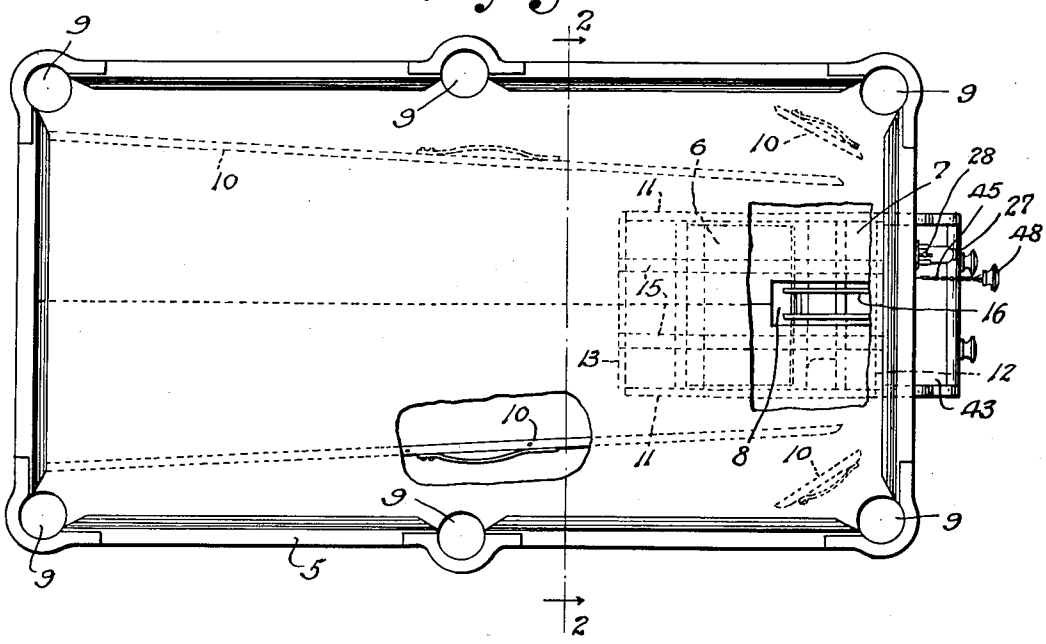
July 31, 1956 G. FISHER 2,756,998

COIN OPERATED BALL COLLECTING AND DISPENSING MECHANISM FOR POOL TABLES

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Fig. 1.



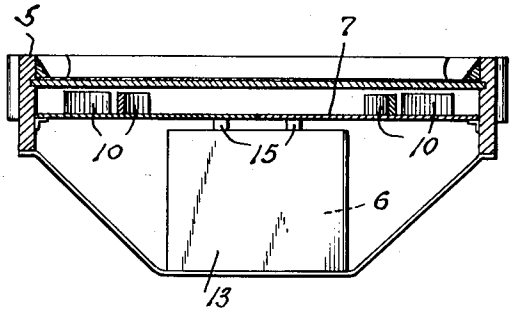


Fig. 2.

