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R. J. BALL

3,606,344

SET OF PROTECTIVE SHROUDS FOR GOLF TEES

Filed May 28, 1969

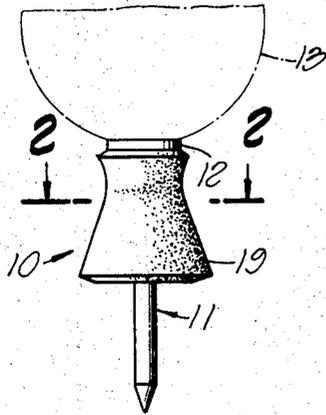


FIG. 1.

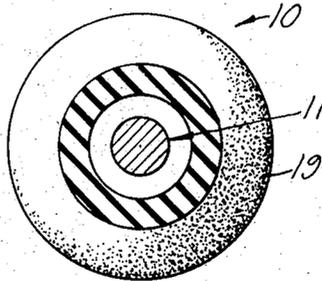


FIG. 2.

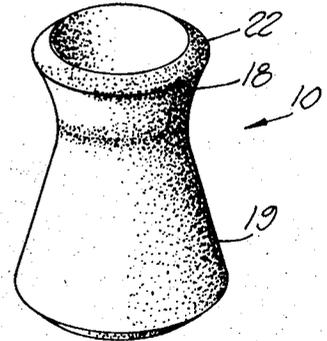


FIG. 3.

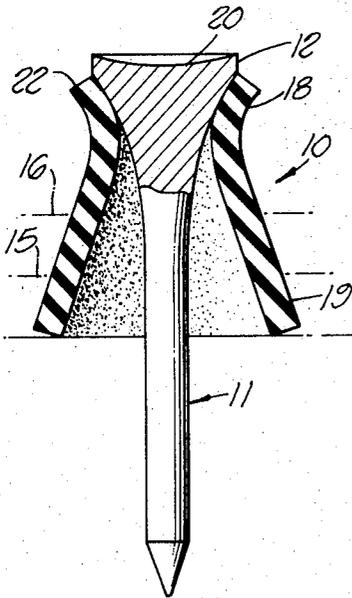


FIG. 4.

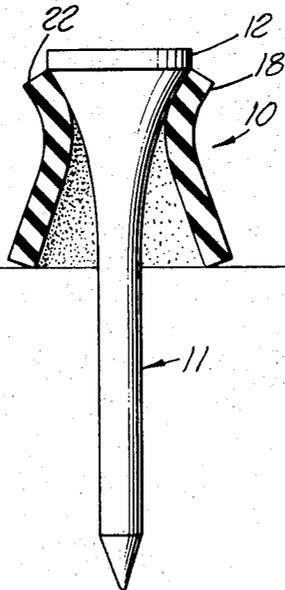


FIG. 5.

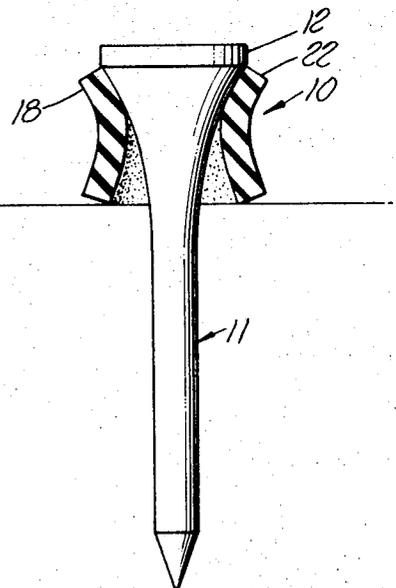


FIG. 6.

INVENTOR
ROBERT J. BALL

BY  
ATTORNEYS

1

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SET OF PROTECTIVE SHROUDS FOR GOLF TEES
Robert J. Ball, 2846 Santa Anita,
Altadena, Calif. 91001
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U.S. Cl. 273-202 4 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A golf tee and club protector comprising a soft resilient ring sized to telescope about and grip the lower head portion of a golf tee and to have its lower end bear against the ground to aid in supporting the golf tee at a desired playing height. The protector safeguards both the face of the club and the tee against damage and is preferably provided in sets of assorted lengths. The protectors are reusable repeatedly and brightly colored to facilitate sighting if displaced by the club in play.

This invention relates to golf tees and more particularly to an improved protective shroud of resilient material adapted to grip the underside of a golf tee head to provide a resilient guard between the face of the club and the tee effective in protecting both against damage.

By this invention there is provided a simple inexpensive article of manufacture comprising a set of resilient rings of assorted widths sized to telescope about and grip the under surface of a golf tee head. Preferably, these resilient rings have oppositely flaring ends one of which is proportioned to firmly grip the tee head and the other of which is sufficiently large to provide a wide area stabilizing support for the tee, particularly in softer ground. When provided in graduated sizes the protectors can be used selectively to support a tee at different selected heights in accordance with a particular condition of play.

The walls of the tubular protectors are sufficiently thick to absorb the blow of a golf club and prevent damaging contact of the club head with the golf tee. Assurance is thereby provided that the critical face of the golf tee is protected and the same is equally true with respect to the tee. Manufacture of the protectors in assorted bright or fluorescent colors greatly facilitates recovery of the tee should it be displaced by the club in play.

