Dec. 13, 1966 L. WOLFE 3,290,693

BASEBALL BATTER'S HELMET

Filed Dec. 14, 1964 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 1.

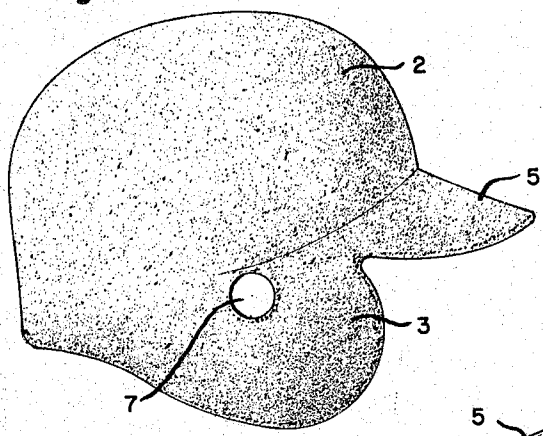


Fig. 2.

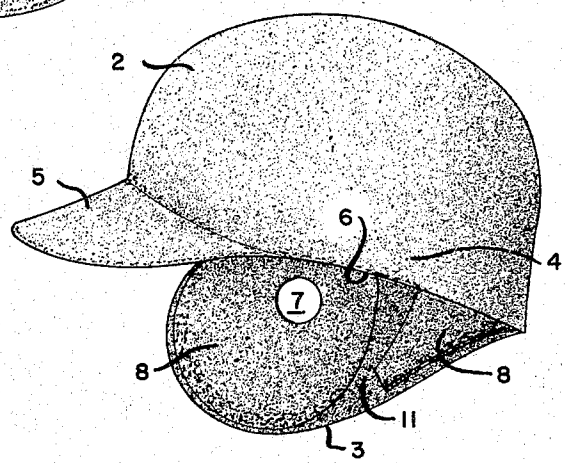


Fig. 3.

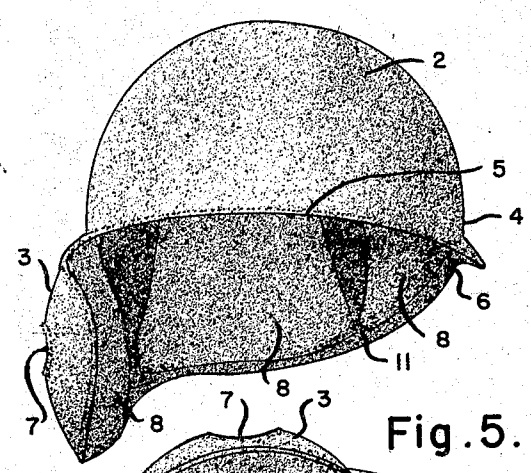


Fig. 4.

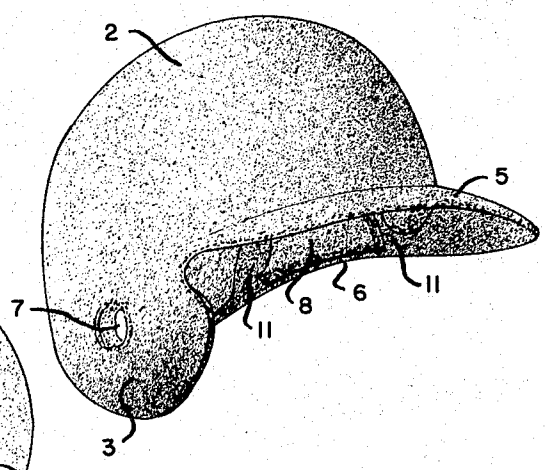
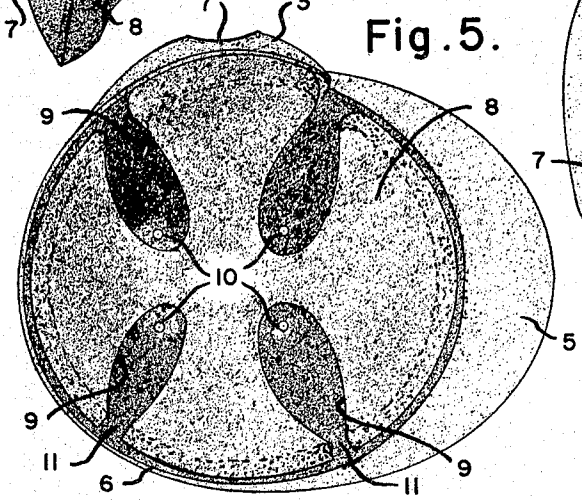


Fig. 5.