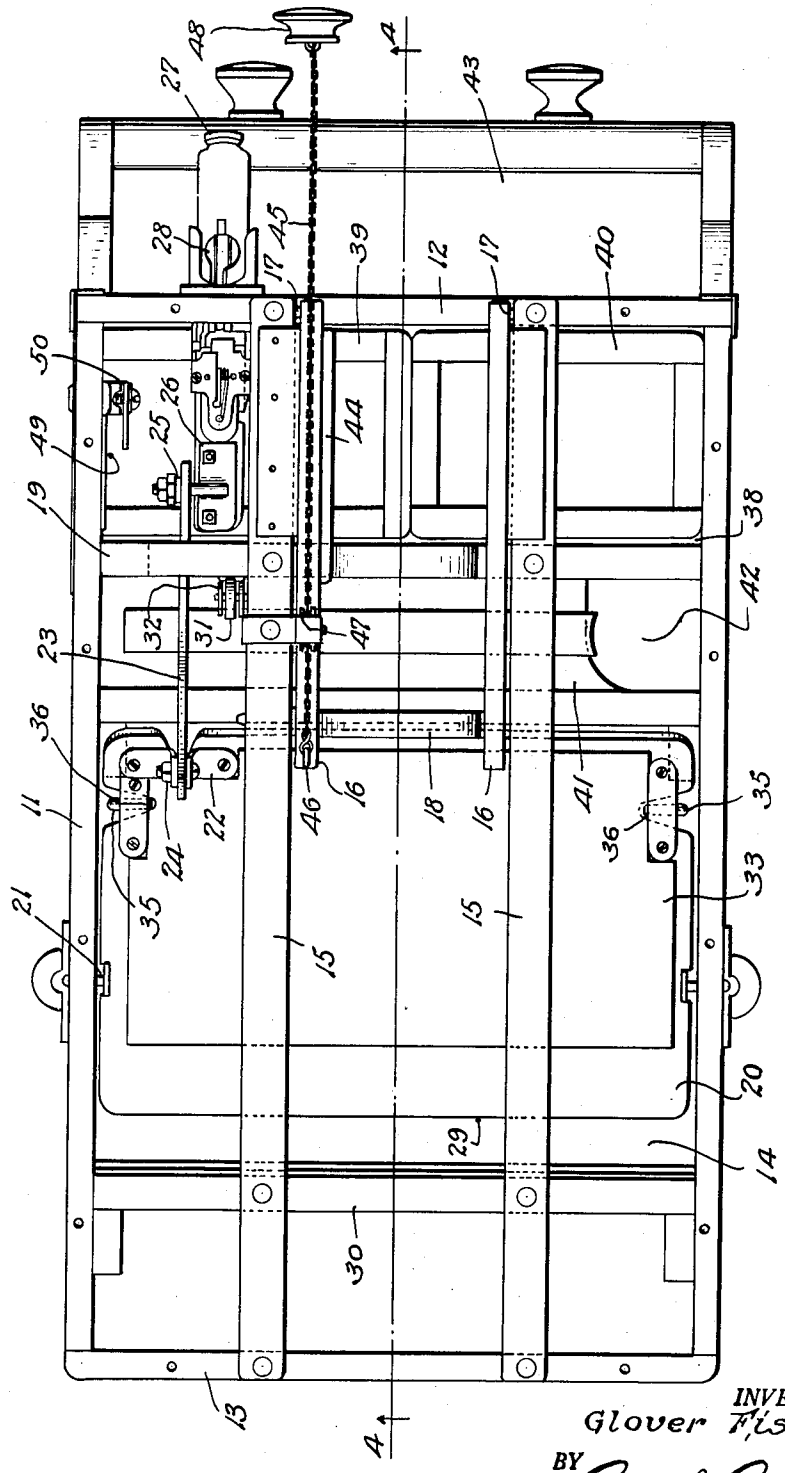
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COIN OPERATED BALL COLLECTING AND DISPENSING MECHANISM FOR POOL TABLES

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Fig. 3.



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COIN OPERATED BALL COLLECTING AND DISPENSING MECHANISM FOR POOL TABLES

