Sept. 13, 1949. E. L. WHITEHALL 2,482,083

GAME BOARD

Filed Feb. 14, 1948

Fig. 1.

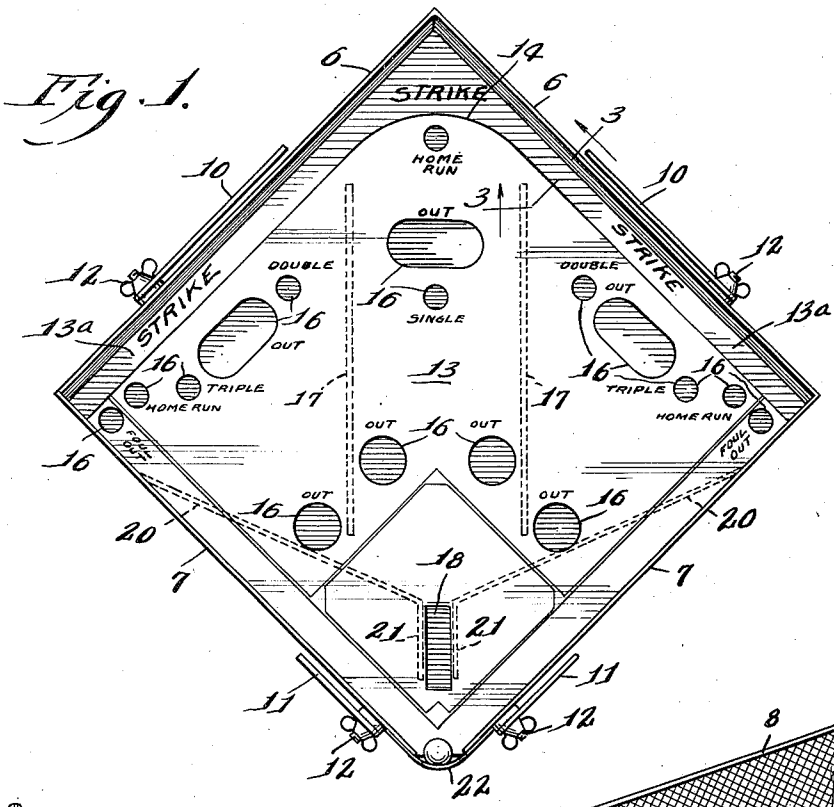



Fig. 2.

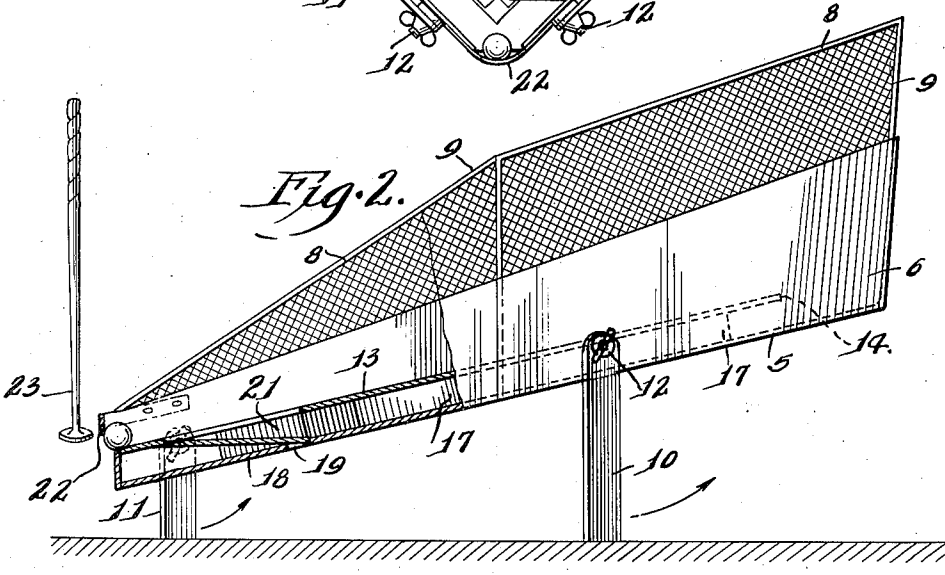
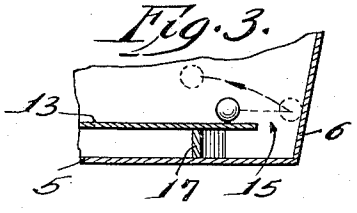


Fig. 3.



