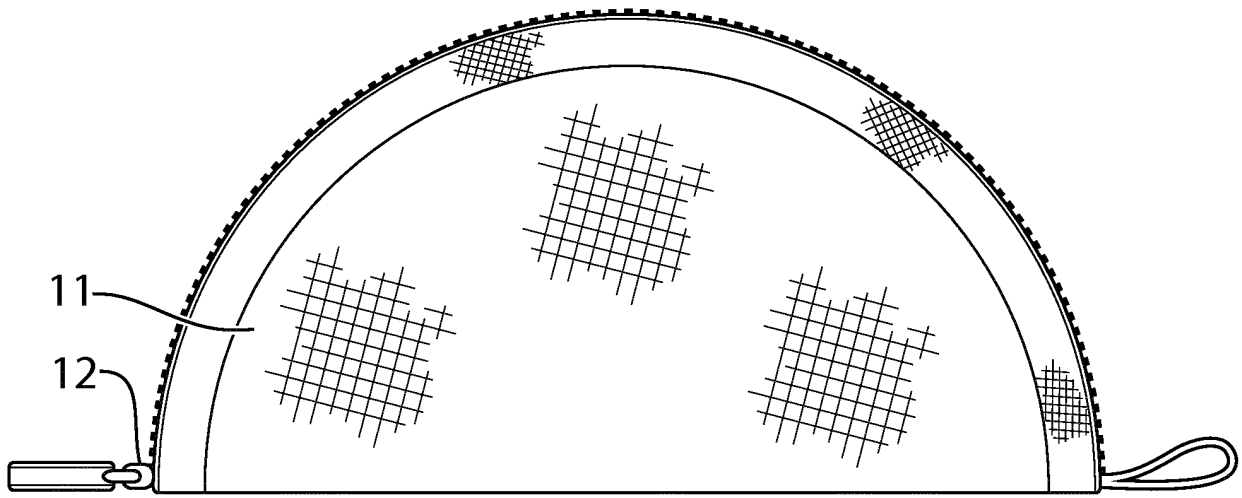


Fig. 5

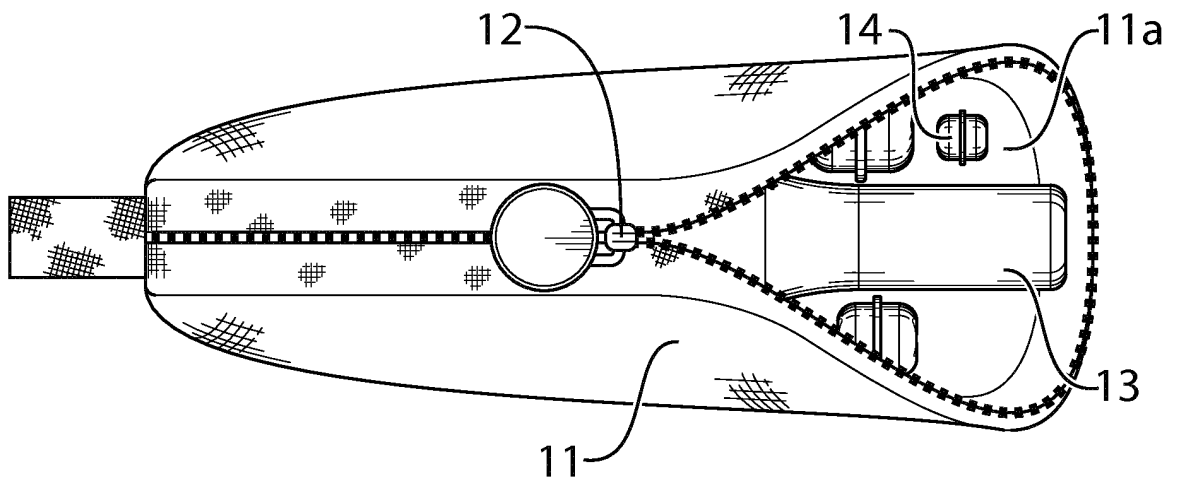


Fig. 6

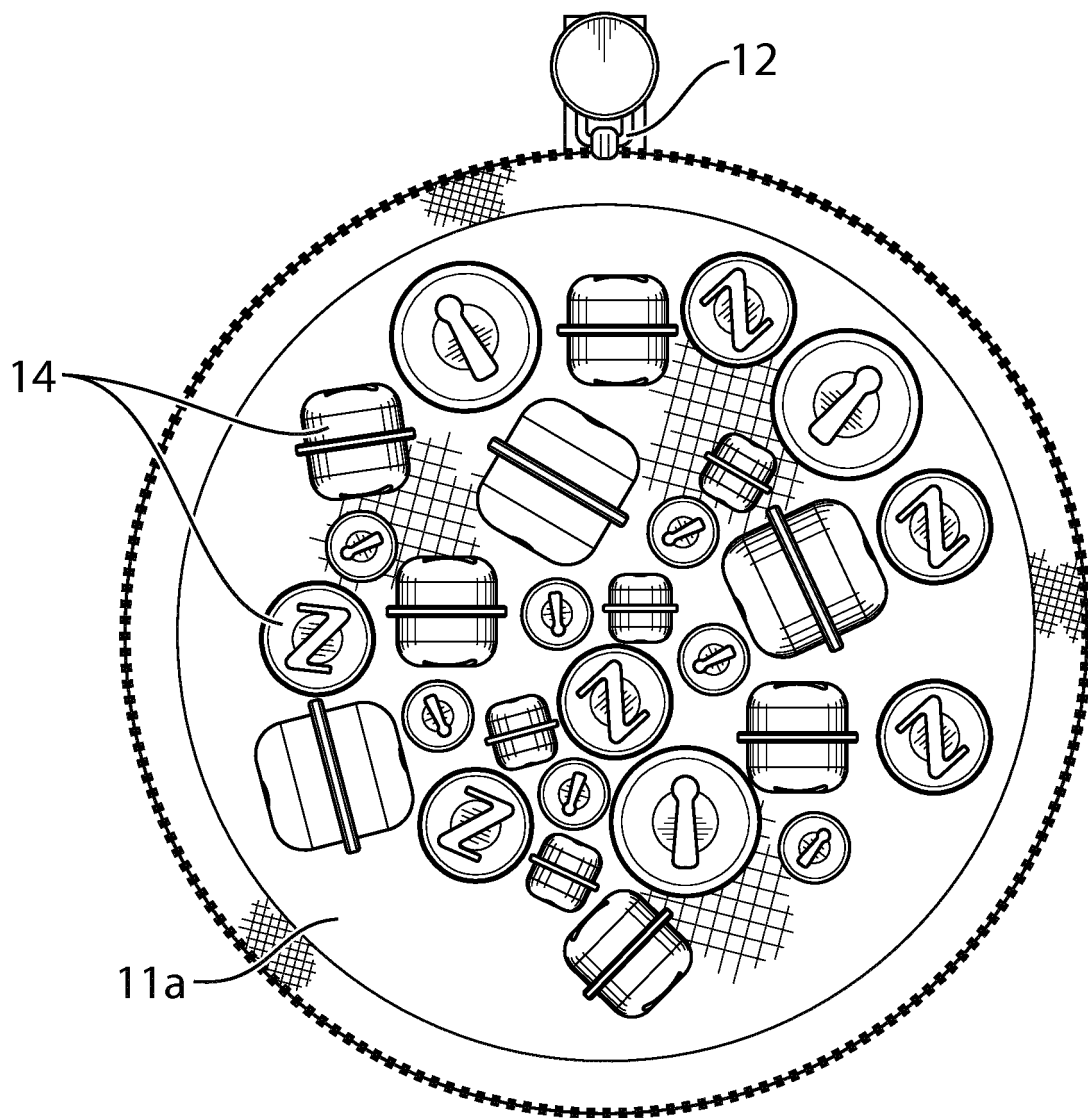


Fig. 7

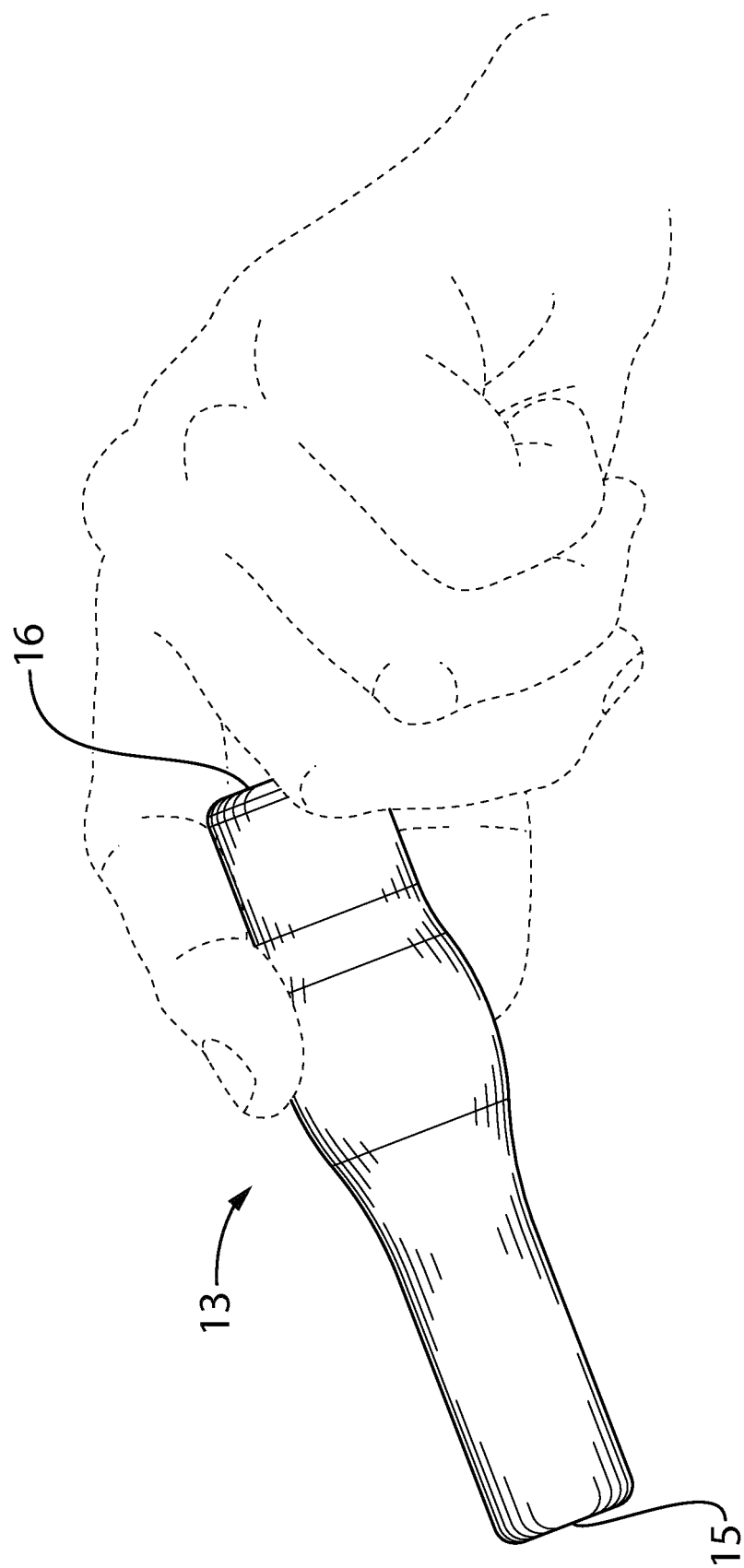


Fig. 8

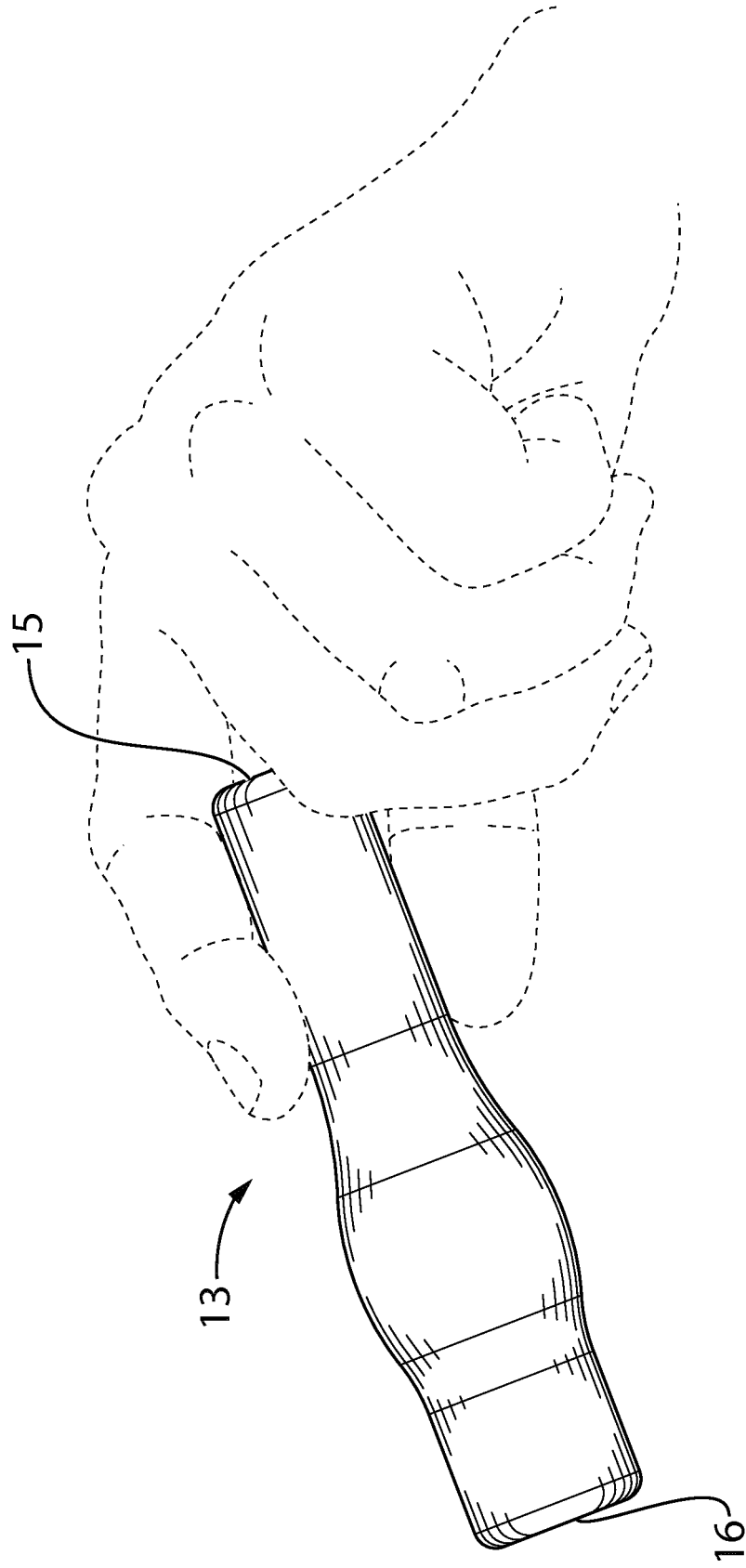


FIG. 9

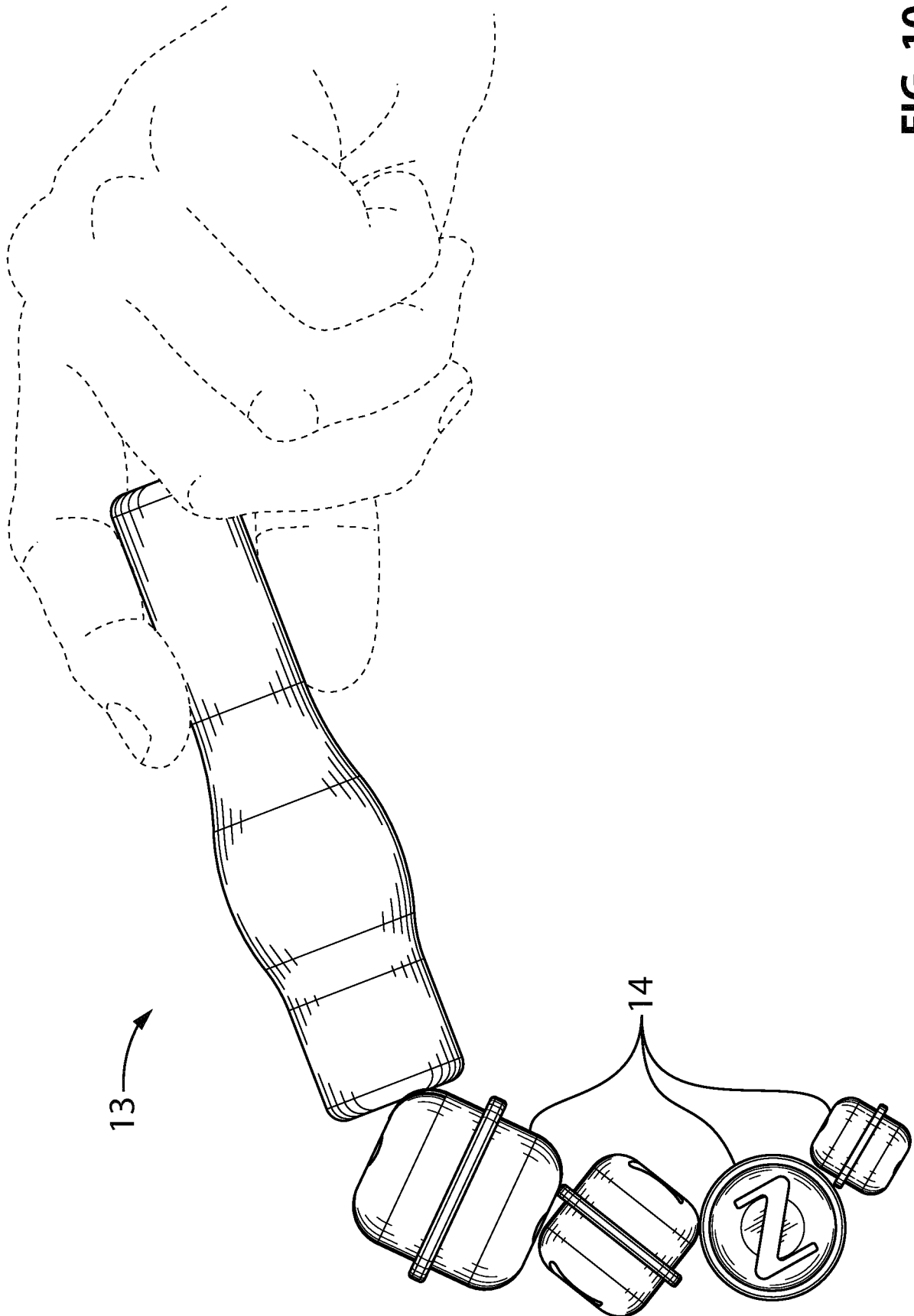


FIG. 10

OBJECT OF THE GAME

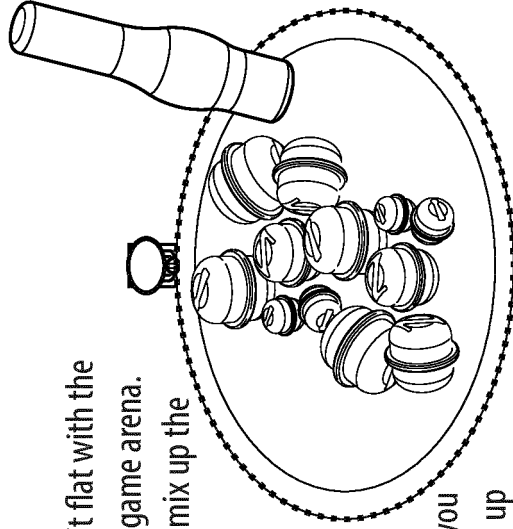
- To collect all 10 bells of one color.