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Dec. 13, 1966 L. WOLFE 3,290,693

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Filed Dec. 14, 1964 2 Sheets-Sheet 2

Fig. 6.

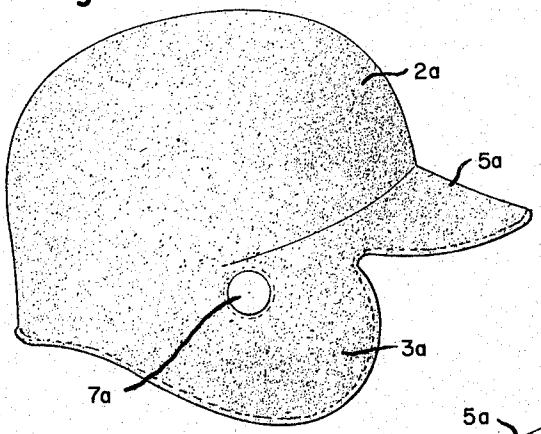


Fig. 7.

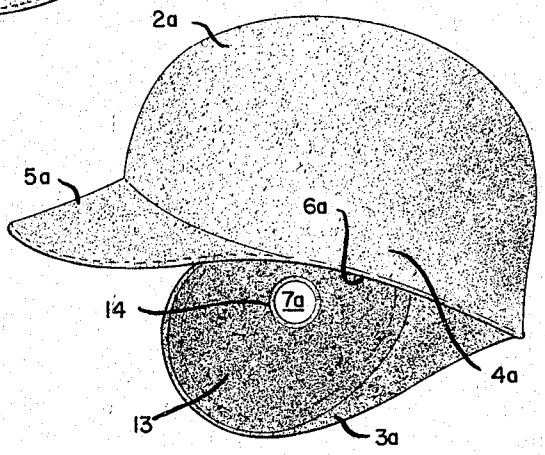


Fig. 8.

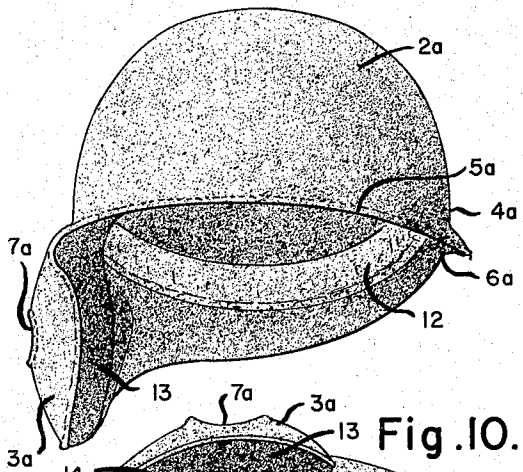


Fig. 9.