Inventor.
Earle L. Whitehall.
By. O. K. Lundy
Attorney.

Patented Sept. 13, 1949

2,482,083

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,482,083

## GAME BOARD

Earle L. Whitehall, Kankakee, Ill.

Application February 14, 1948, Serial No. 8,430

3 Claims. (Cl. 273—90)

1

The present invention relates to a portable game board which embodies a structure for facilitating playing a ball game on a miniature field, and preferably embodies novel improvements of the arrangement shown in my prior patent, No. 2,053,754, granted September 8, 1936, for "Game board or toy."

In my prior patent the structure was such that the player, after starting the game, was required to tilt the board held in the hands to different angles, whereby he could direct the ball or token past hazards or penalty areas towards any of a plurality of goals. The present arrangement provides a game board in the form of a ramp-like field which is maintained at a predetermined tilted angle during the entire game. Also, instead of permitting gravity to move the ball over the playing field, the present arrangement contemplates that the player give impetus to the ball with the hand or manually held rod or club by striking the ball or a yieldable or spring-like member against which the ball initially rests, so that the ball may be driven in a variety of directions, dependent upon the position and manner of placing the impact. By comparison, it will be apparent that there are numerous structural details which clearly distinguish the present assembly from that disclosed in the prior patent. Furthermore, the present board is of a character which permits placing the board on a lawn, terrace or the like so that the game, if desired, may be played in the open air.

A feature of the present game board resides in the novel arrangement of at least a portion of the limiting walls, which are inclined outward in planes at oblique angles to the plane of the playing field. This field, at two sides of the outfield, is spaced inwardly from the walls to provide a channel of angular contour surrounding the outfield into which the ball may roll to penalize the player. The inclination of these outfield walls away from the perpendicular is such that if they are contacted by the ball with sufficient force said ball will have a tendency to rebound from said walls and travel in a trajectory or upward arc which will span the channel and return the ball to the field area where it will roll downward toward one of the pockets in the playing field. In executing a play of this character, the ball should be struck by the player with more force than is required merely to roll the ball on the playing field.

The present game board assembly may be readily produced from pieces of thin, sturdy material such as thin gauge metal, plyboard and the

2

like, so that the structure is light in weight and may be easily carried from place-to-place, or stored in a restricted space. It is also an object of the present invention to simplify the construction of game boards such as contemplated herein, and to improve the efficiency and operation of such game boards.

Numerous other objects, aims and advantages of the invention contemplated herein will be apparent to persons skilled in the art, after the construction and arrangement of the game board is understood from the within description. It is preferred to accomplish the objects of the invention, and to practice the same in substantially the manner hereinafter fully described, and as more particularly pointed out in the appended claims. Reference is now made to the accompanying drawings, forming a part of the specification.

In the drawings:

Fig. 1 is a top plan, drawn to small scale showing a game board made in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a side elevation of the structure shown in Fig. 1 in partly broken away section at the left to disclose the interior construction; and

Fig. 3 is a fragmentary section taken along the plane of line 3—3 on Fig. 1 looking in the direction of the arrows.

The drawings are to be understood as being more or less of a diagrammatic character for the purpose of disclosing a typical or preferred form of the improvements contemplated herein, and in these drawings like reference characters identify the same parts in the different views.

Referring first to Fig. 1, it will be seen that the game board simulates a regulation baseball park with small infield or diamond, and a larger outfield. This lay-out however is not essential, as it is contemplated the arrangement may simulate a football grid-iron, or golf course, tennis court or other outdoors playing grounds.

