United States Patent

Perry

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[54] **PITCHER'S MOUND WITH TOE BLOCK AND REINFORCING RIBS**

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** **273/25**

[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63b 71/00**

[58] **Field of Search** ..... 273/25, 26 R

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS

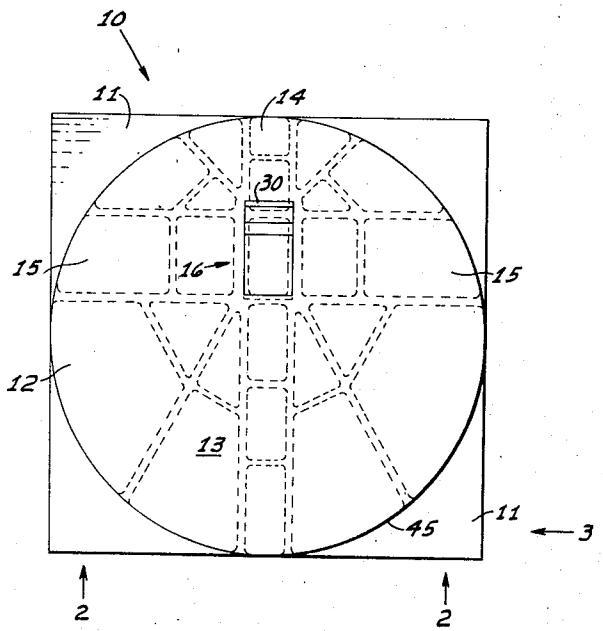
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A portable pitching mound having a removable toe block and reinforcing ribs. A base is integrally joined to an upward sloping mound having a removable toe block secured at its top. The removable toe block is secured within the mound by a tongue and groove arrangement. The removable toe block is made from rubber having a heel supporting portion and a toe supporting portion. Various reinforcing ribs are integrally attached to the hollow bottom interior of the mound supporting the removable toe block. A non-skid pad is attached to the bottom of the pitcher's mound.