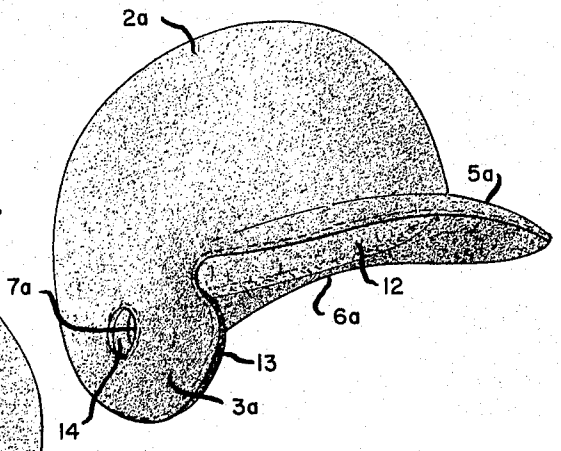
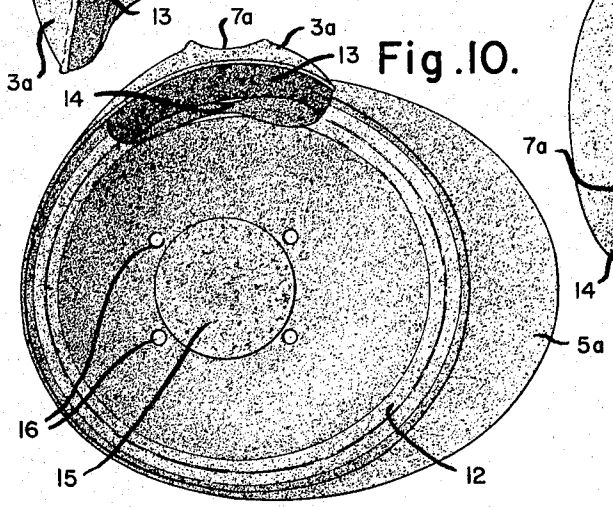


Fig. 10.



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United States Patent Office 3,290,693 Patented Dec. 13, 1966

3,290,693

BASEBALL BATTER'S HELMET

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8 Claims. (Cl. 2—3)

This invention relates to a baseball batter's helmet, i.e., a helmet worn on the head by a baseball player when he goes to bat to protect against serious injury in the event that the batter is struck on the head by a pitched ball. The invention relates to an improvement affording added protection to the batter while not impairing the batter's hearing or closely confining his face or adding greatly to the weight or bulk of the helmet.

Protective batter's helmets are new universally employed in professional baseball. They have proved to be of great protective value and have unquestionably prevented many serious injuries to batters who have been struck on the head by pitched balls. Heretofore the helmet used in professional baseball has been of generally cap form having its bottom rim disposed above or substantially at the level of the wearer's ears at both sides and the back. It has protected against pitched balls striking the wearer above the ears but has not afforded protection for the ears and the sides of the face.

Protective helmets having depending portions covering both sides of the face are used by younger boys but are not feasible for professional use because they impair to a substantial extent the batter's hearing and confine his face and also are substantially heavier than a helmet of the same size not having the depending portions covering the sides of the face.

I have conceived of a baseball batter's helmet affording the batter protection in the region of the ear and the side of the face where he may be struck by a pitched ball but without impairing his hearing, without closely confining his face and without adding greatly to the weight of the helmet. My conception is based on the fact that a batter stands at one side of the home plate holding his bat over the plate and with one side of his face toward the pitcher. In batting he maintains substantially the same orientation until the swing is largely completed. Consequently while the danger exists that the batter may be struck on the side of the face which is disposed toward the pitcher there is not substantial danger of his being struck on the side of the face which is disposed away from the pitcher. I have found that it is possible and feasible to provide the batter's helmet with protection for the side of the batter's face disposed toward the pitcher while leaving the opposite side of the helmet with its bottom rim disposed above the wearer's ear as has been true of both sides of batter's helmets employed in professional baseball prior to the present invention. The batter's ear disposed away from the pitcher is completely uncovered so that his hearing is not impaired, the batter's face is not closely confined and the weight of the helmet is not greatly increased.

My batter's helmets are made in two styles, one for right-handed batters in which protection is afforded for the left side of the batter's face and the other for left-handed batters in which protection is afforded for the right side of the batter's face. In each case the protected side of the batter's face is the side disposed toward the pitcher.

I provide a baseball batter's helmet of stiff protective material comprising a cap shaped to fit over the head of the wearer having a depending portion at one side thereof for covering the side of the face of the wearer disposed toward the pitcher when the wearer is at bat, the opposite side of the cap being free from such a depending portion so that the wearer's ear disposed away from the pitcher is uncovered avoiding impairing the wearer's hearing, minimizing the size and weight of the helmet and obviating confining the wearer's face. The cap preferably has a bill for shading the wearer's eyes, the cap rearwardly of the bill having a bottom rim adapted to be disposed above the wearer's ear at the side remote from the pitcher when the wearer is at bat and to extend downwardly to cover the side of the wearer's face disposed toward the pitcher when the wearer is at bat. The cap including the depending portion is preferably a one-piece integrally molded cap.

