

Dec. 29, 1925.

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H. J. RECTENWALD ET AL

PITCHING TARGET

Filed April 12, 1923

2 Sheets-Sheet 1

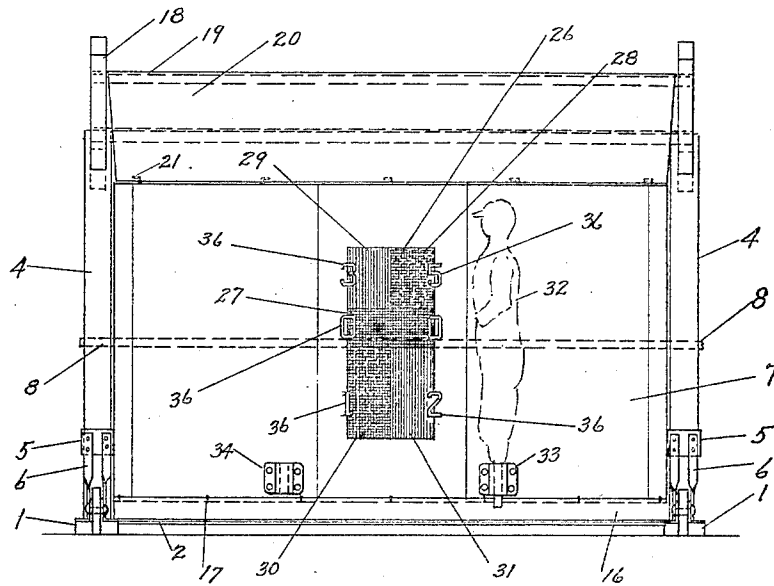


FIG. 1.

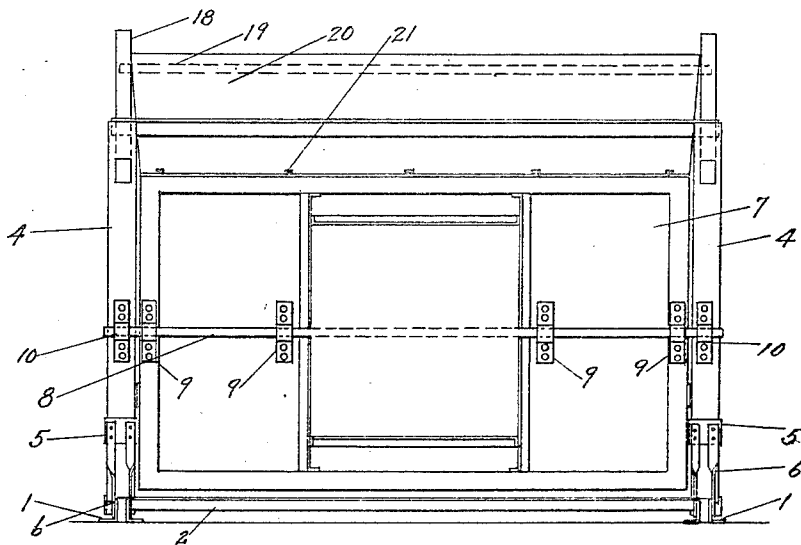


FIG. 2.

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2 Sheets-Sheet 2

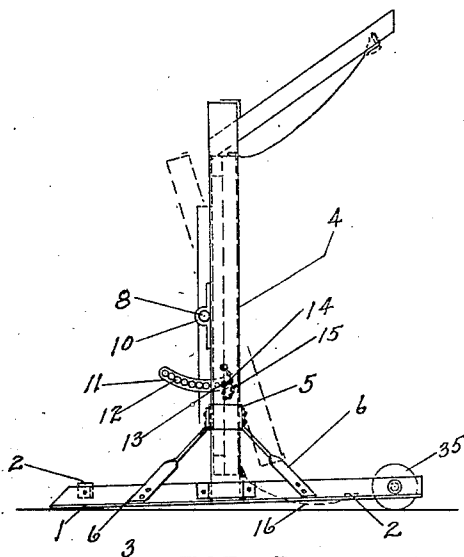


FIG. 3.

