A folding and portable training device for soccer and physical education includes a plurality of meshed, interlocked planks arranged to form a closed geometric figure to be utilized as a rebounding surface. The number of planks used determines the type of geometric figure formed. The device may be employed indoors or outdoors. Easily assembled and disassembled, the device is lightweight and waterproof.
TRAINING DEVICE FOR SOCCER AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION


BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention generally relates to recreational equipment. More specifically, the present invention is drawn to a portable structure which may be used as a soccer training device.

[0004] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0005] Soccer is probably the most popular sport in the world. In the last two decades the term “soccer mom” has become a part of the American lexicon as the number of secondary school soccer leagues has increased dramatically. The recent success of the United States Women’s soccer team at the Olympics has further fueled interest in the sport. As the popularity of the sport has grown, there is an attendant demand and a shortage of space for soccer venues, training equipment and coaches. Thus, there is a dire need for a device which would function to hone the skills of a player in a limited space without a coach being present.

[0006] There are devices in the prior art designed for improving soccer skills. For example, U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,865,330 (D’Amico), 5,054,791 (Ball), 5,524,900 (Allen), 5,558,338 (Taub) and 5,961,403 (Caruso) show soccer training apparatus which are limited in use in that only one person at a time may participate.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 4,258,924 (Ketchum) discloses portable rebounding wall apparatus which is used for soccer training. The instant apparatus is structurally complicated and would require a lengthy set-up time and increased maintenance.

[0008] U.S. Pat. No. 5,346,228 (Offutt) shows a portable device incorporating a soccer goal. This device only enhances the skill of kicking goals.

[0009] U.S. Pat. No. 5,362,045 (Hammett et al.) discloses a practice device for the game of ice hockey. The device incorporates support structure for anchoring the device to an ice surface.


[0011] None of the above inventions and patents, taken either singularly or in combination, is seen to disclose a versatile, portable soccer training device which will subsequently be described and claimed in the instant invention.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0012] The present invention, dubbed “SCARB”, is a portable, easily-assembled soccer and physical education training device which may be used outdoors and indoors. The device can be assembled or disassembled in only seconds and can be transported in any car, van or SUV.

[0013] The device comprises a plurality of planks which are interlocked to form a geometric figure. The configuration of the figure is determined by the number of planks used. For example, only three planks are utilized to form a triangle. Four planks would be needed to form a square; six would be needed to form a hexagon, etc. The multi-sided configurations allow more persons to practice at the same time.

[0014] A tongue, groove and pin arrangement is utilized as the interlocking mechanism for the planks. This arrangement permits maximum flexibility in assembling multiple numbers of planks into different geometric configurations. The pins are provided with a loop at the tops thereof to enhance removal and insertion. Elastic cords are attached to the loops so that resistance exercises may be performed.

[0015] When assembled and disposed on the ground of an outdoor play area or indoors on a gymnasium floor, the instant invention may be utilized as a surface for rebounding soccer balls. One or more players can practice on the device without direct oversight from a coach. Using the device will aid the novice in attaining basic soccer skills and developing better motor skills such as speed, reaction, coordination, balance and agility. The device will allow more seasoned players to improve their basic skills and also to hone advanced skills such as passing accuracy, trapping, turning, dribbling, etc.

[0016] Accordingly, it is a principal object of the invention to provide a portable, training device, which training device can be utilized to improve the skills of soccer players.

[0017] It is another object of the invention to provide a portable training device for soccer players, which training device can be used by one or more players at the same time.

[0018] It is a further object of the invention to provide a portable training device for soccer players, which device is easy to assemble and disassemble.

[0019] Still another object of the invention is to provide a portable training device for soccer players, which device may be used both outdoors and indoors.

[0020] It is an object of the invention to provide improved elements and arrangements thereof for the purposes described which are inexpensive, dependable and fully effective in accomplishing their intended purposes.

[0021] These and other objects of the present invention will become readily apparent upon further review of the following specification and drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0022] FIG. 1 is an environmental, perspective view of a training device for soccer and physical education according to the present invention.

