



US 20070259741A1

(19) **United States**(12) **Patent Application Publication****Lagergren et al.**(10) **Pub. No.: US 2007/0259741 A1**(43) **Pub. Date: Nov. 8, 2007**(54) **METHOD FOR A COURT BALL GAME**(52) **U.S. Cl. 473/415**(76) Inventors: **Ralph Lagergren, Alma, KS (US);
Gary Griffin, Azle, TX (US)**(57) **ABSTRACT**

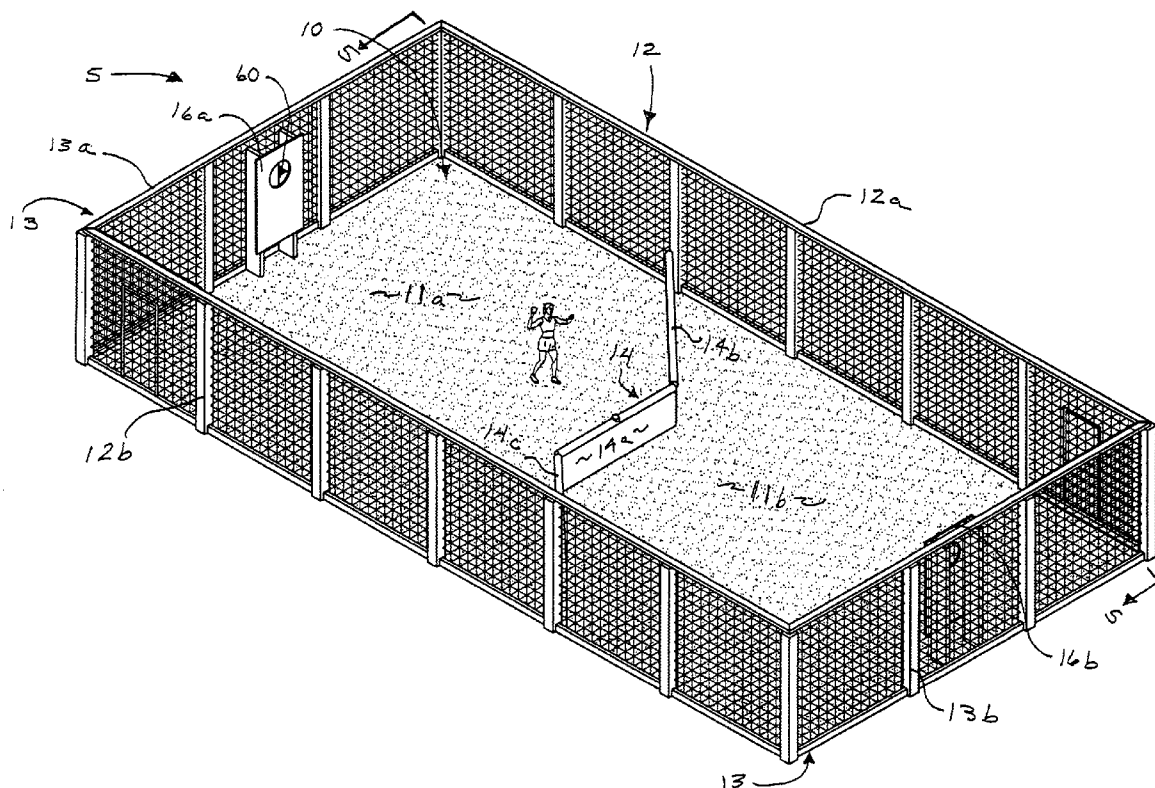
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KANSAS CITY, MO 64105 (US)**(21) Appl. No.: **11/827,504**(22) Filed: **Jul. 12, 2007****Related U.S. Application Data**

(62) Division of application No. 11/374,527, filed on Mar. 13, 2006.

Publication Classification(51) **Int. Cl.
A63B 67/00 (2006.01)**

A game court and method of play are provided which allow players to compete and score points by throwing a ball through their opponent's goal or throwing the ball and hitting their opponent. The game provides a court bound on all sides to facilitate retention of balls during game play and features an opaque dividing fence which splits the court into two halves each occupied by a different team. The fence is oriented such that each team has on its side of the fence an area of the court protruding past the midpoint of the court. The configuration and orientation of the dividing fence creates unique elements of strategy including the possibility that players from one team may attempt to score points from a position behind players of the opposing team.



