March 15, 1927. 1,620,742

L. B. SPAFFORD

GAME

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Fig. 1.

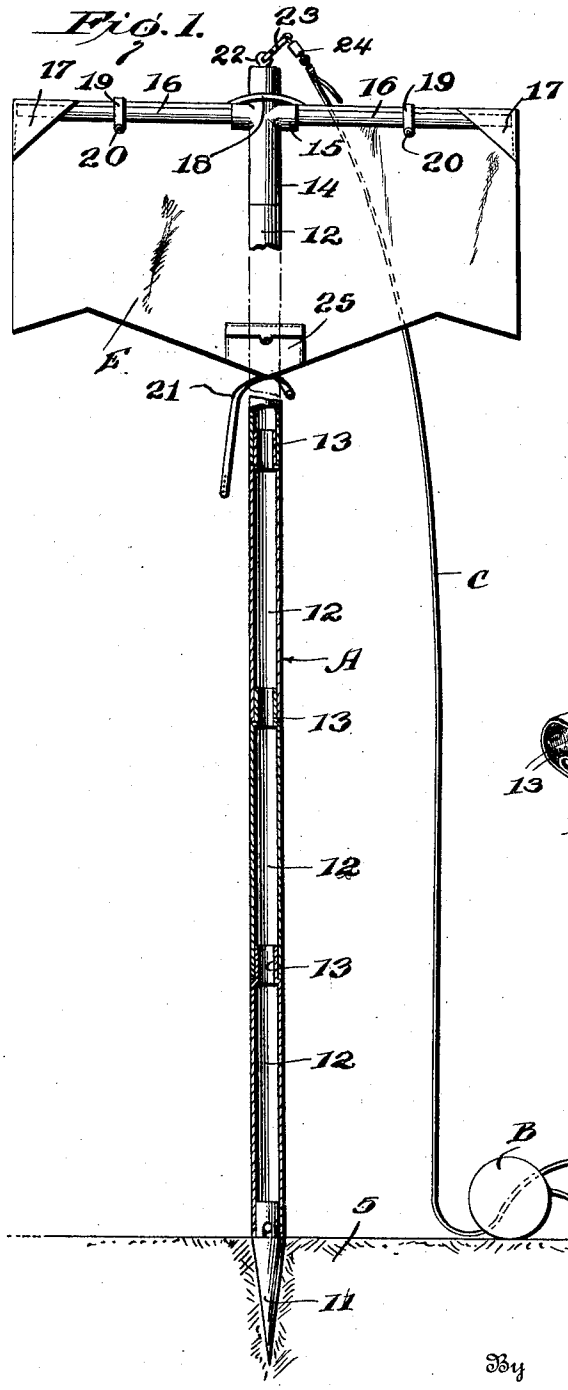


Fig. 2.

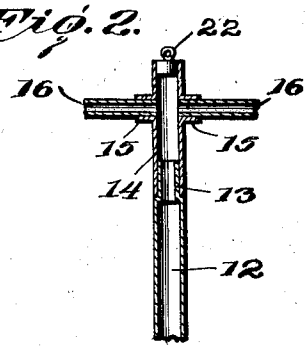


Fig. 3.



Fig. 5.

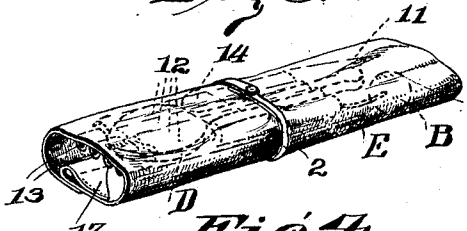
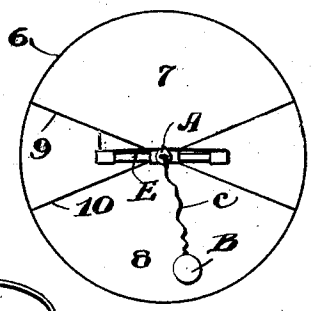


Fig. 4.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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GAME.

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This invention relates to new and useful improvements in games of the type preferably to be played out of doors, and consists in the matters hereinafter described and claimed.

In the accompanying drawings—

Fig. 1 is a view showing the apparatus of my improved game set up for use, the upright or pole being partly in section for the purpose of illustration;

Fig. 2 is a vertical section through the upper part of the upright and the associated portions of the banner supporting cross-member;

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of one of the bats used in playing the game;

Fig. 4 is a top plan view of the playing court in which the apparatus is set up; and

Fig. 5 is a view showing the apparatus packed in the banner for carrying and storage.