[0023] FIG. 2 is a partial, exploded view of a training device for soccer and physical education according to the present invention.

[0024] FIGS. 3 and 4 are perspective views of geometrical configurations of a training device for soccer and physical education according to the present invention.
DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The training device of the present invention, generally indicated at 10 in FIG. 1, allows one or more players to improve their soccer skills by utilizing device 10 as a rebounding surface. As best seen in FIG. 2, device 10 comprises a plurality of identical planks 12 having substantially planar front and rear faces 12a, 12b. Each plank has one end formed with a groove 14 therein and an opposite end formed as a tongue 16. Aligned bores 14a, 14b are disposed in each groove end 14. A bore 16a is disposed in each tongue end 16. Bore 14a, 14b and 16a have the same internal diameter. Tongue 16 and groove 14 are dimensioned so that the planks will mesh with all respective bores in alignment. A plurality of reenforcing kiss-offs 18 are disposed in each plank. For the intended purpose, it has been determined that each plank should be approximately fifty-four inches long, twelve inches high and two and one half inches thick. The planks are fabricated from rotationally molded plastic and may be made in a variety of colors.

Metal pins 20 are provided to interlock the meshed planks 12. Pins 20 have a looped portion 22 at the top to enhance removal and insertion. Loop 22 also functions to retain an elastic band 24. Elastic band 24 can be utilized as an exercise adjunct for initial stretching and warm-up for the players before they begin their practice drills. When used outdoors, pins 20 are seventeen inches long so that the lower end of the pin can be inserted in the ground to provide additional anchoring support for training device 10. For indoor use it is recommended that the pins should be no longer than twelve inches.

As indicated above, multiple planks can be interlocked so that the training device may take on a variety of geometric configurations. FIGS. 3 and 4 exemplify two of the many possible configurations. It is to be noted that the larger configurations will allow a player to practice inside the perimeter of the training device. This more confined area of practice helps to improve the reaction time of the player.

Although the instant invention is contemplated for use as a training device, it should be noted that the interlocking plank design could function as an edging for sand boxes, an area accent or a playground divider.

It is to be understood that the present invention is not limited to the embodiments described above, but encompasses any and all embodiments within the scope of the following claims.

We claim:
1. A training device for soccer and physical education comprising:
a plurality of planks;
each plank of said plurality having a first end, a second end, a front planar face and a rear planar face;
first means for meshing said plurality of planks in an end to end relationship, whereby said plurality of planks form a closed geometric configuration;
second means for interlocking said plurality of planks arranged in end to end relationship;
third means affixed to said second means for providing an exercise adjunct to said device.
2. A training device as recited in claim 2, wherein each plank is rectangularly shaped.
3. A training device as recited in claim 2, wherein said first means for meshing includes a groove formed in each said first end of each plank.
4. A training device as recited in claim 3, wherein said first means for meshing includes aligned bores formed in each said first end of each plank.
5. A training device as recited in claim 4, wherein said first means for meshing includes a tongue formed on each said second end of each plank.
6. A training device as recited in claim 5, wherein said first means for meshing includes a bore hole formed in said tongue.
7. A training device as recited in claim 6, wherein said second means for interlocking comprises a pin, said pin having an upper end, whereby said pin is adapted to be inserted through the bore holes formed in said first end and the bore hole formed in said tongue.
8. A training device as recited in claim 7, including a loop disposed on said upper end of said pin.
9. A training device as recited in claim 8, wherein said third means for providing an exercise adjunct comprises an elastic band.
10. A training device as recited in claim 9, wherein said elastic band is attached to said loop.
11. A training device as recited in claim 10, wherein said planks are fabricated from molded plastic.
12. A training device as recited in claim 11, wherein said planks are fabricated in a variety of colors.
13. A training device as recited in claim 12, wherein said pin is fabricated from metal.
14. A training device as recited in claim 13, wherein each rectangularly shaped plank is approximately fifty-four inches long, twelve inches high and two and one half inches thick.

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