June 17, 1952 J. M. TULLIO 2,600,940

FOOTBALL GAME DEVICE

Filed Aug. 4, 1948

FIG. 1

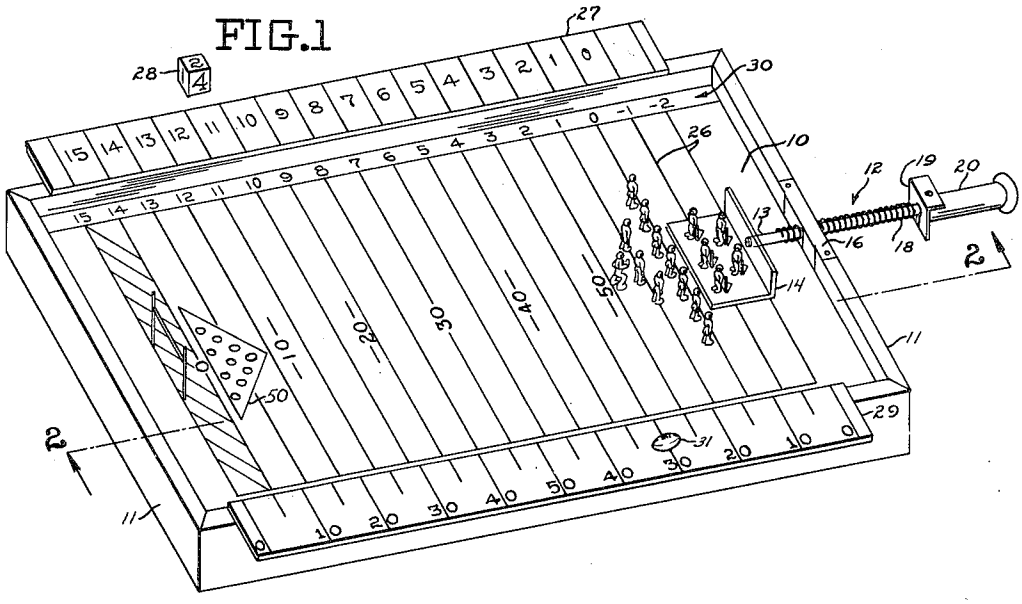


FIG. 2

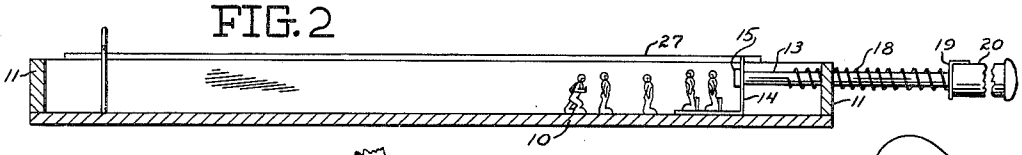


FIG. 3

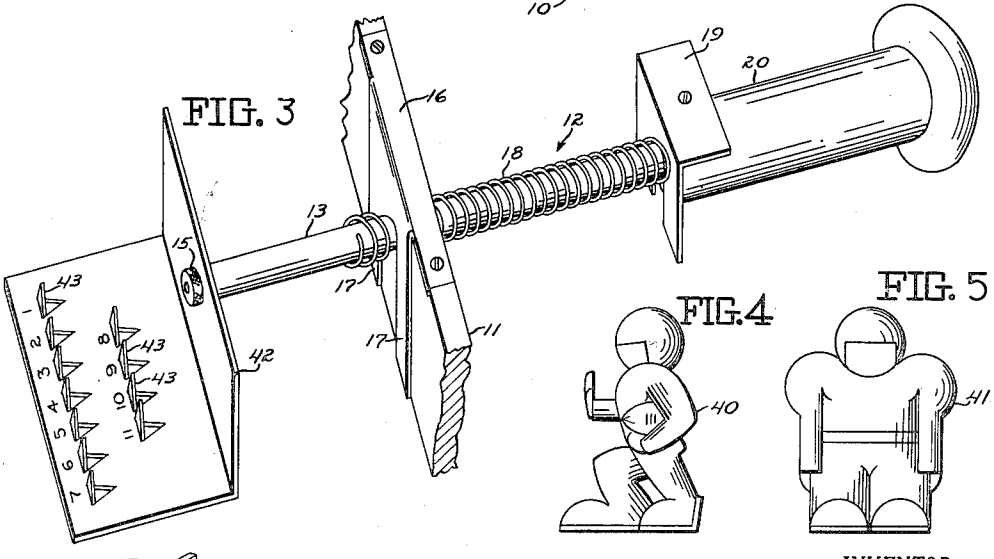


FIG. 4

FIG. 5

FIG. 6

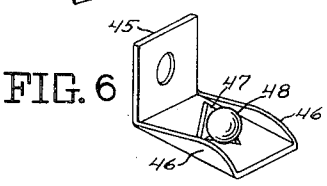


FIG. 7



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FOOTBALL GAME DEVICE

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2 Claims. (Cl. 116—120)

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This invention relates to an indoor or table football game in miniature in which provision is made to simulate the array on an actual playing field and to duplicate the actual physical contacts of the game as determining factors in the progress thereof. In that sense, the game of this invention is to be carefully distinguished from games of the type wherein figures or symbols of players constitute mere markers, the contest proceeding according to the results of separate devices involving chance or skill.