COMPONENTS

- 1 travel pouch / game arena
- 1 magnet wand
- 40 bells in 4 colors
(20 small, 12 medium, 8 large)

SETTING UP

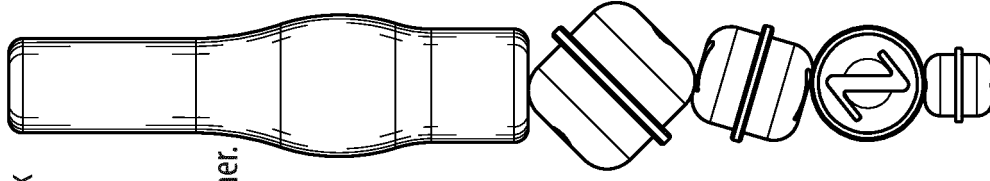
- Unzip the travel pouch and lay it flat with the blue side facing up to form the game arena.
- Remove the magnet wand and mix up the 40 bells in the arena.
- Choose a player to go first.



HOW TO PLAY

- On your turn, use the magnet can of your color without picking up bells of any other color.
- You are free to choose any color of bell you want, as long as another player has not already claimed any bells of that color.

- The magnet wand has a larger end with a strong magnet and a smaller end with a weak magnet. You can use either end, but you can't switch ends during your turn.
- As you collect bells, it's fine to hang them in a line from the wand, or clump them together.
- You can keep trying for more bells as long as you don't:
 - Pick up more than one color of bell or another player's color
 - Cause any bells to be knocked or dropped out to the arena



- If your turn ends because of either of the above reasons, you must return to the arena all the bells you picked up, dropped, or knocked out on that turn.
- If you are satisfied with the number of bells you have collected, you may remove the bells and put them in front of you.
- Play passes to the person on the left.

WINNING THE GAME

The first player to collect all 10 bells of their chosen color wins the game!

FIG. 11

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

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