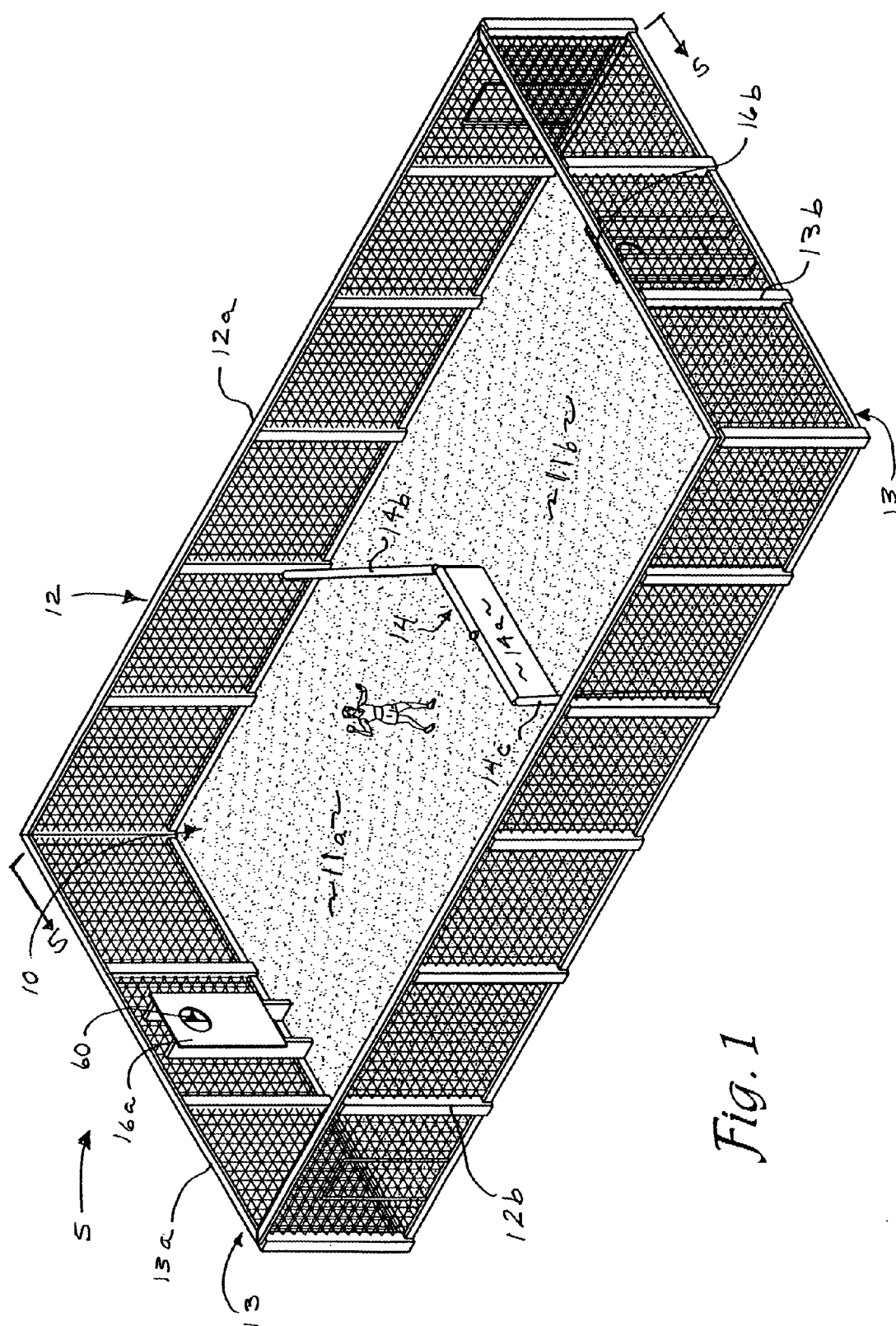


Fig. 1

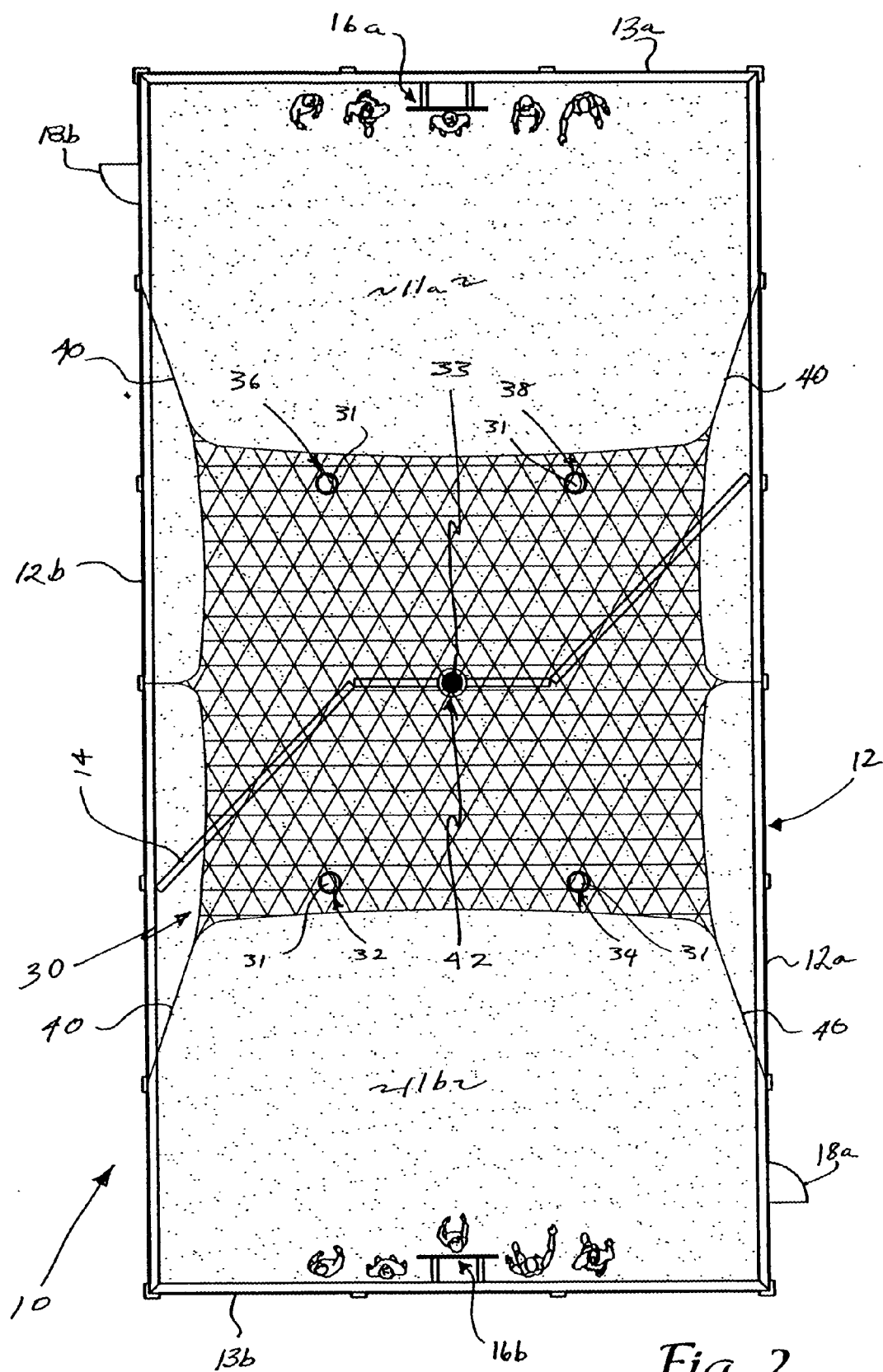


Fig. 2

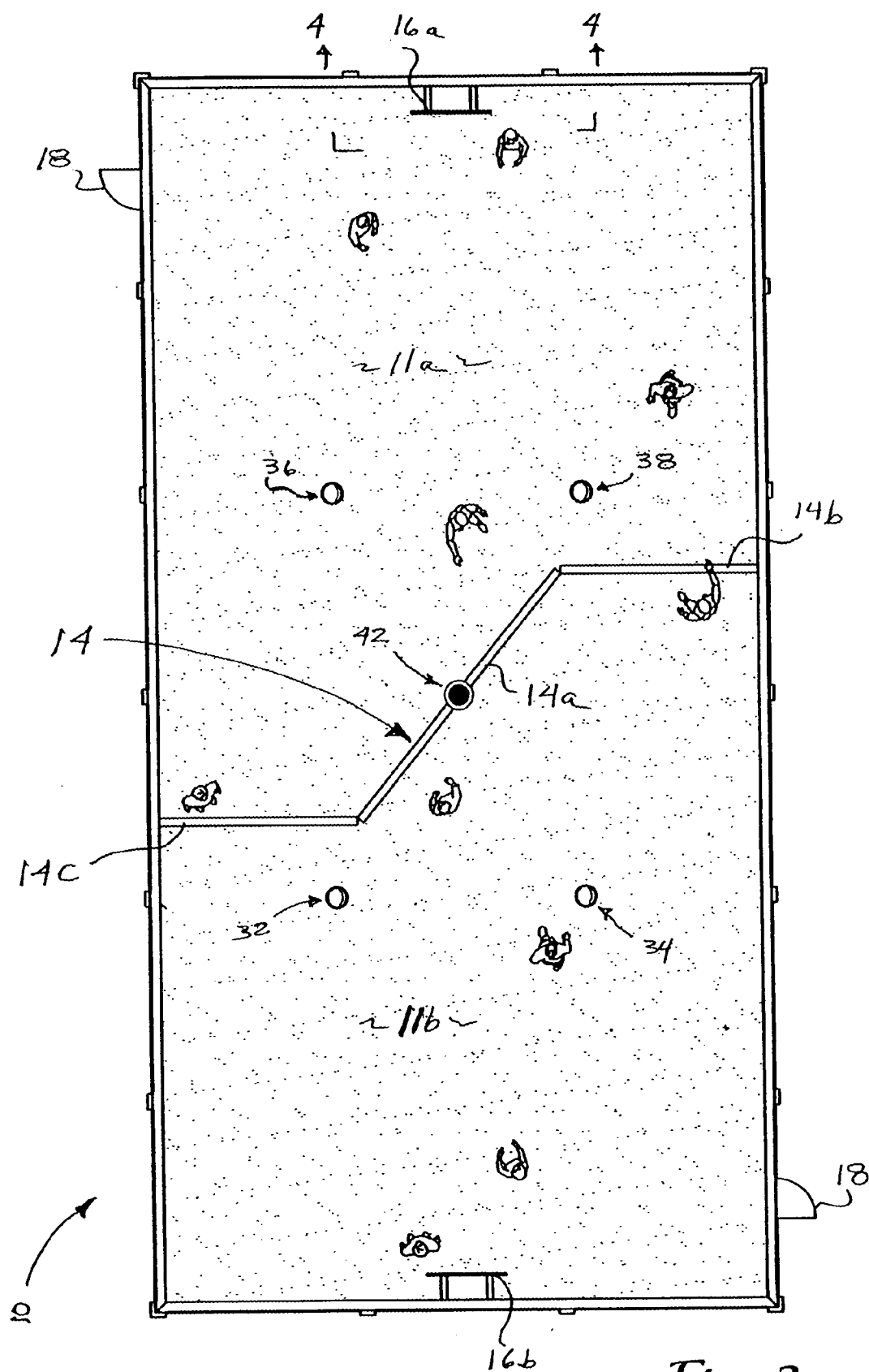


Fig. 3

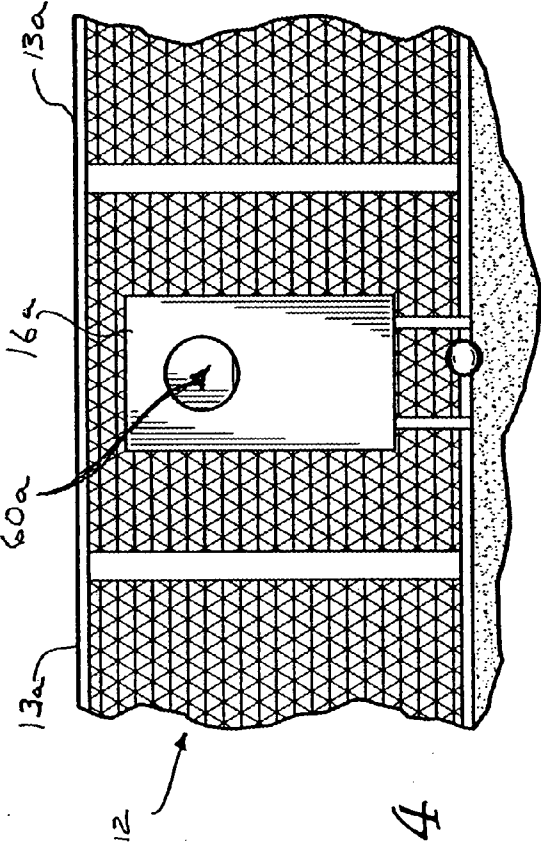


Fig. 4

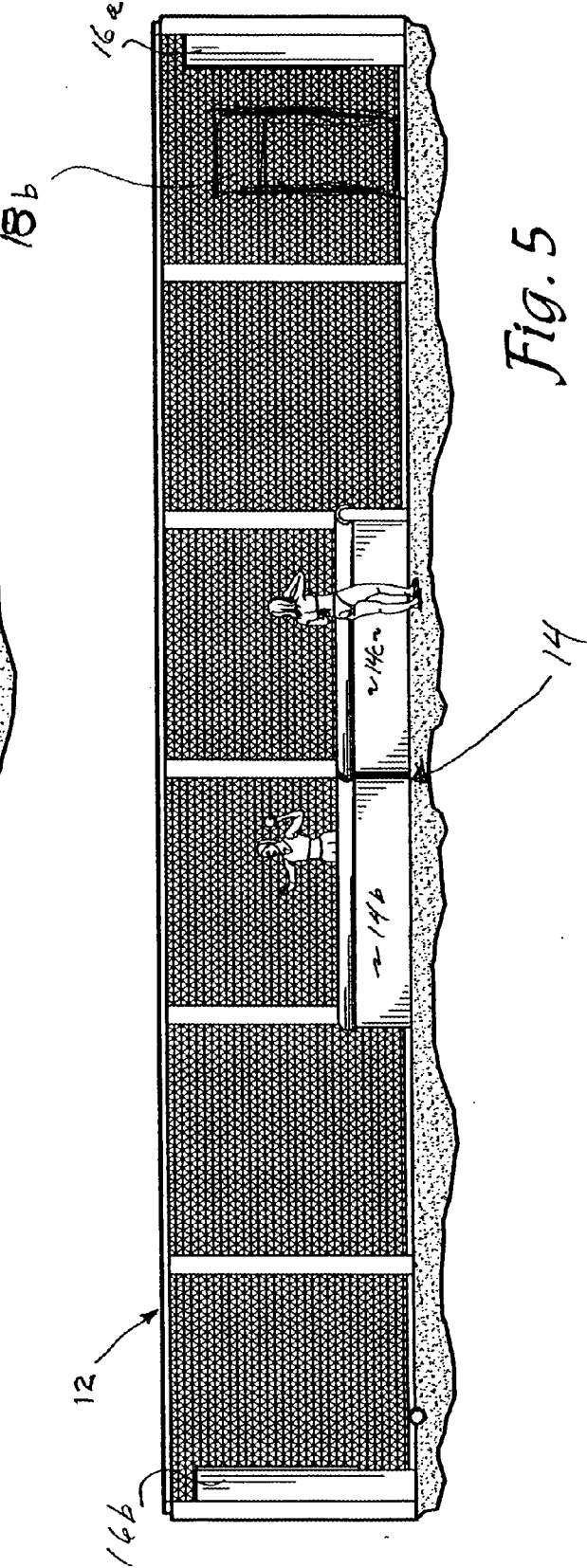


Fig. 5

METHOD FOR A COURT BALL GAME

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application is a division of application Ser. No. 11/374,527 filed Mar. 13, 2006 and which is incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates to games and sporting events. More particularly the invention relates to an apparatus and method for a competitive game in which points being scored for hitting other players with game balls and throwing game balls through goals positioned at opposite ends of the court.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Athletic contests have always been a popular source of entertainment and exercise, and many different types of games and activities are known in the prior art. Games and athletic contests have become an outlet for an increasingly health-conscious society to maintain physical fitness in an enjoyable