As shown in the drawings, my improved game apparatus comprises, generally, an upright or pole A, an inflated or resilient ball B, an elastic cord or equivalent element C connecting the ball with the upper end of the pole, one or more bats D with which to strike the ball, and a vertically disposed banner or partition E at the upper end of the pole and extending across the same on opposite sides thereof.

The pole A is set up in the ground 5 in the center of a playing field of a sufficient size, preferably twenty-five feet in diameter and marked off to that extent on the ground about the pole as a center by a circular outline 6, as shown in Fig. 4. This field is divided into two equal playing courts 7, 8 on opposite sides of the banner E by any suitable arrangement of lines marked off on the ground and passing through the lower end of the pole. In Fig. 4, I have shown the field marked off by radial lines 9, 10 passing through the pole and arranged at such angles to each other as to make each court somewhat less than half of the field; the spaces of the field between the lines constituting "out of bounds" ones.

The lower end portion 11 of the pole A is pointed so that it may be readily driven into the ground to anchor the pole in its upright playing position. The pole is preferably made of metal, steel tubing being preferred so that it will be light in weight for carrying, yet strong and somewhat resilient so as to yield under the outward pulls of the cord C thereon during the playing of the game.

For dismantling and adjusting purposes, the pole is preferably made in relatively short sections 12, 12 fitted end to end, as shown. Any suitable form of fastening may be used betwen the sections to detachably connect them together, an interfitting form of connection being shown in the drawings. In this form, each section has a reduced upper end 13 to enter the unreduced lower end of the section next above for connecting and supporting purposes. The pointed member 11 at the lower end of the pole has a reduced upper end also to enter the lower end of the section 12 thereabove; there being a pin through the interfitting parts to hold the pole from turning on this base member 11 when the the pole is set up for use, and thus maintain the banner E in a fixed playing position, properly dividing the two courts 7 and 8.

The top section 14 of the pole A is made somewhat shorter than the others and has its lower end slipped over the reduced upper end of the section 12 immediately therebelow, as shown in Fig. 2. This top section 14 has laterally extending nipples 15, 15 on opposite sides thereof to receive the inner ends of horizontally disposed arms 16, 16 of the same length. This top section 14 and its arms 16 constitute a cross-member supporting the upper edge of the banner. The latter is flexible, being preferably made of fabric, such as canvas, and has pockets 17, 17 at its two upper corners to receive the outer ends of said arms.

The banner E is also provided at its upper edge with a centrally disposed loop 18 and two straps 19, 19 on opposite sides of the loop. The latter is slipped over the top portion of the upper section 14 where it projects above the arms 16, 16, while the straps are engaged about said arms and have their free ends detachably secured to the banner just below the arms by suitable snap fastenings 20, 20, as shown. Secured to the lower edge of the banner at its mid-portion is a strap 21 to be fastened about the pole to keep the banner from curling or rising upward out of its playing position either when struck by the cord C or when blown by the wind.

The elastic cord C is normally longer than the length or height of the pole A above the ground, so that the ball B may strike the

ground and bounce to be struck by a player. The top section 14 has an eye 22 at its upper end. To this eye the upper end of the cord C is attached by a snap hook 23, there being a swivel 24 between the cord and the eye so that the cord may freely turn with the twisting of the ball.

In playing the game, one player takes a position in one court 7, while the other player stands in the other court 8. Each player is provided with a bat D, and the first player strikes the ball B with his bat in a manner to drive the ball into the air and toward the opposite court with the cord C passing over the top of the banner E. The cord being elastic will stretch under the outward pull of the ball thereon and will allow the latter to go some distance beyond the pole yet remain connected therewith so as to return on the contracting of the cord. The ball will return rapidly toward the second player and when within reach will be struck by him and driven back over the banner E toward the first player in the opposite court. This play is continued until a player either misses or fails to hit the ball at the proper time or fails to drive the ball and cord over the top of the banner. On the happening of any of these things, the player in default loses his turn to strike or serve the ball and a point is scored against him in favor of the other player.

The proper time to hit the ball is either while the ball is still in the air or after the first bounce only. Hitting the ball at any other time scores a point in favor of the other player. If the ball, either on a serve or on a return, strikes in the narrow "out of bounds" spaces in the angles between the court lines 9, 10, before hitting any other part of the court, no score is counted against either player, the serving stroke merely passing to the other player. Ten points constitute a game, and more than two may play the game if desired, either counting individual scores or arranging themselves in opposing teams or sides.

