

June 29, 1971

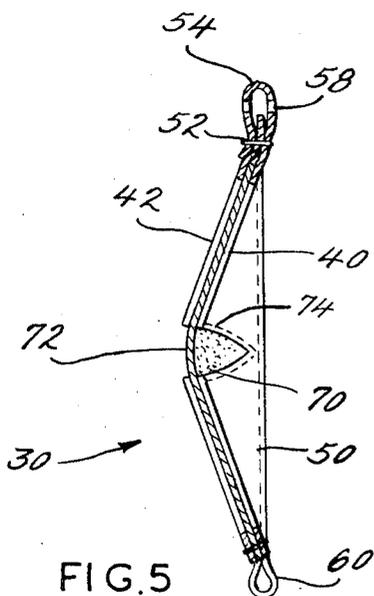
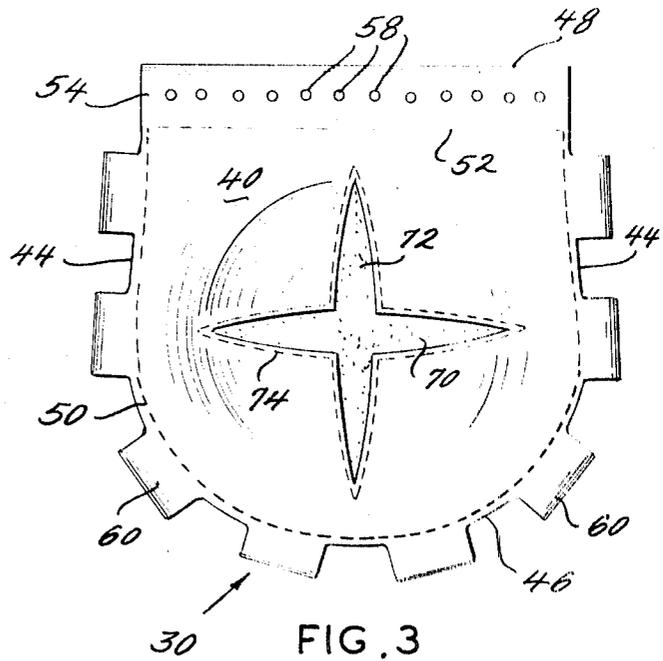
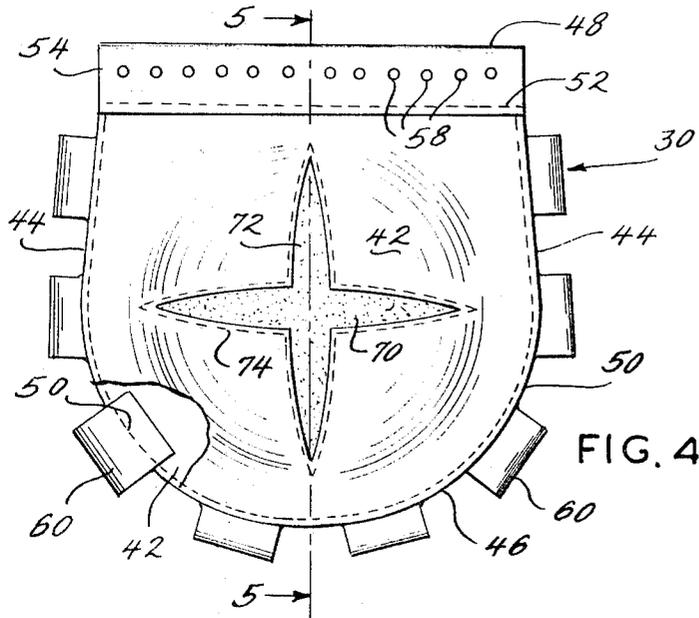
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3,588,915

BALL GLOVE HAVING A CONCAVE BACKSTOP

Filed Jan. 30, 1970

2 Sheets-Sheet 2



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3,588,915

BALL GLOVE HAVING A CONCAVE BACKSTOP
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 Filed Jan. 30, 1970, Ser. No. 7,188
 Int. Cl. A41d 13/10

U.S. Cl. 2—19

10 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A ball glove has a first finger section and a thumb section with a flexible backstop connected to and closing the area between those sections. The backstop is formed from similarly-shaped and overlying facing and backing plies each of which is internally slitted to permit expanding the ply into a three dimensional configuration. Means is secured in the plies so that the slits are prevented from closing. Thus, the three dimensional configuration of concave shape for the backstop is maintained.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates in general to ball gloves, and more particularly to backstops for ball gloves.

In many fielders' gloves of current manufacture the finger sections extend considerably beyond the ends of the fielder's finger, and likewise the thumb section extends considerably beyond the end of the fielder's thumb. Indeed, the fingers for the most part are presented behind the palm portion of the glove body, that is, directly behind the pocket area of the glove where baseballs are most often caught. The foregoing construction coupled with the natural divergence of the fielder's thumb and index finger require a relatively wide and long backstop between the thumb section and the first finger section of the glove body. This backstop forms a continuation of the pocket in the glove body and thereby prevents balls from passing between the thumb and finger sections of the glove.