and entertaining fashion. But very few games or activities manage to combine physical coordination and mental strategy in such a way as to appeal to both strategists and persons of all athletic skill ranges.

[0004] It is a common problem with many games that the athletic capabilities of one player or team can become such a dominate element of the game that any individual or team

[0005] the invention presents a new game which utilizes geometry and spacing to combine unique elements of individual and team strategy with physical ability to provide the broadest appeal to many ages and athletic abilities.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] In view of the foregoing disadvantages found in many games and activities and the public's insatiable appetite for new and challenging games, the present invention provides a new game which will appeal to people of all athletic skill levels and provide a means for exercise and entertainment.

[0007] The general purpose of the invention, which will be described in greater detail below, is to provide a new game apparatus and method of play. To attain this purpose, the invention comprises a playing field having a generally rectangular shape. As shown in FIG. 1, the game is equipped with a periphery defined by a vertical wall. The court is divided into two halves along the longitudinal by a fence typically between 30 and 48 inches in height. The fence bisects the court into separate, team-specific playing areas. The playing area for each team is geometrically identical and defined by a rear wall, two side walls, and the dividing fence.

[0008] While a number of different fence configurations are possible, the object of the invention is to provide a configuration of the dividing fence that will have a significant impact on game play. The dividing fence is a key part of the present invention as it allows for additional strategies and creates unique angles during game play. Under the configurations of the invention, the center point of the fence is at the geometric center of the court. The fence then

extends outward from the center to connect to the sides of the rectangular court as bound by the exterior fence. FIGS. 1 and 2 show alternate but not exclusive arrangements for the dividing fence. While the configuration of the fence may change, the fence always longitudinally bisects the court into two identical playing fields. Further it is desirable that the fence structure create a portion of the playing field for each team that extends beyond the mid-point of the court in the direction of the opponent's goal.

[0009] This general configuration of the fence described above is advantaged over a fence that is simply parallel to the ends of the court as the configuration of the invention greatly alters the strategic possibilities of the game by creating the possibility that players may be able to strike an opposing player with a ball (thus knocking them out of the game and scoring a point for their own team) from a position that is actually behind the opposing player.

[0010] To further enhance the strategic advantages created by the configuration of the fence, a preferred embodiment of the invention contains a fence made of an opaque material so that the players of one team cannot see the players of the opposing team that are hiding behind the fence.