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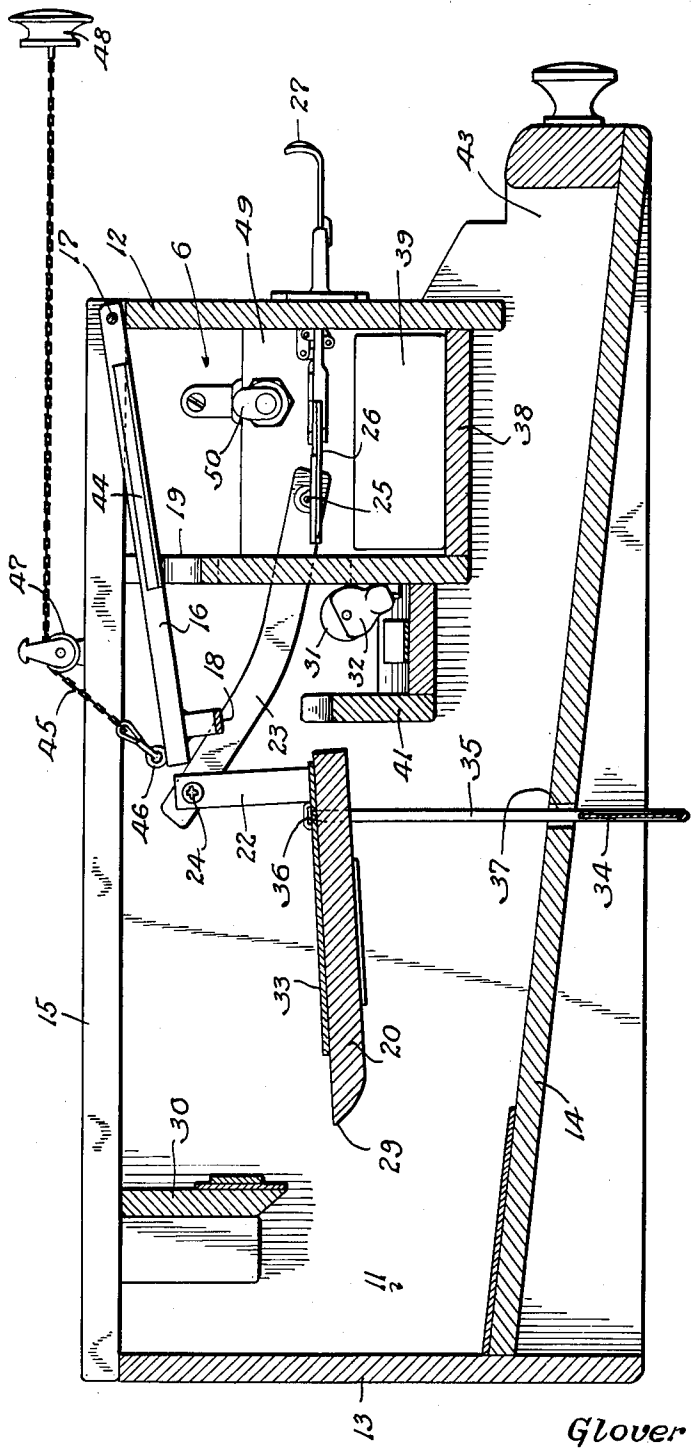


Fig. 4.

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COIN OPERATED BALL COLLECTING AND DISPENSING MECHANISM FOR POOL TABLES

Glover Fisher, Columbia, Miss.

Application June 19, 1953, Serial No. 362,807

4 Claims. (Cl. 273—11)

This invention relates to a ball collecting and dispensing mechanism for pool tables.

It is an object of the invention to provide a coin controlled ball releasing mechanism for automatically vending games of pool without the need of a constant attendant which is designed to prevent the release of the balls except upon deposit of the proper coin and which embodies means for returning the cue ball without return of the play balls in event the cue ball is scratched.

A further object of the invention resides in providing a mechanism which requires no adjustments and having manually operable means for dislodging a ball should it become stuck in the track which directs the balls into the ball receiving box.

Another object of the invention resides in providing a mechanism of the above-mentioned character which is simple and durable in construction, which may be attached to a conventional pool table without material alterations and which is inexpensive to manufacture.

Other objects and advantages of the invention will be apparent during the course of the following specification.

In the accompanying drawings, forming a part of this specification and in which like numerals are employed to designate like parts throughout the same,

Fig. 1 is a top plan view of a pool table showing the attachment applied thereto,

Fig. 2 is a section taken on line 2—2 of Fig. 1,

Fig. 3 is a top plan view of the ball receiving and dispensing mechanism, and

Fig. 4 is a longitudinal sectional view taken on line 4—4 of Fig. 3.

In the drawings wherein for the purpose of illustration I have shown a preferred embodiment of the invention, the numeral 5 denotes a pool table of conventional design having the usual pockets 9 to receive the balls during the playing of the game. A casing containing the ball receiving and dispensing mechanism 6 is mounted beneath one end of the table in the center thereof. Mounted beneath the top of the table in spaced relation thereto is a board 7 which is slightly inclined from the sides and one end downwardly towards the mechanism 6 and is provided with an opening 8 above the mechanism, as shown in Fig. 1. Extending from each of the pockets 9 in a direction towards the opening 8 are a series of upstanding ribs 10 attached to the surface of board 7 which directs the balls deposited in the pockets 9 so that they roll towards the opening 8.