According to the invention, the broad definition of the manner of play involves a catapulting of one or more figures of sensible mass in the general direction of a collection of similar figures representing the opposing team. To the extent that the opposing team may be placed in position, within limits, at the will of one player, and the offensive figures may be directed for catapulting by the other player, the game involves skill and generalship on the part of the players. Upon release of the offensive group, however, the general action proceeds according to the vagaries of chance in a manner suggestive of that involving live players executing individual decisions contributing to a composite result.

The game therefore enables the players to partake of the actual play to the extent of planning the general course of action in each instance and to then relax into the role of a spectator, thus compounding the enjoyment and enlivening the spirit and zest incident to the play.

It is therefore an object of the invention to provide a miniature game device in close simulation of the full-scale game of football, including the physical contacts of figures. A further object is to provide such a game in which the player participation partakes of determining the general course of action prior to actual contact of the figures. More particularly, it is an object to provide a football game in miniature in which an offensive group is catapulated against an opposing group to produce random alignments.

To these and other ends which will be in part apparent and in part made manifest as the description proceeds, the invention is expressed in certain embodiments, one preferred form of which is described in the following specification and illustrated in the drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a view in perspective of a game board representing among other things the scrimmage area of a playing field;

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

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Fig. 3 is an enlarged, fragmentary view in perspective of the catapult element showing a modified platform;

Fig. 4 is a side view of a miniature ball-carrying figure;

Fig. 5 is a front view of another playing figure;

Fig. 6 is a perspective of another modified catapult platform; and

Fig. 7 is an elevation of a miniature bowling pin.

The game board comprises a bottom or floor member 10 which serves as the active playing field. An upright frame or border 11 erected along all four sides of the bottom serves as a fence to confine the movable objects in play and to support auxiliary marking or scoring elements to be later described.

A catapult shown generally at 12 is slidable through an opening in one end section of the fence 11 and comprises a rod 13 on the inner end of which is received a platform 14 fastened as by a nut 15. At the opening provided in the fence for passage of the rod 13 is attached a metal member 16 having a downwardly depending pair of legs 17 spaced apart sufficiently to pass the rod 13, but the spacing being less than the outer diameter of a helical spring 18 which surrounds the rod. The spring is thus anchored by the yoke. A second similar yoked member 19 anchors in like manner the opposite end of the spring. Thus, when the handle 20, to which member 19 is fastened, is drawn outwardly of the fence 11, the spring is placed under tension. The relation of tension to stroke of the catapult as a whole may be varied by removing member 16 and engaging a different convolution of the spring in the yoke. The rod 13 will preferably have a loose fit in the yoke 17 and fence 11. This loose fit and the short bearing surface of the rod in the fence make possible a variation in the angle of the catapult.

On the floor 10 is scribed a rectangle stepped off in equally spaced parallel grid lines 26 in general simulation of a playing field. The field, however, and the grid lines do not have the same significance as in the full-scale game, but represent the locale of action for each individual scrimmage. Each grid line represents one yard and they will be provided in such number that the farthest line from the line of scrimmage will represent by its number the maximum yardage to be expected from a scrimmage play. Such number is of course arbitrary and its variation has to do only with the matter of the ease or difficulty of scoring, the absolute ad-

vance of the ball in the scrimmage area being determined by the physical characteristics of the various components of the game device. The figures indicating the value of the yardage attained from scrimmage are shown in Fig. 1 immediately above the grid lines and are designated by the arrow and the numeral **30**. These are numbered from 0 to 15 and from 0 to —2, the zero line being the starting line of scrimmage for each play.

The remaining required yardage from scrimmage in the four or less downs available may be indicated by placing a suitable marker adjacent the proper one of a series of consecutive numbers imprinted on a strip **27** fastened to one long side of the border **11**. A very convenient marker is shown as a cube **28** bearing on various of its faces, the numerals 1 to 4. An ordinary die of proper size will suffice for this purpose. Thus, not only is the marker a means for indicating the required yardage, but also for advising as to the number of the "down."

The progress of the game as a whole is indicated by a marking strip **29** carried by the border **11** on the opposite side of the playing field from the strip **27**. Strip **29** has evenly spaced graduations to represent 5 yard intervals and are numbered at the 10-yard intervals as in a regular playing field, with the 0-yard line at each end, and the numbers increasing inwardly from each end up to a single 50-yard line at the middle. A marker **31** preferably in the general semblance of a football is moved by the players or referee to record its exact position at any given time as determined by the results of the various plays. The marker may be differently colored on two sides for alternative use by the two sides, depending upon which "has the ball." This marker may also be used for the football in the process of "kicking off."