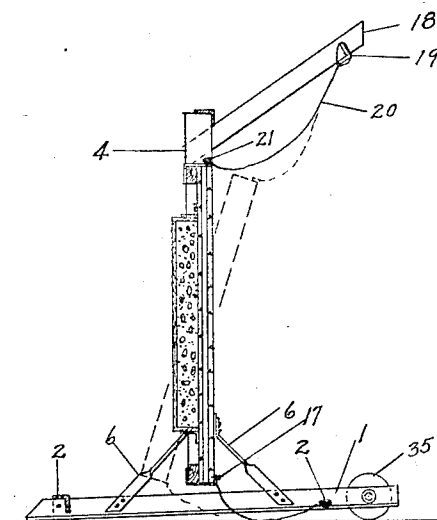


FIG. 4.

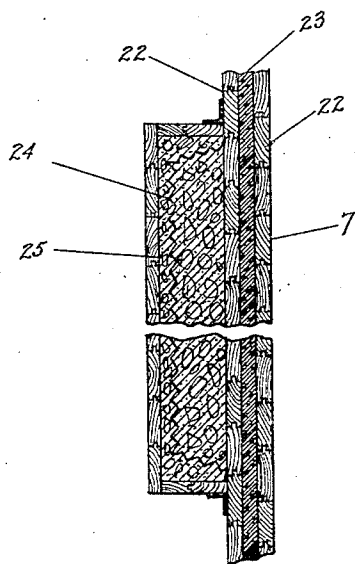


FIG. 5.

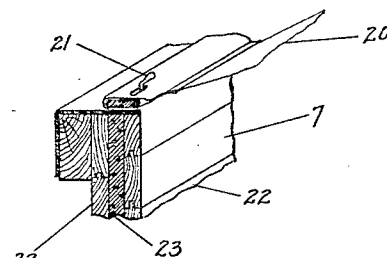


FIG. 6.

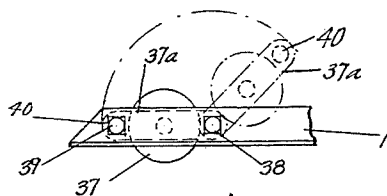


FIG. 7.

INVENTORS

Henry J. Rectenwald and William E. Bernhardt

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Patented Dec. 29, 1925.

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

HENRY J. RECTENWALD AND WILLIAM E. BERNHARDT, OF PITTSBURGH, PENN-
SYLVANIA.

PITCHING TARGET.

Application filed April 12, 1923. Serial No. 631,578.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that we, HENRY J. RECTENWALD and WILLIAM E. BERNHARDT, citizens of the United States, residing at Pittsburgh, in the county of Allegheny and State of Pennsylvania, have invented a new and useful Improvement in a Pitching Target, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to a pitching target.

10 To anyone acquainted with the game of baseball it is a well known fact that control, that is ability to deliver a baseball for the required distance with great accuracy, is of great if not of the greatest importance to a pitcher. The successful and intelligent
15 baseball pitcher attempts in pitching to a batter to deliver the ball in such position over the home plate and between the knees and shoulders of the batter, as renders it
20 most difficult for the batter to strike the ball squarely or direct its course when struck so that it lands outside the territory covered by any fielder. It is also possible for a pitcher possessed of great control to so direct
25 a ball that there is a tendency for the batter to hit the same into such area of the playing field as may be most desirable for the defensive team in effecting a double out, cutting off a run, or the like. The ball
30 should never be delivered in what is known as the "groove", that is over the home plate adjacent the waist of the batter.

It is almost impossible for a pitcher to practice control without a definite target at which to pitch.