Accordingly it is a primary object of the present invention to provide an article of manufacture comprising a resilient protector readily assembled over a wide variety of sizes and shapes of golf tees and frictionally gripping the same to provide a resilient shroud between the tee head and a golf club.

Another object of the invention is the provision of a set of golf tee protectors of graduated lengths adapted to be selectively assembled about the lower head portion of a golf tee and useful in supporting the tee at a proper height effective to safeguard the golf club face and the tee from injury.

Another object of the invention is the provision of a brightly colored resilient shroud sized to grip the head of a golf tee and to limit the insertion of the tee into the ground.

These and other more specific objects will appear upon reading the following specification and claims and upon considering in connection therewith the attached drawing to which they relate.

Referring now to the drawing in which a preferred embodiment of the invention is illustrated:

FIG. 1 is an elevational view of the preferred embodi-

2

ment of the invention assembled about a conventional golf tee;

FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken along line 2-2 on FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a protector per se on an enlarged scale; and

FIGS. 4, 5 and 6 show a set of golf tee protectors of graduated size, the protectors being shown in cross-section and assembled about similar tees each supported at a different height above ground level.

Referring initially more particularly to FIG. 1, there is shown an exemplary embodiment of the invention protector, designated generally 10, assembled about a golf tee 11, having a typical head 12 contoured to support a golf ball 13. The protectors are preferably manufactured in a set of graduated size best illustrated in FIGS. 4, 5 and 6. The protectors of a given set differ essentially in their axial width or height. Initially all components of a set may be made in a common mold having the size shown in FIG. 4, the FIGS. 5 and 6 lengths being provided by the simple expedient of trimming away the larger end of the protector along the planes indicated by the dot and dash lines 15 and 16 respectively.

Protectors 10 are made of any suitable inexpensive soft resilient material, such as rubber or soft resilient thermoplastic. The individual elements may be described as a resilient ring having oppositely-flaring ends. As herein shown, the upper end has a shorter flare than the lower end and has a normal interior diameter somewhat smaller than the diameter of the portion of the tee closely below its ball-supporting cavity 20. In consequence the upper end 18 of the protector is stretched sufficiently when telescoped over the shank of the tee as to grip the tee head firmly and sufficiently strongly to retain itself firmly assembled to the tee. The lower larger end 19 of the protector flares away from the tee shank and serves not only to limit the penetration of the tee into the ground but to cooperate therewith in stabilizing the tee and in assuring that the tee is supported in an upright position. The supplemental tee-supporting characteristics of the protector are particularly pronounced in softer ground.

Protector 10 preferably has a sufficiently thick wall that its upper rim edge 22 protrudes radially beyond the largest portion of the tee head as is clearly illustrated in the drawing. It will be noted that this portion of the protector is firmly backed by the tee head itself. If the player swings too low the protector prevents the face of the club contacting the tee. Owing to its resilient nature, the protector is harmless to the club face and provides a shock absorbing layer between the club and the tee itself. Accordingly neither is damaged.

The protector rings are preferably made in different bright colors contrasting sharply with the playing field. This fact and the substantially larger size of the assembly than the normal tee enables the player to quickly locate the tee in cases where the playing club displaces it from the ground.

It will be evident from the foregoing that the resiliency and stretchability of the protector ring enables it to be stretched into firm seating engagement with tees of a great variety of shapes and sizes. Accordingly, it may be manufactured in a single standard contour.

While the particular set of protective shrouds for golf tees herein shown and disclosed in detail is fully capable of attaining the objects and providing the advantages hereinbefore stated, it is to be understood that it is merely illustrative of the presently preferred embodiments of the invention.

I claim:

1. In combination with a golf tee, a protective shroud comprising a unitary tubular member of flexible resilient

3

material having a restricted central portion and outwardly symmetrically flaring opposite ends, one of said flaring ends being sized to frictionally grip the lower head portion of said golf tee and the other flaring end being positioned well back from the pointed end of said tee and adapted to bear against the surface of the ground when the tee is inserted to a proper teeing height, and said protective shroud being effective to prevent the golf club from contacting the tee and causing damage to the tee or the face of the club.

2. In combination with a plurality of golf tees, a set of protective shrouds, said shrouds being of different lengths and selectively assembled about the upper shank and head portion of a respective one of said golf tees to aid in supporting the same more firmly in soft ground at a desired height, said protective shrouds being formed of soft resilient material and sized to frictionally grip the upper end portion of a respective one of said golf tees and having a lower symmetrically and outwardly flaring end spaced backwardly from the pointed end of the shank and adapted to rest against the ground when the tee is depressed to a desired teeing height.

4

3. The combination as defined in claim 2 characterized in that said shrouds are molded in a generally tubular configuration with oppositely flaring ends one of which is sized to grip the upper portion of one of said golf tees resiliently and firmly and to accommodate itself readily to golf tees of widely varying shape and size.

4. The combination defined in claim 3 characterized in that said shrouds are brightly colored in a color contrasting with green thereby to facilitate sighting the location of a golf tee after it has been displaced in play.

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RICHARD C. PINKHAM, Primary Examiner.

T. BROWN, Assistant Examiner.