The ball collecting and dispensing mechanism 6 is more clearly shown in Figs. 3 and 4 and conisists of a box-like structure or casing having side walls 11, front and rear walls 12 and 13 and a bottom wall 14. The top of the casing has a pair of spaced longitudinal bars 15 and pivotally mounted between the bars at the front end of the casing are a pair of rails 16 forming a track for directing the balls deposited thereon into the casing. The rails at one end are pivotally mounted, at 17, to the bars 15 above the front wall 12 and at their opposite

ends are connected by a downwardly curved bar 18. The rails constituting the track are supported in a downwardly inclined position by a vertical partition wall 19. The discharge or free end of the track is disposed above a rockably mounted platform 20 which extends the width of the casing and is pivotally mounted on the side walls 11 by pivot pins 21. The end of the platform adjacent the track has an upstanding bracket 22 at one side to which one end of an arcuate lever 23 is pivotally connected, at 24. The opposite end of lever 23 is pivotally connected, at 25, to a coin controlled slide 26 of conventional construction. The slide 26 projects through the front wall 12 and has its outer end turned upwardly to provide a handle 27 for reciprocating the slide when a coin is deposited in the recess 28. When the slide is moved inwardly, lever 23 exerts an upward thrust on bracket 22 which tilts the platform sufficiently to move the end 29 away from the partition wall 30 to allow the balls collected on the platform to drop from the platform onto the inclined bottom wall 14. The slide 26 is guided and supported in its forward movement by guide roller 31 mounted in bracket 32 attached to partition wall 19. The platform 20, wall 30 and bottom wall 14 have a layer of felt 33 covering that part of the surface contacted by the balls in their movement through the casing. To prevent the balls from rolling down the bottom wall prior to return of the platform to its normal position, a baffle plate 34, suspended by wires 35 attached to the platform, at 36, is slidably disposed in a transverse slot 37 in the bottom wall 14. When the platform is in normal position, the baffle plate is lowered beneath the surface of the bottom 14 but upon tilting of the platform the baffle plate is raised above the surface of the bottom and acts as a stop to arrest the movement of the balls down the bottom. The partition wall 19 and front wall 12 terminate above the bottom wall and extending between the wall 19 and front wall 12 is a horizontal shelf 38 which supports a coin collecting box 39 and trash box 40. Attached to the rear side of partition wall 19 is a trough 41 extending transversely of the casing in an inclined plane for receiving the cue ball which by reason of its smaller diameter then a play ball will drop between the rails of the track and be deposited in the trough. At the lower end of the trough is an opening 42 for discharging the cue ball onto the bottom 14 for return to the delivery tray 43 at the front end of the casing beyond the front wall. One of the rails 16 forming the track is provided on its inner side with an inwardly projecting rib 44 which only extends to a point slightly beyond the partition wall 19 to allow the cue ball to roll down the track until it is over the trough 41 before dropping from the track. The track is pivotally mounted to permit the track to be raised and dropped against the upper edge of partition wall 19 to jar lose any balls which might become stuck on the track. The raising and dropping of the track is performed by pulling the cable 45 attached to the eye hook 46 mounted on the lower end of one of the rails 16. The cable 45 is trained over pulleys 47 and extends through an opening in the end side rail of the table having a knob 48 attached to its free end for pulling the same. The side wall 11 at one end of shelf 38 is provided with a door 49 normally closed by a suitable lock 50 which permits removal of the coin and trash boxes 39, 40 when desired.