It is also a necessity for a successful pitcher that he be able to field his position well, as his failure in this respect leaves a weak spot in the infield of his team which is
40 subject to successful attacks on the part of an opposing team, particularly by directing softly hit balls or "bunts" to that area of the infield which should be covered by the pitcher.

One object of the invention is, therefore, to provide a target presenting a definite mark or marks at which a pitcher may deliver a baseball in practicing control.

Another object of the invention is to provide a portable and movable target for such purpose, which is so arranged that a ball rebounds therefrom back to the pitcher, thus returning the ball to him and providing him with practice in fielding the same.

55 A further object of the invention is to

provide a pitcher's target which may be so adjusted as to return a baseball delivered against the target either directly on a line, on the ground as a "grounder", or in the air as a "fly" ball.

In the accompanying drawings Figure 1 is a front elevation of a target comprising the subject matter of the present invention; Figure 2 is a rear elevation thereof; Figure 3 is a side elevation of the target; Figure 4 is a vertical section therethrough; Figure 5 is a fragmentary section similar to that of Figure 4, but on an enlarged scale, illustrating a detail of construction of the target; Figure 6 is a detail view illustrating another point of construction; and Figure 7 is a detail view showing a modification which may be added to the features shown in the preceding figures.

The frame work of the target comprises a horizontal frame or platform having side members 1 and transverse spacing members 2 formed of angle beams or the like. The side members 1 are provided with sockets 3 in which engage the uprights 4 of the frame. These uprights 4 are preferably further held in position by means of straps 5 and angle braces 6. The uprights 4 may be of wood or metal as is desired. Wood may also be employed for the horizontal frame or platform of the target, it being merely desirable to utilize such material and so arrange the structure that the entire target is of knock-down construction.

The main body or hoarding 7 of the target is pivotally mounted in the uprights 4 by means of a shaft 8, which is secured to the body 7 by means of straps or the like 9, and which is rotatably mounted in bearing straps 10 on the uprights 4.

The body or hoarding 7 of the target may be adjusted in either vertical, forwardly inclined, or rearwardly inclined position by simply pressing against the same to rotate it on the shaft 8. In order to secure the hoarding in proper position, it is provided with a segmental plate 11 having therein a plurality of apertures 12 one of which at a time may be brought into register with an aperture 13 in one of the side posts or uprights 4. A pin 14, shown as secured to the uprights by a chain 15, is passed through the registering apertures 12 and 13 to lock the body in position.

In order to prevent balls from passing

beneath the hoarding 7 of the target, a strip of canvas 16 is secured to the forward cross bar 2 of the horizontal frame, and is attached to the lower portion of the target body 7 by means of hooks or buttons 17. Extending upwardly and forwardly from the frame of the target are arms 18 having a notched engagement therewith. A cross bar 19 extends between such arms, and has secured thereto a strip of canvas 20, which is attached to the upper extremity of the hoarding 7 by means of hooks or buttons 21.

It will be readily understood that the parts of the complete target may be easily assembled for use and disassembled for shipment. To disassemble the parts the arms 18 may be removed from the uprights 4, the canvas strip 20 disengaged from the hooks 21 on the body or hoarding of the target, and the canvas strip 16 unbuttoned from the lower portion of the body member 7. The hoarding 7 may be removed from the frame work by withdrawing latch pin 15 and withdrawing the shaft 8 by which the hoarding is supported. The bolts securing the uprights 4 in the sockets 3 are removed, and the braces 6 unbolted from the uprights 4 and from frame members 1.

The body or hoarding 7 of the target is constructed, as shown particularly in Figure 5 of the drawings, to provide resilient means for causing a swift return of a pitched ball to the pitcher. For this purpose the hoarding is formed of two layers of matched boards 22 having between them a layer 23 of a resilient material, such as cork composition, cork, gutta percha, or rubber. Bolted to the rearward surface of the hoarding 7 is a case 24 filled with concrete or the like 25. This rigid backing contributes largely to returning a ball thrown against the target. It will be understood that a metallic plate of sufficient size and weight may be used instead of the concrete block, but the latter is preferable in that it provides a sufficient rigid backing with less weight per unit of area.