In the matter of the kick-off, the numerals beside the grid lines **26** do not bear the proper significance for the purpose. Therefore the numerals 10 to 50 are provided to designate the alternative use of a portion of the playing field as the defense's half of a complete football field. These yard-lines and numerals occur in intervals of 10 yards and are shown as placed along the center of the field, although they may be placed to one side of the center if desired. These yard lines 10 to 50 do not necessarily coincide with any of lines **26**. Their spacing is determined independently by considering that the distance from the zero or goal line to the point of kick-off (which in the game board shown is selected to coincide with the zero line of the group numbered 30) should be divided into six equal spaces, so that the 50 yard line lies 10 yards in front of the kick-off point. In this area the defense team is grouped by a player in any desired manner with a view to blocking the kicked ball. The ball is then placed on the platform **14** by the other player and catapulated in the general direction of the goal line. The position of the point at which it is stopped or forced out of bounds is identified by the series of yard lines numbered 10 to 50 on the field, and the football is removed and placed on the corresponding yard line on the strip **29**. If the ball should happen to cross the goal line play is commenced from the 20-yard line, or any position agreed upon by the players.

Play then proceeds as from scrimmage. At the commencement of each scrimmage the defense figures are lined up behind the grid line

indicated by 0 in the row of numbers indicated at 30. They may be placed anywhere in the field back of this line. The offense formation is carried entirely by a platform such as **14**. The offense may comprise a single ball carrier located at any one of the positions on the platform or a ball-carrier and the balance of the backfield, or the entire team may be catapulted from a platform such as that shown in Fig. 3, depending upon the whim or peculiar skill of individual players.

Procedure

The opposing players will vie for kick-off as by flipping a coin. The defense then aligns his eleven men behind the 50-yard line in the area designated by the numerals 10–50. The position of commencement of play is determined by the kick-off as described above. The offense then places his ball carrier **40** with or without teammates **41** on the platform **14**. Or, the offense may locate his ball-carrier while concealing the operation, as with his hand, and the defense will then locate his men prior to disclosure of disposal of the ball-carrier, thus introducing an element of guess-work which confronts the defense as in the case of a "huddle" in actual football play. Whatever the manner or sequence of disposition, the offense then catapults his man or men by drawing back and releasing the handle on rod **13**. At the extreme limit of inward motion of the rod and platform, the men of the offense will proceed by virtue of their inertia. The result will be a series of collisions and a general intermingling during which the progress of the ball-carrying figure is of prime interest. When the latter comes to rest, its position is gauged by the nearest grid line and the number of this line is noted in the row of numerals 30. This number is subtracted from 10 (or added thereto in the case of a loss) and the resulting figure is marked in strip **27** by the placement of marker **28** with the figure "2" uppermost to indicate "second down." The position of the marker **28** in Fig. 1 indicates "second down, eleven yards to go." The marker **31** is then moved in the proper direction and in the proper amount to indicate the position of the ball after the gain or loss. The players are again lined up for scrimmage and the ball-carrier catapulted. The yardage gained or lost is added or subtracted, as the case may be, from the figure indicated by the marker **28**, the marker being turned to indicate this result with the next higher number showing on its uppermost face, and so on, the position of the marker **31** being moved the proper direction and amount after each operation. Punting is accomplished in a similar manner to the kickoff.

The play figures **40**, **41** may be variously designed, either stylized or in close simulation of the human form. They should however be constructed to present a low center of gravity in order that they may be easily and quickly spotted in position, and have a tendency to retain an erect position during and after scrimmage although not totally so.

The platforms **14** and **42** will be provided with uprights such as tabs **43** shown as struck from the floor of the platform and bent upright to provide means to carry the figures throughout the stroke of the catapult and permit their release at the end of such stroke. If two or more rows of such tabs be provided, the tabs in the respective rows will be staggered so as to permit unobstructed ejectment of the figures.

For an alternative use of the game board there is shown at **50** a triangle within which are imprinted a series of circles representing "spots" for ten pins such as **44** in Fig. 7. For this employment a modified platform **45** is substituted for types **14** and **42**. This platform is smaller in size, has side flanges **46** and its struck tab **47** accommodates a small sphere **48** such as a ball bearing, to serve as a bowling ball.

While I have described a certain embodiment of the invention, the same is for purposes of illustration mainly, and certain changes in the size, shape, character and arrangement of the various elements may be resorted to without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A football game device comprising a base representing a playing field having grid lines numbered entirely in ascending order, and substantially coextensive with the base, to indicate yards gained from scrimmage, a numbered panel to indicate yards to be gained and including a minimum upper value of 10, a marker for said panel having a plurality of faces bearing respectively the numerals 1 to 4 at least, and a second panel numbered from zero at each end to a single valve of 50 at the center.

2. In a device as in claim 1, index marks in said base bearing numerals from zero to fifty in a length substantially coextensive with said grid lines, with said numerals in inverse order to those on said grid lines.

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