In operation, when the play balls are knocked into any of the pockets 9 of the table 5 they are deposited on the board 7 and directed by the ribs 10 towards the opening 8. The balls drop through the opening 8 upon the upper end of the track rails 16 which is inclined downwardly and directs the balls so they fall upon the platform 20. In its normal position platform 20 has

its end 29 sufficiently close to partition wall 30 so the space therebetween is not enough to allow the balls to drop from the platform onto the bottom 14. If the cue ball is scratched it will follow the same course as the play balls until it rolls down the track past the rib 44 whereupon it drops between the track rails, owing to its smaller diameter, and is deposited in the trough 41. The cue ball rolls down the trough through opening 42 and down the bottom wall into the delivery tray 43 where it may be picked up by the player and returned to the table. When the game is completed all the play balls will be collected on the platform 20 and are retained thereon until the coin controlled slide 26 is operated. To operate the coin controlled slide a coin is deposited in the recess 28 which allows the slide to be pushed inwardly by the handle 27. As the slide moves inwardly it is guided and supported by roller 31 so that lever 23 exerts an upward thrust upon the bracket 22 to tilt the platform 20 on its pivots 21 thus increasing the space between the end 29 of the platform and wall 30 to allow the play balls to drop down upon the bottom 14. When the platform is tilted, the baffle plate 34 is raised upwardly to block the passage of the balls down the bottom 14 until the platform is returned to its normal position by retraction of the slide 26 to a locked position. When the platform is returned to its normal position the baffle plate 34 drops down below the bottom 14 and allows the balls to roll into the collecting tray 43 where they may be picked up by the player. Any articles which might be accidentally dropped in the pockets 9 of the table will move towards the opening 8 and will drop between the track rails into the trash box 40. The coins deposited in the slide 26 are dropped into the coin collecting box 39 when the slide is pushed inwardly. If a play ball becomes lodged between the track rails so as to block the track they may be dislodged by pulling on the cable 45 to jar the track rails against the upper edge of wall 19. The apparatus provides a simple and efficient mechanism for automatically collecting and dispensing the balls of a pool table so that games of pool may be vended without the need of a constant attendant.

It is to be understood that the form of my invention herein and shown and described is to be taken as a preferred example of the same and that changes in the shape, size and arrangement of the parts may be made without departing from the spirit of the invention.

Having thus described my invention, I claim:

1. Apparatus of the character described comprising a casing having an inclined bottom wall extending from the rear wall downwardly to an opening in the front wall, a platform rockably mounted in spaced elevated relation to the upper end of said bottom wall adapted to swing downwardly in the direction of the rear wall of the casing, a track inclined downwardly from the top of said casing with its lower end disposed above said platform, said track being adapted to receive and deliver balls to said platform, means coacting to retain the balls on said platform when the platform is in normal position, a coin controlled slide operably connected to said platform for rocking said platform to discharge the balls collected thereon onto the upper end of said inclined bottom wall, a baffle plate slidably mounted in a transverse slot in said bottom wall beneath said platform, and means connecting said baffle plate with said platform whereby the baffle plate is raised above the surface of the bottom wall to arrest the movement of the balls down the bottom wall when said platform is rocked to discharge the balls onto the upper end of the bottom wall.

2. Apparatus of the character described in claim 1 having said track pivotally mounted at its upper end, a partition wall freely supporting the lower end of said track and means for raising and lowering said track against said partition to jar said track.

3. Apparatus of the character described in claim 1 wherein said track is composed of spaced rails having a greater space between their lower ends than their upper ends to allow balls of small diameter to drop between the rails before reaching said platform, and an inclined trough beneath said rails to receive the balls dropped from said track, said trough having an opening at its lower end to deposit the balls on the bottom wall of said casing forward of said baffle plate.

4. Apparatus of the character described comprising a casing having an inclined bottom wall extending from the rear wall downwardly to an opening in the front wall, a platform rockably mounted in spaced elevated relation to said bottom wall adjacent the rear wall of said casing, a track inclined downwardly from the top of said casing with its lower end disposed above said platform, said track being adapted to receive and deliver balls onto said platform, means coacting to retain the balls on said platform when the platform is in normal position, a coin controlled slide operably connected with said platform to tilt said platform in a rearwardly direction to discharge the balls thereon onto the upper end of said bottom wall, a baffle plate slidably mounted in a transverse vertical slot in said bottom wall beneath said platform, said baffle plate being normally disposed below the surface of said bottom wall, and means connecting said baffle plate with said platform for raising said baffle plate above the surface of said bottom wall when said platform is tilted, whereby the balls discharged from the platform onto the bottom wall are arrested in their movement down the wall by said baffle plate.

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