On the forward surface of the body 7 of the target is the actual mark which a person utilizing the device endeavors to strike in pitching practice. This mark is shown as a rectangular space 26 which may be painted directly on the boards of the hoarding 7, or which may be painted upon canvas or the like stretched thereover. The mark 26 has a width equal to that of the home plate used in the game of baseball, and is of a height equal to the distance between the knees and shoulders of a batter of average height. This mark 26 is divided into a central portion 27, representing the "groove" which is to be avoided, a division 28 representing the area in which a pitch may be considered "inside and high", a division 29 representing the area within which a pitch may be con-

sidered "outside and high", a division 30 representing an area within which a pitch may be considered "outside and low", and a division 31 representing an area within which a pitch may be considered as "inside and low". The groove, and the various other divisions of the mark, are preferably of contrasting colors, as indicated in Figure 1 of the drawings.

If desired a dummy 32 representing a batter may be inserted in a socket 33 on the hoarding 7. If the conditions for a left hand batter be desired the dummy 32 may be inserted into a socket 34 on the other side of the space 26. In such case the "inside" divisions of the mark become the "outside" spaces, and vice versa.

In order that the complete target structure may be readily moved from place to place, the forward portion of the horizontal frame of the target is preferably provided with wheels 35. The rear of the target may thus be lifted in moving the target and normally permitted to rest on the ground in order to maintain the target stationary. If desired, however, the modification illustrated in Figure 7 may be applied. In this modification the rearward portion of the frame is provided with wheels 37 mounted on arms 37^a, which are pivotally mounted on a transverse shaft 38. The wheels may thus be secured in operative position by means of bolts 39 passing through bolt holes 40 in the arms 37^a, or many be swung into the inoperative position indicated in dotted lines.

In use of the device the pitcher desiring practice takes his position at the regulation distance from the target, and delivers the ball at the mark 26. With the divisions of the mark as shown, he may practice delivering straight balls, curve balls, or slow balls into any division of the mark, noting how often it accidentally strikes the undesirable area of the "groove."

With this practice he may also combine his fielding practice, as the target is so constructed, as stated, that the ball will be returned to him. For the fielding practice he may leave the hoarding of the target vertical so that the ball is returned to him on a line, or may tilt it slightly forwardly to return the ball as a "grounded", or may tilt it slightly to the rear so that the ball is returned as a "fly". The tilting of the target in the latter two cases is so slight that the vertical extent of the mark at which he throws is not unduly decreased by foreshortening.

In any position of the hoarding of the target a slow ball will be returned to the pitcher as a "bunt". While practising curve balls a pitcher may also gather valuable information by noting the path of the ball in rebounding from the target.

In order to increase interest, and to make

a game when two or more pitchers are using the target, scoring digits 36 may be removably applied to the various divisions as by applying the same with whitewash or the like. These digits are to be erased and changed with change in the particular division at which the pitchers aim.

If so desired a coating of calcimine, or the like, may be applied to the entire mark so that the exact point where a ball strikes the mark may be readily observed.

It will be understood that the device of the present invention is susceptible of various modifications over the form illustrated and described herein without departing from the spirit of the invention. For example, the hoarding may be composed of a single layer of boards and a layer of the elastic material, and if so desired the elastic material may be on the face of the hoarding and the board used as a backing therefor.

It will be understood further that the mark itself is susceptible of use as applied otherwise than in connection with the target structure illustrated and described.

What we claim is:

1. A target for use in pitching and fielding practice for baseball pitchers comprising a frame, a hoarding tiltably mounted in said frame and arranged to be secured in angularly adjusted position therein, and a backing of rigid material on said hoarding of sufficient thickness and density to produce an active rebound of a baseball striking the face of the hoarding within the area so backed.