5 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures



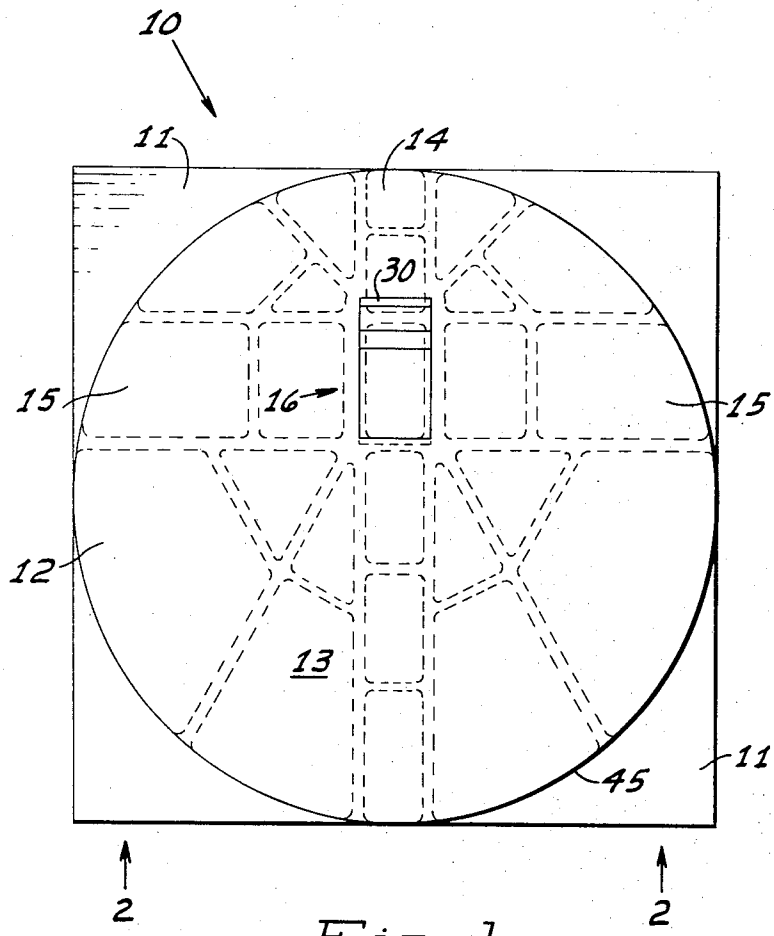


Fig. 1

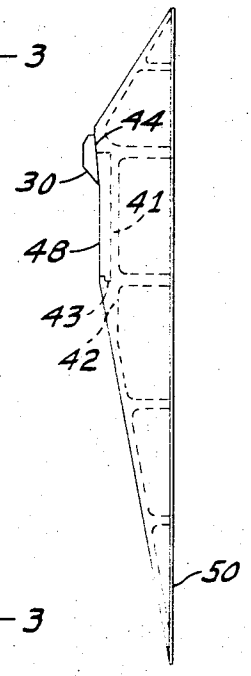


Fig. 3

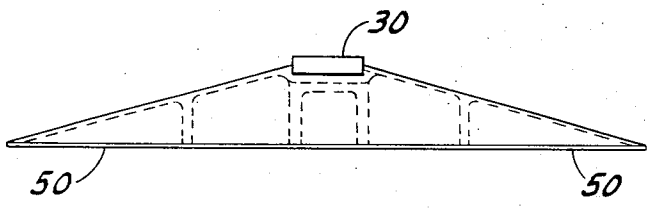


Fig. 2

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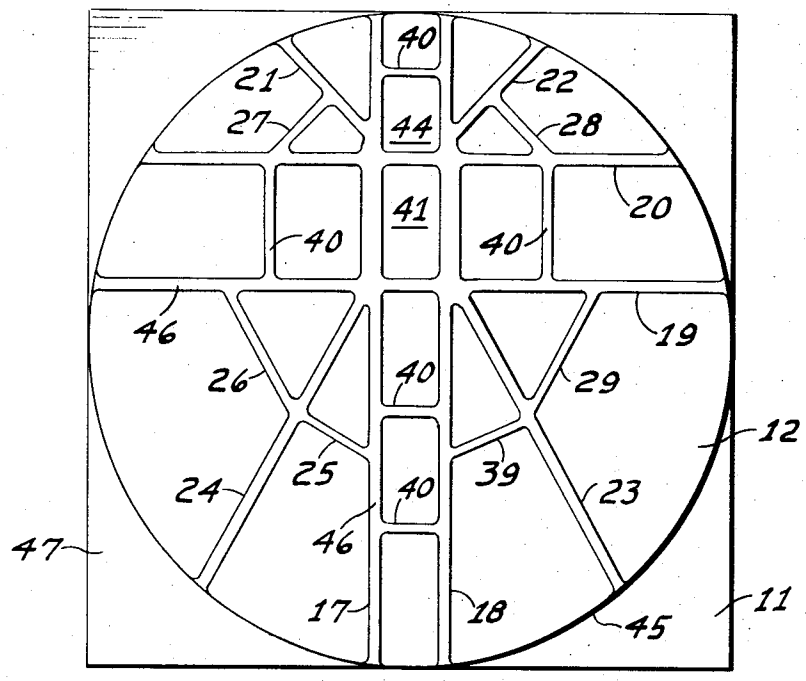