Soft resilient lining material is disposed in the helmet, preferably being interposed between the inside of the cap including the inside of the depending portion and the space to be occupied by the wearer's head. The soft resilient lining material may be interposed between the portions of the cap shaped to fit over the head and to cover the side of the wearer's face and the space to be occupied by the wearer's head. In one form an annulus of soft resilient lining material may be disposed in the helmet positioned to surround the wearer's head with a pad of soft resilient lining material, desirably polyester material, interposed between the portion of the cap covering the side of the face of the wearer and the space to be occupied by the wearer's head. In another form a one-piece soft resilient lining may be disposed in the helmet lining the portions of the cap shaped to fit over the head and to cover the side of the wearer's face.

Other details, objects and advantages of the invention will become apparent as the following description of certain present preferred embodiments thereof proceeds.

In the accompanying drawings I have shown certain present preferred embodiments of the invention in which

FIGURE 1 is a side view of a baseball batter's protective helmet designed for a left-handed batter as viewed from the right side of the wearer's head;

FIGURE 2 is a side view of the helmet shown in FIGURE 1 but viewed from the opposite side, i.e., from the left side of the wearer's head;

FIGURE 3 is a view of the helmet shown in FIGURES 1 and 2 viewed from the front;

FIGURE 4 is a perspective view of the helmet;

FIGURE 5 is a view looking into the inside of the helmet from below; and

FIGURES 6–10 are respectively counterparts of FIGURES 1–5 but showing a baseball batter's protective helmet having the same cap as is shown in FIGURES 1–5 but different lining means.

Referring now more particularly to the drawings and first to FIGURES 1–5, the helmet comprises a cap 2 shaped to fit over the head of the wearer having a depending portion 3 at one side thereof for covering the side of the face of the wearer disposed toward the pitcher when the wearer is at bat, the opposite side 4 of the cap being free from such a depending portion so that the wearer's ear disposed away from the pitcher is uncovered, avoiding impairing the wearer's hearing, minimizing the size and weight of the helmet and obviating confining the wearer's face. The cap has a bill 5 for shading the wearer's eyes, the cap rearwardly of the bill 5 having a bottom rim 6 adapted to be disposed above the wearer's ear at the side remote from the pitcher when the wearer is at bat and to extend downwardly to cover the side of the wearer's face disposed toward the pitcher when the wearer is at bat.

The helmet is made of stiff protective material such as fibrous glass or plastic which is strong and rigid and

adapted to withstand blows of rapidly pitched baseballs. Materials suitable for this purpose are well known to those skilled in the art. The portion 3 covers the batter's ear, in the present case the batter's right ear although a helmet for a right-handed batter covers the left ear. The portion 3 is provided with an opening 7 in alignment with the ear covered thereby affording substantial hearing through that ear while the opposite ear is completely uncovered. As mentioned above, the cap 2 including the depending portion 3 is preferably a one-piece integrally molded cap. This not only contributes importantly to the strength of the cap but eliminates any hazard due to riveting on the depending portion. If a depending portion were riveted to a conventional protective helmet the rivets might if hit by a pitched ball be driven into the wearer's head.

The helmet of FIGURES 1–5 is provided, with a soft resilient lining 8 disposed therein lining the inside of the cap 2 including the inside of the depending portion 3. The lining 8 may be of any suitable material, such, for example, as sponge rubber. It is shown in FIGURES 1–5 as being made in one piece so as to line the portion of the cap fitting over the head as well as the portion covering the side of the wearer's face. It may be cut out of a planar sheet of material with reentrant portions 9 adapting the lining to be inserted into the helmet and applied thereto and maintained therein by any suitable adhesive as well known to those skilled in the art. The helmet may be provided with ventilation openings 10 which are not covered by the lining 8 so that air circulation is provided for inside the helmet. The reentrant portions of the lining are spaced apart in the region of the rim 6 providing passageways 11 so that there may be through ventilation between the openings 10 and the passageways 11.