[0011] Positioned at either end of the court is a vertical goal. Each goal has a circular opening larger than the size of the balls used to play the game. Points are scored by throwing the balls through the circular opening. To facilitate game play and constant action, the goals are equipped with a ball return system which in its simplest form consists of a hollow space behind the circular opening with an opening at the bottom so that the ball thrown through the circular opening will fall down through the interior of the goal and may be retrieved by a player through another opening at the bottom of the goal.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the game playing field according to the invention;

[0013] FIG. 2 is a plan view of the playing field of the invention with optional cover net and showing the game in its starting position and showing a first configuration of the fence;

[0014] FIG. 3 is a plan view of the playing field of the invention without optional cover net and showing a second configuration of the fence;

[0015] FIG. 4 is an elevation view taken along line 4-4 of FIG. 3 showing the goal on the back wall of the court; and

[0016] FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 5-5 of FIG. 1 showing the playing field of the invention and showing the positioning of players of opposing teams residing on their teams end of the court, but being positioned in back of the player on the opposing team

DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0017] With reference now to the drawings, and in particular, to FIGS. 1 through 5 thereof, a new game involving the principles and concepts of the present invention will be described.

[0018] The vertical walls forming the border of the court being of such material to prevent the balls from leaving the

playing field during game play. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the walls are made of a mesh netting thereby allowing spectators to watch the game from ground level and still perform its function of retaining balls within the playing field during game play.

[0019] In the preferred embodiment, the point of entry/exit for each team is located along the side wall near the rear of the team's playing area. The entry/exit points are located on opposite walls so that teams enter their respective playing fields from opposite sides. Additionally, the access points are located near the back wall to facilitate certain aspects of game play.

[0020] FIG. 1 shows an embodiment of the invention 5 including rectangular playing field 10 bound by peripheral wall 12. In a preferred embodiment, the game method of the invention is played using the longer walls of the rectangular court or playing field 10 as the sides and the shorter walls as ends of the field 10. The dimensions of playing field 10 in a preferred embodiment include end walls of thirty (30) feet in length and side walls of sixty (60) feet in length. Peripheral wall 12 is intended to be of sufficient height to retain balls within playing field 10 during game play. In a preferred embodiment, peripheral wall 12 is generally about nine (9) feet six (6) inches high, but any height sufficient to keep the balls on the playing field 10 on most occasions is acceptable. Preferably, the side wall or peripheral wall 12 consists of a mesh netting to allow spectators to see from outside the court.

[0021] Court 10 is subdivided by fence 14 into two team-specific playing areas 11a, 11b. In a preferred embodiment of invention 5 a fence 14 is divided into three sections. In one embodiment fence 14 comprises a middle fence section 14a of about ten (10) feet in length. Fence center section 14a is oriented generally perpendicularly to the longitudinal sides 12 of the court and centered at the horizontal and vertical center of the court. Fence 14 further comprises first and second end fence sections 14b, 14c that complete the fence structure by connecting to either end of the fence center section 14a and attaching to opposed side walls 12 approximately twenty (20) feet from the end wall 13. More particularly, a first end of first fence end section 14b connects to a first end of fence center section 14a and a second end of first fence end section 14b attaches to a first side wall 12 approximately twenty (20) feet from a first end wall 13a. A first end of second fence end section 14c connects to a second end of fence center section 14a and a second end of second fence end section 14c attaches to a second side wall 12 approximately twenty (20) feet from second end wall 13b. The opposed and oppositely angled connections of first and second fence end sections 14b, 14c to first and second side walls 12a, 12b and which are spaced approximately twenty (20) feet from opposed end walls 13a, 13b provide an incursion space for each team that operates to place team members deep within the court half assigned to the opposing team and to position team members in the incursion space rearward of members of the opposing team that are in their own team's incursion space. Reference to FIG. 5 presents this incursion effect of the inventive game court configuration resulting from the fence configuration.

[0022] Referring now to FIG. 4, court 10 is further defined by goals 16a, 16b located at the center of each end wall 13. The goals 16 have an aperture 60a, 60b which in the

preferred embodiment is about nineteen (19) inches in diameter and the aperture is about seven (7) feet above the ground.

[0023] Referring now to FIG. 2, exit/entry points 18a, 18b are provided for each team so that team members eliminated from play during the course of play may exit the court and re-enter play when allowed by the game method rules. The entry/exit points 18 are located along opposite side walls 12a, 12b near opposite end walls 13a, 13b to facilitate aspects of game play including quick exit and entry without interference from the opposing team.

[0024] FIG. 2 shows a plan view of the court 10 bisected by fence 14 into playing areas 11a, 11b and bound by exterior fence 12 and entry/exit ports 18 and opposed goals 16a, 16b. A cover net 30 suspended above the court 10 as shown. The cover net 30 is suspended by cables 40 above the playing surface 10. In one embodiment, the cover net 30 can be added to create additional elements of game play associated with throwing balls onto or over the cover net 30 and hoping that those balls drop onto or strike an opponent thus eliminating that opponent from play in the game and scoring points for the team opposed to the eliminated player's team. Still referring to FIG. 2 the initial setup of a preferred embodiment of the game is shown. The players are aligned along the end wall or back wall 13a, 13b of exterior fence 12 and four (4) similarly colored game balls 31 are placed in their respective starting spots 32, 34, 36 and 38 with an oddly colored ball 33 is placed in its starting position 42 atop the center of the fence 14.