The arrangement shown preferably comprises a generally polygonal base 5, preferably rectangular or square, having upstanding walls 6, 6, and 7, 7, along its margins, and it will be seen that these walls vary in height from the outer bounds of centerfield towards the rear of home plate. In other words, these four walls, as shown in Fig. 2, taper towards the position where the play starts. A back-stop, preferably woven netting or other fabric 8, is supported on corner posts 9, and extends above walls 6 and 7 for the purpose of retrieving a ball which may escape the tops of said walls. Collapsible or foldable legs 10, 10, and 11, 11, are adapted to support the game board in

an inclined plane to a supporting surface, by reason of the fact that legs 11 are considerably shorter than legs 10. Thus it will be apparent that the lowest corner of the board at home-plate is only slightly above the supporting surface for facilitating the starting of each player, whilst the centerfield corner is high above such surface. Wing nut and bolt assemblies 12 secure the legs to the outer sides of the walls 6 and 7 so that when the board is not in use the wing nuts may be loosened and the legs swung up flat against the side as will be understood.

The playing floor 13 has a generally polygonal contour and is shorter than the base on two of its sides 13a, and the corner of the floor at its high end is formed with an arcuate curve 14 joining the adjacent side edges. Thus it will be apparent that a channel or gutter 15 extends along both margins of the outfield, the function of which will later be explained. As shown in Fig. 1, the floor 13 has therein a plurality of apertures, pockets or the like, all identified by numeral 16, said apertures having different dimensions and being designated for penalties and scores. The floor 13 is spaced above the base member 5 in a manner to permit the ball to fall through any of the apretures 16 or into channel 15, and upon reaching the base member, said ball will roll downward towards the low corner of the game board nearest the player. Suitable upstanding strips 17 are interposed between and are properly secured to the base member and the floor member for spacing these members as well as for securing the floor member to said base. These strips 17 are shown in parallel relation to each other, but it is understood such arrangement is optional.

For the purpose of readily returning the ball from the base member back to the playing field, there is a ramp-like arrangement such as shown in section in Fig. 2. In order to effect this retrieving arrangement an elongated U-shaped cut is made in the floor member 13 to provide a tongue 18 extending from the pitcher position to approximately home plate. This tongue is bent downward at its free end, which end is then inserted into and secured to a seat or slot 19 in the adjacent region of base member 5. For the purpose of guiding the ball to this return ramp, inwardly converging supporting strips 20 are interposed between and secured to the base and floor member 5 and 13 respectively in the same manner as spacer strips 17, and as shown in Fig. 1, inner end regions 21 of these converging strips 20 extend parallel to each other so that they lie along the sides of the ramp where they prevent the ball leaving the ramp when returning to the playing field.

At the lowest corner of the game board the ends of the side walls 7 may be separated to provide a gap which is spanned or bridged by a yieldable or spring-like member 22 having its end portions overlapping and secured to the end regions of the walls 7. This yieldable member 22 may be a strip of metal, rubber, or other suitable material which has sufficient flexibility to yield under impact when it is struck with a club, mallet or other implement 23 held by the player.

In starting a play or game the player positions the ball at the low corner of the board so that it rests against yieldable member 22, and, holding club 23 in the hand or hands, strikes the member 22 with the head of the club. The impact thus imparted to the ball drives it across the playing floor so that it may by-pass some of the apertures or pockets 16 and finally fall into a score or penalty aperture, or pass over the playing floor 13 into channel 15 along the sides of the outfield. However, should the ball escape the apertures 16 or channel 15 and travel at sufficient speed to pass over channel 15 it will impinge against either of the oblique walls 6 and rebound therefrom in a trajectory which will tend to return the ball to the playing floor where it will roll backward thereon. When the ball gravitates to the base member it will be guided by converging strips 20 to the ramp 18 and thence to the surface of the playing field and come to rest against yieldable member 22 where it will be ready for the next stroke by the player. The mid portion of the yieldable member 22 where it spans the gap in the side walls is arranged so that its lower margin is above the central or equatorial region of the ball so that part of the ball surface protrudes below the edge of said yieldable member. This is a feature of the present assembly in that the player may hit the ball by direct contact therewith whereby a properly directed impact will effect a fly hit which causes the ball to soar upwardly above the playing field. A fly hit of sufficient height may drive the ball over the outfield walls and nets for scoring a home-run for the player.