At the rear of the helmet the rim 6 spirals gradually from the left side downwardly toward the right side so that the vulnerable portion of the left-handed batter's face behind the right ear is fully protected.

The helmet of FIGURES 6–10 comprises a cap 2*a* identical with the cap 2 of FIGURES 1–5 but having different lining material. Parts in FIGURES 6–10 which are the same as parts in FIGURES 1–5 are designated by the same respective reference numerals each having the letter *a* appended.

The cap 2*a* has an annulus 12 which may for example be of leather covered latex positioned to surround the wearer's head as shown, being at the location in the cap where a sweat band is normally positioned in headware. Disposed at the inside of the depending portion 3*a* of the cap 2*a* is a pad 13 of resilient polyester material. The pad 13 covers the ear and has therethrough an opening 14 mating with the opening 7*a* of the cap. In the crown of the cap is a disc 15 which may be of sponge rubber, latex, polyester or other suitable material adapted to seat atop the wearer's head. The annulus 12, the pad 13 and the disc 15 are maintained in place in the cap by any suitable adhesive as well known to those skilled in the art. The cap 2*a* has ventilating holes 16 through its crown disposed about the disc 15 as shown in FIGURE 10.

Professional baseball players and particularly major league players have been aware of the possibility of being struck by a pitched ball below the rim of the conventional protective cap heretofore worn by professional players and efforts have been made to introduce for their use the type of helmet used by boys which closely confines the sides of the face and covers both ears. Professional players have rejected that type of helmet because of the impairment to hearing, the close confining of the face and the substantially greater weight when made of the protective material employed for batter's helmets used by professional players. My helmet, however, has been adopted and used in major league play and has been found entirely satisfactory, for the first time affording protection below the ear at the side of the batter's face disposed toward the pitcher while not impairing the batter's hearing, not closely confining his face and not greatly increasing the weight of the helmet.

While I have shown and described certain present preferred embodiments of the invention it is to be distinctly understood that the invention is not limited thereto but may be otherwise variously embodied within the scope of the following claims.

I claim:

1. A baseball batter's helmet of stiff protective material comprising a cap shaped to fit over the head of the wearer having a depending portion at one side thereof only for covering the side of the face of the wearer disposed toward the pitcher when the wearer is at bat, so that the wearer's ear disposed away from the pitcher is uncovered avoiding impairing the wearer's hearing, minimizing the size and weight of the helmet and obviating confining the wearer's face.

2. A baseball batter's helmet of stiff protective material comprising a cap shaped to fit over the head of the wearer having a bill for shading the wearer's eyes, the cap rearwardly of the bill having a bottom rim adapted to be disposed above the wearer's ear at the side remote from the pitcher when the wearer is at bat and to extend downwardly to cover the side of the wearer's face disposed toward the pitcher when the wearer is at bat.

3. A baseball batter's helmet as claimed is claim 1 in which the cap including the depending portion is a one-piece integrally molded cap.

4. A baseball batter's helmet as claimed in claim 1 with soft resilient lining material therein interposed between the inside of the cap including the inside of the depending portion and the space to be occupied by the wearer's head.

5. A baseball batter's helmet as claimed in claim 2 with soft resilient lining material therein interposed between the portions of the cap shaped to fit over the head and to cover the side of the wearer's face and the space to be occupied by the wearer's head.

6. A baseball batter's helmet as claimed in claim 1 with an annulus of soft resilient lining material therein positioned to surround the wearer's head and a pad of soft resilient lining material interposed between the portion of the cap adapted to cover the side of the face of the wearer and the space to be occupied by the wearer's head.

7. A baseball batter's helmet as claimed in claim 1 with an annulus of soft resilient lining material therein positioned to surround the wearer's head and a pad of resilient polyester material interposed between the portion of the cap adapted to cover the side of the face of the wearer and the space to be occupied by the wearer's head.

8. A baseball batter's helmet as claimed in claim 1 with a one-piece soft resilient lining therein lining the portions of the cap shaped to fit over the head and to cover the side of the wearer's face.

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