[0025] FIG. 3 shows another plan view of the playing court 10 bound by the outer wall 12 and divided by the fence 14 into playing areas 11a, 11b. The dividing fence 14 is shown in an alternate embodiment with the center section of the fence being generally diagonal to outer walls 12a, 12b with the first and second ends 14b, 14c of fence 14 being generally parallel to the ends. This alternate embodiment of the fence 14 shows that the configuration of the fence changes the geometry spacing affecting the strategy of the game.

[0026] Referring to FIG. 4, a close up of a goal 16a having circular aperture 60a therein is shown. During game play, participants attempt to score points by throwing game balls through the circular aperture 60a. While the embodiment of FIG. 4 shows a protruding goal, the goal may either protrude from, or be flush with, the end wall 13a.

[0027] FIG. 5 shows an elevation view of the court 10 with a portion of the peripheral wall 12, first and second ends 14b, 14c or fence 14 and the goals 16a, 16b. The additional strategic elements of the game added by virtue of the angled dividing fence 14 are easily realized in this figure. In particular, as shown in FIG. 5, the unique configurations of the dividing fence 14 allow players from each opposed team to be positioned behind, or nearer the opposing team's goal than are players from the opposing team. In this fashion, players, while remaining on their team's portion of the playing court, can actually be in back of opposing players and can throw a ball from behind the opposing player to thereby strike the opposing team player and eliminate that player from play. This feature, combined with the overhead net feature, results in players being susceptible to being struck by a ball from the front, from the rear and from above.

Therefore, at least two additional dimensions of play are added to the inventive game than are offered by the conventional dodge ball game.

[0028] The method of play associated with the present invention **10** will now be set forth. Two teams of five players each are designated to be opposed to one another. A referee is designated to monitor play and keep score. Each game is played to ten points, and a match is two out of three games. Referring to FIG. 1, each opposed team is assigned to populate one of the two court halves **11a**, **11b**.

[0029] The game is played using four balls of similar color and one ball of a different color. The game begins with the four similarly colored balls **31** placed at their beginning positions **32**, **34**, **36**, **38**, and the differently colored ball resting in its position in the middle of the fence **14** at position **42** as shown in FIG. 2. Players begin each game in a position to touch the back wall **13a**, **13b** of their respective playing fields **11a**, **11b** to await the official's whistle to signal the beginning of play.

[0030] Play begins when the official blows his whistle. Players then may move from their starting positions touching the back wall **13a**, **13b** and begin play. Because the single differently colored ball **33** has added value at the beginning of the game, it is likely that players from opposing teams will race to obtain possession of the colored ball **33** immediately upon hearing the starting whistle. The first team to obtain possession of the colored ball **33** has one opportunity to throw the differently colored ball **33** through the opposing goal to thereby receive four points for that first goal with the colored ball **33**. After this first scoring attempt, all points scored with the differently colored ball **33** have the same point value as the like-colored other balls in the game, one point. In addition to having the opportunity for a four-point goal, initial possession of the differently colored ball is worth one point.

[0031] Game play progresses by players of opposing teams collecting and throwing balls at both their opponent and their opponent's goal. Players struck by a ball thrown by an opposing player are eliminated from play unless they catch the ball before it hits the ground. Once all players of a single team are eliminated from play, the entire team returns, the game continues until one team scores ten points.

[0032] During game, play points are scored in the following ways: a team can score each time they throw a ball through the opening **60** in goal **16** that is situated in the playing court **11a**, **11b** that is opposite their own playing area **11a**, **11b**. With the exception of the first throw of the differently colored ball **33**, each time a team successfully throws a ball **31**, **33** from their playing area into the opening **60** of circular goal **16a**, **16b** in the opponent's playing area, they will receive two points. If a team successfully throws the differently colored ball **33** through the opponent's goal on the first throw of the game for colored ball **33**, that goal with colored ball **33** is worth four points rather than two points. The four-point play only is available on the first possession of colored ball **33** in the game. All subsequent goals scored by the differently colored ball **33** are worth the standard two points.

[0033] Points may be scored by throwing any of the balls **31**, **33** and striking a member of the opposing team without the ball being caught. Teams score one point each

time a team member throws a ball that strikes a member of the opposing team without being caught by any member of the opposing team. Players hit by a ball that is not caught are eliminated from play and must leave the playing area until all five members of their team are eliminated from play, at which time all the team players return to play.

[0034] To score a point, the ball thrown must strike the opponent prior to striking the ground, fence, wall or goal. In an alternate embodiment of the invention which uses the cover net shown in FIG. 2, a ball may, however, be thrown against the underside of the cover net **30** or over the cover net **30** and score one point if the ball strikes a player on the opposing team before the ball hits the ground.