It will be understood that when simulating a baseball game the player continues his plays until he has struck out and has scored one or more runs. When the game board simulates a golf game the apertures 16 and channel 15 may be designated greens, hazards, out of bounds and the like and the players may alternate the strokes. It is not intended to be limited to the use of a ball or sphere for playing the game, as a thick disc or the like may be substituted therefor. The use of the words "token" or "ball" herein is merely for the purpose of defining an object which will move on the board when given impetus by the hand of the player or by a club held by the player.

While the invention has been described in detail in its preferred form or embodiment, it will be apparent to persons skilled in the art, after understanding the improvements, that various changes and modifications may be made therein without departing from the spirit or scope thereof. It is aimed in the appended claims to cover all such changes and modifications.

What is claimed is:

1. A game board structure for use with a movable token, comprising a base member of polygonal contour; means adapted to maintain said base member in an inclined plane extending upward from a corner of said base member; upstanding limiting walls along the sides of said base member; a playing floor of polygonal contour spaced above said base member and being arranged in a plane below the upper edges of said limiting walls; said floor having therein a plurality of well-defined penalty and scoring apertures through which the token may pass; unitary yieldable means spanning a recess at the lowermost corner of the wall structure and against which a playing token is adapted to rest when a play is initiated, said means being effective when it receives an impact delivered by a player to direct the token across the surface of the playing floor; and means between said base member and playing floor for gravitationally returning the token to the yieldable means.

2. A game board structure for use with a ball, comprising a generally rectangular base member; means supporting said base member on one

corner in an inclined plane extending upward; an apertured playing floor generally parallel with said base member and spaced upwardly therefrom; perpendicular bounding side walls along the margins of said base member and extending above the plane of said playing floor for retaining the ball on the floor; a penalty zone of angular contour at the upper region of the structure and extending below said playing floor, said zone defined by an open channel between the two upper bounding walls and the adjacent upper side edges of said playing floor; adjacent side walls at the opposite lower corner region of said playing floor being spaced from each other to provide a wide gap for positioning the ball at the initiation of a play; a yieldable spring metal strip extending across said gap and against which the ball initially rests, said strip being effective in response to an impact delivered to it by the player to impel the ball upwardly on said playing floor; and means between said base member and said floor for gravitationally returning the ball to said spring spanning strip.

3. A game board structure as defined in claim 2 wherein the apertures in the playing floor have a variety of shapes and dimensions denoting



particular scores and penalties; and the upper side walls which define the outer limits of the channel incline outward oblique to the plane of the floor, the inclination of said walls being at an angle such that the ball moving at sufficient speed to cross the channel will ricochet in an upward trajectory and return to the playing floor to roll downwardly thereon for continuing the play.

EARLE L. WHITEHALL.


## REFERENCES CITED

The following references are of record in the file of this patent:

UNITED STATES PATENTS

| Number | Name | Date |
|---|---|---|
| 870,041 | Lundberg | Nov. 5, 1907 |
| 1,086,279 | Cullmer | Feb. 3, 1914 |
| 1,346,782 | Gehring | July 13, 1920 |
| 1,939,819 | Isaza | Dec. 19, 1933 |
| 2,240,871 | Stark | May 6, 1941 |
| 2,246,115 | Volz | June 17, 1941 |
| 2,237,351 | Johnson | Apr. 8, 1941 |
| 2,362,188 | Clark | Nov. 7, 1944 |