Fig. 4

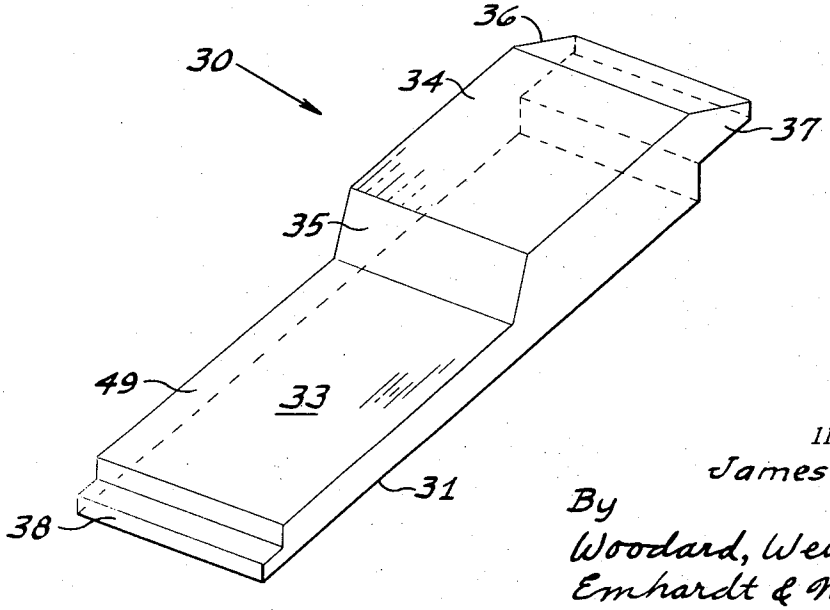


Fig. 5

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PITCHER'S MOUND WITH TOE BLOCK AND REINFORCING RIBS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention is in the field of portable baseball mounds.

2. Description of the Prior Art

The rules and regulations of the game of baseball provide that the pitcher throw the ball from a pitcher's mound. These mounds are upraised portions having a depression for receiving the toe of the pitcher. A block of wood or similar material is located at the back of the depression for receiving the pitcher's heel. It can be appreciated, that the game of baseball is played in many areas not having pitchers' mounds. In addition, pitchers practice throwing the ball indoors during inclement weather. It is therefore desirable to have a portable pitcher's mound which may be quickly and easily moved to the location to be used by the pitcher. Three pitchers' mounds are disclosed in the following: U.S. Pat. Nos. 2,156,469 issued to Boltz; 3,236,520 issued to Friedman; and, 3,479,028 issued to Goeders.

The present invention is an improvement over the prior art pitcher's mound in that it has a removable toe block which is supported by various reinforcing ribs. Many of the prior art pitchers' mounds are hollow shells having a toe block positioned at the top of the mound. It is possible therefore when the pitcher places his foot upon the toe block for the mound to buckle and/or give slightly thereby impairing the accuracy of the throw. The present invention eliminates this problem in that various ribs are integrally attached to the bottom surface of the mound around the area supporting the removable toe block. These toe blocks wear out over extended periods of time. It is therefore desirable to have a toe block which is removable from the mound. The prior art devices use standard fastening devices such as bolts and nuts to secure the toe block to the mound. The present invention provides a removable toe block which is secured to the mound by a tongue and groove arrangement thereby eliminating the necessity for tightening various fastening devices. In addition, the prior art toe blocks typically were made from a material different from the mound and supported only the pitcher's heel. As a result, the front portion of the pitcher's foot was supported by material having a different resilience than that portion supporting the heel. The present invention eliminates this problem in that the portion supporting the front portion of the foot and the heel portion of the foot is one integral piece being made from the same material.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

A portable pitcher's mound having a removable toe block and reinforcing ribs. A flat base having a bottom surface is integrally joined to an upward sloping hollow mound having an upper extremity and an outer extremity. The outer extremity surrounds said mound and is integral with the base. The upper extremity has a rectangular shaped depression with a groove formed in front of the depression. A removable toe block having a heel supporting portion and a toe supporting portion integrally joined together has a leading edge with a tongue formed thereon. The tongue fits within the groove formed in front of the depression. Reinforcing ribs integrally joined to the mound extend down flush with the bottom surface of the base and are positioned to support the block.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a portable pitcher's mound having a removable toe block which is positioned atop a mound and supported on the bottom by various reinforcing ribs.

In conjunction with the above object, it is an object of the present invention to provide a mound having a non-skid bottom surface.

Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a portable pitcher's mound having a removable toe block which is secured to the mound without the aid of fastening devices such as bolts and screws.

An additional object of the present invention is to provide a portable pitcher's mound having a toe supporting portion and a heel supporting portion being of the same material.

Related objects and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the following description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

FIG. 1 is a top elevation of a portable pitcher's mound incorporating the present invention.