2. A target for use in pitching and fielding practice for baseball pitchers comprising a frame, a hoarding having a mark on one face thereof tiltably mounted in said frame and arranged to be secured in angularly adjusted position therein, and a backing of rigid material on the other side of said hoarding and covering at least the area embraced by said mark, said backing being of sufficient thickness and density to produce an active rebound of a baseball striking the face of the hoarding within the area so backed.

3. A target for use in pitching and fielding practice for baseball pitchers comprising a frame, a hoarding mounted in said frame, and a backing of rigid material on said hoarding of sufficient thickness and density to produce an active rebound of a baseball striking the face of the hoarding within the area so backed.

4. A target for use in pitching and fielding practice for baseball pitchers comprising a frame, a hoarding mounted in said frame and having a mark on one face thereof, and a backing of rigid material on the other side of said hoarding and covering at least the area embraced by said mark, said

backing being of sufficient thickness and density to produce an active rebound of a baseball striking the face of the hoarding within the area so backed.

5. A target for use in pitching and fielding practice for baseball pitchers comprising a frame, a hoarding tiltably mounted in said frame and arranged to be secured in angularly adjusted position therein, said hoarding having on one face thereof a mark the width of the home plate in the game of baseball and a height equal to the distance between the knees and shoulders of a batter of average height, said mark being divided into the desirable and undesirable areas for the delivery of a baseball under actual playing conditions, and a backing of rigid material on the other side of said hoarding and covering at least the area embraced by said mark, said backing being of sufficient thickness and density to produce an active rebound of a baseball striking the face of the hoarding within the area so backed.

6. A target for use in pitching and fielding practice for baseball pitchers comprising a frame, a hoarding mounted in said frame and having on one face thereof a mark the width of the home plate and a height equal to the distance between the knees and shoulders of a batter of average height, said mark being divided into the desirable and undesirable areas for the delivery of a baseball under actual playing conditions, and a backing of rigid material on the other side of the hoarding and covering at least the area embraced by said mark, said backing being of sufficient thickness and density to produce an active rebound of a baseball striking the face of the hoarding within the area so backed.

7. A target for use in pitching and fielding practice by baseball pitchers comprising a frame, and a hoarding comprising layers of relatively non-resilient material and a layer of relatively resilient material between said non-resilient layers tiltably mounted in said frame, said hoarding having on one face thereof a mark the width of the home plate in the game of baseball and a height equal to the distance between the knees and shoulders of a batter of average height.

8. A target for use in pitching and fielding practice by baseball pitchers comprising a frame, a hoarding comprising layers of relatively non-resilient material and a layer of relatively resilient material between said non-resilient layers tiltably mounted in said frame, said hoarding having on one face thereof a mark the width of the home plate in the game of baseball and a height equal to the distance between the knees and shoulders of a batter of average height, and a

backing of rigid material on the other side of said hoarding and covering at least the area embraced by said mark.

9. A target for use in pitching and field-
5 ing practice by baseball pitchers comprising a frame, and a hoarding comprising layers of relatively non-resilient material and a layer of rubber between said non-resilient
10 layers tiltably mounted in said frame, said hoarding having on one face thereof a mark the width of the home plate in the game of baseball and a height equal to the distance
15 between the knees and shoulders of a batter of average height.
10. A target for use in pitching and field-
ing practice by baseball pitchers compris-

ing a frame, a hoarding comprising layers of relatively non-resilient material and a layer of rubber between said non-resilient
20 layers tiltably mounted in said frame, said hoarding having on one face thereof a mark the width of the home plate in the game of baseball and a height equal to the distance
25 between the knees and shoulders of a batter of average height, and a backing of rigid material on the other side of said hoarding and covering at least the area embraced by said mark.

In witness whereof, we hereunto set our hands.

HENRY J. RECTENWALD.
WILLIAM E. BERNHARDT.