[0035] To prevent being hit, players may use a ball as a shield to block thrown balls. If the ball hits the fingers on the shield ball, that person is not eliminated from play or out of the game. If a ball being used for a shield is knocked out of a player's hands by a thrown ball, that person is eliminated from play and one point is scored for the opposing team. In other words, it counts as a hit against the opposing player. If opposing players throw balls simultaneously, and both are hit, they are both eliminated from play, and each team receives a point.

[0036] Teams may also score points by catching balls thrown by the opposing team. Catching a ball thrown by an opposing player eliminates from play the player that threw the ball and scores one point for the team that caught the ball. If a ball bounces in the air after striking a player, no point is scored for catching the ball unless the person that was originally struck by the ball catches the deflected ball. If a ball bounces in the air after striking a player, and a member of that player's team catches the ball, no point is scored the player that was struck is not out and the opponent that threw the ball is not out.

[0037] As mentioned above, if the optional cover net **30** is used, a ball may be thrown scoring one point for the throwing team if the ball hits a person after it rolls off the top of the cover net or deflects off the bottom of the cover net. However, if the participant catches the ball after it hits or rolls off of the cover net, no points are scored and the thrower is not out of the game.

[0038] Several special rules relate to play with the differently colored ball **33**. The differently colored ball is placed on the center of the fence **14** at the beginning of the game. When the game begins, the first team to capture the odd colored ball **33** scores a point. If the ball is thrown through the goal **16** at the end opposite the team's playing area with the first throw, four points are scored for the team that first captured ball **33** and scored the goal. The person that captures the odd colored ball **33** can try to score with the ball or they may pass the ball **33** one time to another player. If the first throw with ball **33** is missed or if ball **33** is passed more than once, the four point opportunity is lost.

[0039] If a player on the opposing team catches the odd colored ball on the first throw, they receive one point, the thrower is out, and the opportunity to score four points with ball **33** passes to the other team as if it had gained initial possession of the odd colored ball **33**.

[0040] In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the game has several rules that govern and facilitate game play in addition to those regarding scoring. Players may reach

over the dividing fence to get balls as long as they keep one foot on the ground. No holding of players is allowed with the exception of two people struggling over the odd colored ball at the beginning of the game. If a player is pulled over the fence while struggling for initial possession of the odd colored ball, two points are scored, and that player that was pulled over the fence is eliminated from play. During the game, balls may be handed or passed to teammates at any time except for the restrictions on the odd colored ball 33 at the beginning of the game. If a ball leaves the playing area, players that have been eliminated from the game may get the ball and throw it back in to their teammates, or designated crowd members may throw the balls back into the court at the same place the balls left the court. Balls thrown back into the arena do not score points, and if they strike a player, do not eliminate the player from play. If all members of a team are knocked out during game play, the last person to be hit remains in the game and must touch the back wall, and when he does so, the rest of the team must reenter within ten seconds or a point is scored for the opposing team.

[0041] As stated above, referees are provided to begin the game, to keep score, and to monitor all aspects of game play. Referees can stop the game at any time with a whistle and may restart the game with a whistle. If the game slows down when there are fewer players in the cage, the referee can blow a whistle and yell five seconds. All players must find and throw a ball within five seconds or they are out and other team scores a point.

[0042] With respect to the above description, it is to be realized that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the invention to include variations in size, materials, shape, form, function and manner of operation, assembly of use are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one skilled in the art. In all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and described in the specification are intended to be encompassed by the present invention.

[0043] Therefore, the foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention

to the exact construction and operation shown and described. Accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to falling within the scope of the invention.

[0044] Having thus described the invention, what is claimed as new and desired to be secured by Letters Patent is as follows:

1. A method of playing a game comprising the steps of:

providing a court playing area of a generally rectangular shape having opposed sides and opposed ends with a court periphery defined by a vertical wall said vertical wall encompassing said court periphery providing first and second goals said first goal being positioned at a first of said opposed ends and a second goal being positioned at a second of said opposed ends each goal having at least one aperture said aperture sized for receiving a ball therethrough;

providing a fence to divide said court into first and second generally equal playing areas, said fence configured to define a portion of each of said first and second playing areas that extends past a court midpoint to project into the other playing area;

designating two teams having at least one player on each team at the beginning of the game;

providing game balls of sufficient size to pass through the apertures in said goal; and throwing said balls to score points by passing said balls through said apertures in said goals or by throwing balls and striking opponents with said balls.

7. The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said vertical wall is of a sufficient height as to generally prevent balls from exiting the court during game play.

8. The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said fence is opaque.

9. The method as claimed in claim 1 wherein said fence extends to a height of about 2 feet to about 5 feet above the court.

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