FIG. 2 is the end elevation of the mound of FIG. 1 viewed in the direction of arrows 2—2.

FIG. 3 is a side elevation of the mound of FIG. 1 viewed in the direction of arrows 3—3.

FIG. 4 is a bottom elevation of the pitcher's mound of FIG. 1.

FIG. 5 is an enlarged perspective view of the removable toe block 30 shown in FIGS. 1 through 3.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

For the purposes of promoting an understanding of the principles of the invention, reference will now be made to the embodiment illustrated in the drawing and specific language will be used to describe the same. It will nevertheless be understood that no limitation of the scope of the invention is thereby intended, such alterations and further modifications in the illustrated device, and such further applications of the principles of the invention as illustrated therein being contemplated as would normally occur to one skilled in the art to which the invention relates.

Referring now more particularly to FIGS. 1 through 4, there is shown a portable pitcher's mound being molded from a plastic material and having a rectangular shaped planar base 11 generally parallel with the flat ground supporting the pitcher's mound. Integrally joined to base 11 is a raised mound 12 having a generally circular outer extremity 45 being positioned immediately adjacent the top surface of base 11. Mound 12 tapers upwardly from base 11 to a flat portion 16. Mound 12 is contoured sloping at a small angle in the front portion 13 of the mound as compared to a relatively large sloping angle with respect to base 11 at the rear portion 14 of the mound. The sides 15 of the mound likewise slope upward to area 16 and are contoured with front portion 13 and back portion 14.

FIG. 4 is a bottom elevation of the pitcher's mound of FIG. 1 showing the multiple strengthening ribs which are integrally attached to mound 12. A pair of longitudinal ribs 17 and 18 extend the complete length of the

portable pitching mound to outer extremity 45. A pair of transverse ribs 19 and 20 are integrally attached to mound 12 and ribs 17 and 18 being positioned at right angles with respect to ribs 17 and 18. Ribs 17 through 20 have a bottom surface 46 which is flush with the bottom surface 47 of base 11. Thus, the ribs provide support to mound 12 which is hollow. Non-skid pad 50 is attached to the bottom surfaces 46 and 47 of the ribs and base to prevent relative motion between the pitcher's mound and the ground. This non-skid pad is shown in FIGS. 2 and 3 but has been deleted from FIG. 4 to more clearly illustrate the various ribs. It can be appreciated that when a pitcher places his foot upon the removable toe hold 30, the entire weight of the pitcher bears downward through the toe hold and is applied to the center portion 16 of the pitcher's mound. Ribs 17 through 20 have been positioned around the perimeter of the renewable toe hold thereby providing for maximum support and preventing mound 12 from buckling. Angular ribs 21, 22, 23 and 24 are integrally joined to the intersection of ribs 17 through 20 projecting outwardly ending at outward extremity 45. The angular ribs likewise are integrally attached to mound 12. Center ribs 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 39 are integrally joined to the mound and to the angular ribs 21 through 24 and ribs 17 through 20. The center ribs are also positioned around the renewable toe block thereby giving additional support. Multiple cross ribs 40 are integrally attached to mound 12 being connected between ribs 17 and 18 and ribs 19 and 20. FIG. 4 clearly shows the positioning of the center ribs and cross ribs with center rib 25 being integrally joined between longitudinal rib 17 and angular rib 24 and with center rib 26 being integrally joined between angular rib 24 and transverse rib 46. Ribs 27 and 28 are integrally joined to transverse rib 20 and to respectively angular ribs 21 and 22. Likewise, center ribs 29 and 39 are integrally joined to angular rib 23 and respectively transverse rib 19 and longitudinal rib 18.