The height of the pole A may be varied by adding or removing sections 12. The length of the cord C may also be varied to suit the adjustments given the pole by uniting the cord at the swivel 24 and lengthening or shortening the cord as may be required. The higher the pole, the more difficult the game, because it is harder to carry the cord over the banner. The pole is also set high when a large number play the game or when there are exceedingly tall players. For children the pole is set low and the length of the cord shortened proportionately. When set low, one player can play both sides at one time.

When not in use, the sections 12 of the pole may be disconnected and wrapped up in the banner E together with the top and bottom members 11, 14 of the pole, the bats D, and the arms 16, 16 for the banner. The cord C may be folded up and placed in a pocket 25 on one side of the banner, as shown in Fig. 1. To do this the cord is of course detached from both the ball and the pole. When reduced to this compact package (Fig. 5) the apparatus may be conveniently carried from place to place or be stored away.

My improved game may be played by people of all ages, sizes and strengths. The apparatus may be set up and taken down quickly and requires no special court or grounds, any level spot of ground twenty-five feet in diameter being sufficient. It is not necessary to the playing of the game that the ground about the pole be marked off into courts, as shown in Fig. 1, unless desired. In playing the game, exercise is given to the arm, neck, shoulder, back, waist and leg muscles, thus making the play beneficial.

With the ball B tied to the pole A by an elastic cord, the ball when struck has a peculiar and deceiving motion. In playing, the players usually stand with their backs to the pole. The players watch the ball as it goes over their heads and strikes the court at some point beyond the pole within the outer circle 6. After the ball strikes the court, the elastic cord brings the ball back toward the pole and the player must be on his guard to watch the ball as it comes toward him. He must strike it on its way toward the pole and endeavor to carry the elastic cord over the top of the banner. This is a game of deftness rather than brawn, and thus requires skill in the playing.

The pole A could be made telescopic. The ball B may be the size of a volley ball. The details of structure shown and described may be variously changed and modified without departing from the spirit and scope of my invention.

I claim as my invention:

1. A game apparatus, comprising an upright, a vertically disposed partition at the upper end of the upright and extending on opposite sides thereof, a ball, and a flexible element connecting the ball with the upper end of the upright above the partition.

2. A game apparatus, comprising an upright, a vertically disposed partition at the upper end of the upright and extending on opposite sides thereof, a ball, and a flexible cord connecting the ball with the upper end of the upright above the partition, the normal length of the cord being longer than the height of the upright to permit the ball to bounce against the ground.

3. A game apparatus, comprising an upright, a cross-member at the upper end of the upright and extending on opposite sides

thereof, a flexible banner depending from said cross-member on opposite sides of the upright, a ball, and an elastic cord connecting the ball with the upper end of the upright above the banner, the normal length of the cord being longer than the height of the upright to permit the ball to bounce against the ground.

4. A game apparatus, comprising an upright made so that its height may be varied, a vertically disposed partition at the upper end of the upright and extending on opposite sides thereof, a ball, an elastic cord connecting the ball with the upper end of the upright above the partition, the normal length of the cord being longer than the height of the upright to permit the ball to bounce against the ground, said cord being also adjustable lengthwise so that its length may be made to suit the height given to the upright.

5. A game apparatus, comprising an upright, a cross-member at the upper end of the upright and embracing horizontal sections respectively extending on opposite sides of said upright, a fabric banner depending from said sections and extending on opposite sides of said upright, said banner being provided with straps to be fastened about said sections and also with spaced pockets for receiving the outer ends of said sections, a ball, and a flexible connection between the ball and the upright.

6. A game apparatus, comprising an upright, a cross-member at the upper end of said upright and extending on opposite sides thereof, a flexible banner depending from said cross-member, a ball, and an elastic cord connecting the ball to the upright at a point about the banner, said upright and cross-member being made in sections so that the upright and the cross-member may be reduced to a small compact form and wound up in the banner for carrying and storage.

7. A game apparatus, comprising an upright, a vertically disposed flexible banner at the upper end of the upright and extending on opposite sides thereof, a ball, a flexible cord connecting the ball with the upper end of the upright above the banner, and a strap carried by the lower portion of the banner for fastening the latter to the upright.

8. In a game of the character described, a playing field, an upright set up at the center of said field, a vertically disposed partition at the upper end of the upright and extending on opposite sides of the upright, said partition dividing the field into opposed courts, a ball, and a flexible element connecting the ball with the upper end of the upright above the partition, said element having a normal length greater than the height of the upright above the field so that the ball may bounce in either of said courts.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature this 12th day of November, 1926.

LEWIS B. SPAFFORD.