FIG. 5 is an enlarged perspective view of the removable toe hold 30 which has a bottom surface 31 which is seatable on support wall 41 shown in FIG. 3. Wall 41 is parallel with base 11 and is integrally joined to longitudinal ribs 17 and 18 and transverse ribs 19 and 20. The bottom surface of wall 41 is shown in FIG. 4. In addition, wall 41 is integrally joined at thickened portion 42 (FIG. 3) to the front sloping portion 13 of mound 12. Wall 41 is recessed beneath the uppermost surface 48 of flat portion 16 so as to receive the removable toe block 30. The distance from the uppermost surface 48 of portion 16 to the top surface of wall 41 is approximately equal to the thickness of toe support 33 of block 30. Thus, the upper surface 49 of toe support portion 33 is flush with surface 48. The toe support portion 33 is integrally joined to heel support portion 34 with an upward sloping surface 35 therebetween. Heel support portion 34 extends rearwardly forming flange 37 having an upper beveled end 36. Flange 37 overhangs and is supported by planar portion 44. Integrally formed at the forward edge of toe support 33 is tongue 38 which slips into groove 43 formed in mound 12 immediately above wall 41. Toe block 30 is produced from a rubber material having a hardness of approximately 90 durometer. As the toe block wears down by continued use, the rear flange 37 may be grabbed and pulled upwardly until tongue 38 disengages groove 43. The toe block 30 may then be removed and a new toe block inserted in its place. By appropriate sizing of toe block 30, adhesives and other fastening devices are not required to secure the toe block to the mound. The sides of mound 12 which abut against toe block 30 are sized to interferingly fit and receive the toe block. The toe block will give slightly being made from rubber when it is inserted into the mound and as a result of tongue 38 and groove 43 will be securely held therein. The non-skid pad 50 is attached to the bottom of the pitcher's mound by a suitable adhesive. The non-skid pad may be made from a rubber-like cloth material having a roughened lower surface for frictional engagement with the ground.

Variations in the present invention are contemplated and included by this specification. For example, it is possible to provide holes throughout the periphery of base 11 for receiving various stake-like protrusions for permanently anchoring the pitcher's mound to the ground. The pitcher's mound may be produced in a variety of sizes with the base having an overall width (extending parallel with the transverse ribs 19 and 20) from 5 feet to 7 feet. The height of the pitcher's mound from the bottom surface of the base to the top surface of the removable toe block may be from 10 inches to 2 feet. In one embodiment of the present invention, the overall length of the toe block was 12 inches.

It will be evident from the above description that the present invention provides a portable pitcher's mound having a removable toe block which is positioned atop a mound and supported on the bottom by various reinforcing ribs. The pitcher's mound has a non-skid bottom surface for use indoors as well as outdoors. The non-skid bottom will prevent injury to floors when used indoors. It will be further evident from the above description that the present invention provides a portable pitcher's mound having a removable toe block which is secured to the mound without the aid of fastening devices such as bolts and screws.

While the invention has been illustrated and described in detail in the drawings and foregoing description, the same is to be considered as illustrative and not restrictive in character, it being understood that only the preferred embodiment has been shown and described and that all changes and modifications that come within the spirit of the invention are desired to be protected.

The invention claimed is:

1. A portable pitcher's mound comprising:

a flat base having a bottom surface;

an upward sloping hollow mound having an upper extremity and an outer extremity, said outer extremity surrounding said mound and being integral with said base, said upper extremity having a rectangular shaped depression with a groove formed in front of said depression;

a removable toe block having a heel supporting portion and a toe supporting portion integrally joined together, said toe portion having a leading edge with a tongue formed thereon, said tongue fitting within said groove; and,

reinforcing ribs integrally joined to said mound and extending down flush with said bottom surface of said base and being positioned to support said block.

2. The mound of claim 1 wherein:
said heel supporting portion has a flange projecting rearward of said block resting atop said upper extremity, said heel supporting portion is positioned higher than said toe supporting portion.
3. The mound of claim 2 wherein:
said mound has a front portion and a back portion, said front portion slopes upward with respect to said base at an angle less than said back portion slopes with respect to said base; and,
said block has a width with said tongue extending completely across said width.
4. The mound of claim 3 additionally comprising:
a non-skid pad mounted on said bottom surface of said base.
5. The mound of claim 4 wherein:
said outer extremity is circular in shape;
said block is rubber; and,
said mound and base are plastic.

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