In gloves of current manufacture the backstop normally constitutes nothing more than a flat piece of webbing laced or otherwise secured to the opposed edges of the thumb section and the index finger section. By reason of the flat construction, hard hit balls which enter the glove pocket obliquely have a tendency to pass along the backstop and slip out of the pocket. Furthermore, the use of relatively flat webs detracts from the flexibility of the glove, making control of the glove difficult, particularly when it is new and not yet broken-in.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

One of the principal objects of the present invention is to provide a ball glove with a backstop having superior ball retention capabilities for balls which enter it. Another object is to provide a backstop which is concave or pocket-shaped to retain balls which enter it. A further object is to provide a backstop which is quite flexible and enables the user to maintain a high degree of control over the glove. Still another object is to provide a backstop which creates a deep pocket in the glove but does not have puckering or gathering in the plies during shaping, and yet affords easy retrieval of balls caught in the glove. Yet another object is to provide a backstop which is simple in construction and easy to manufacture. These and other objects and advantages will become apparent hereinafter.

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The present invention is embodied in a ball glove having a flexible pocket-shaped backstop extending between its first finger section and its thumb section. The backstop includes at least one ply of flexible material having at least one slit cut therein. The margins of the slit are spread to impart a concave shape to the ply and means bridge the slit to maintain the margins thereof in spread apart relation. The invention also consists in the parts and in the arrangements and combinations of parts hereinafter described and claimed.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

In the accompanying drawings which form part of the specification and wherein like numerals and letters refer to like parts wherever they occur:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the front face of a ball glove provided with a backstop constructed in accordance with and embodying the present invention,

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the back face of the ball glove,

FIG. 3 is a front view of the backstop,

FIG. 4 is a rear view of the backstop, and

FIG. 5 is a sectional view taken along line 5—5 of FIG. 4.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring now in detail to the drawings, 2 designates a ball glove including a glove body 4 (FIGS. 1 and 2) having an outer shell 6 provided with finger sections 8, 10, 12 and 14 and a thumb section 16, all of which emanate from a palm area 18 on the outer shell 6. One margin of the palm area 18 terminates at a heel 20, while the opposite margin extends up to a crotch 22 located between the first or index finger section 8 and the thumb section 16.

The glove body 4 also includes an inner or lining shell (not shown) having finger stalls and a thumb stall for receiving the user's fingers and thumb, respectively. The finger stalls are positioned such that the user's palm and fingers will be spread generally behind the palm area 18 of the glove body 6 with the tips of the fingers being in the vicinity of the inner ends of the finger sections 8, 10, 12, and 14. Similarly, the thumb stall positions the end of the user's thumb in alignment with and near the beginning of the thumb section 16. Thus, the finger sections 8, 10, 12 and 14, and the thumb section 16 form extensions of the user's fingers and thumb, respectively.

The space between first or index finger section 8 and the thumb section 16 is closed by a backstop 30 which is secured to the finger section 8 and the thumb section 16 as well as to the intervening crotch area 22 of the glove body 4 by means of a leather or other suitable lacing 32. The backstop 30 possesses a concave or pocket-like configuration and together with the adjoining palm area 18 of the glove body 4 forms a deep ball-receiving pocket 34 (FIG. 1) within the glove 2.

The backstop 30 is of multiply construction (FIG. 5) and includes a facing ply 40 and a backing ply 42. The facing ply 40 is presented forwardly, or in other words faces in the same direction as does the ball-receiving side of the outer shell 6, whereas the backing ply 42 faces rearwardly. Both plies 40 and 42 have substantially the same shape and like the backstop 30, which they form, they are peripherally defined (FIGS. 3 and 4) by substantially straight side margins 44 which lie along the sides of the first finger and thumb sections 8 and 16 of the

glove body 4, an arcuate or shaped inner margin 46 which merges at its ends into the straight side margins 44 and lies along the crotch 22 of the glove body 4, and finally a generally straight outer margin 48 which is squared off with respect to the side margins 44 and extends between the outer extremities of the first finger section 8 and thumb section 16.

The two plies 40 and 42 are attached together immediately inwardly from their side and inner margins 44 and 46 by a run of stitching 50. At the outer edge 48, the facing ply 40 is doubled back across the outer end and back face of the backing ply 42 (FIG. 5) and is secured thereto by a straight run of stitching 52 which is set inwardly from the fold in the facing ply 40, that is from the outer margin 48, so that the doubled back portion of the facing ply 40 forms a tunnel 54 through the backstop 30.

The tunnel 54 contains a lacing 56 (FIGS. 1 and 2) formed from a suitable flexible material such as leather, and that lacing extends into and is attached to the ends of the thumb section 16 and the finger section 8. The portion of the facing ply 40 which forms the tunnel 54 is furthermore provided with a plurality of transversely spaced apertures 58, and some of the lacing 56 is passed spirally through the apertures 58 and over the doubled back portion of the facing ply 40 so that a spirally wound segment of lacing 56 extends along the outer margin 48 of the backstop 30.

In addition to the doubled back portion of the facing ply 40 at the outer margin 48, the facing ply 40 has tabs which project outwardly from its side margins 44 and its arcuate inner margin 46, and these tabs are doubled back upon themselves in the provision of attaching loops 60. The ends of the tabs or loops 60 are tucked between the backing ply 42 and main body of the facing ply 40 and are caught in the run of stitching 50 so that the loops 60 are permanent and will not unfold (FIG. 4). The tabs, however, may be on either ply.

The lacing 32 extends alternately through the attaching loops 60 on one hand and the finger section 8, crotch section 22 and thumb section 16 of the glove body 4 on the other hand. In this connection, it should be noted that the loops 66 are fastened generally against the back sides of the finger section 8, crotch 22 and thumb section 16 so that the backstop 30 is located slightly behind and forms a continuation of the palm area 18 of the glove body 4.

The backstop 30 is provided with a pocket or concave shape by slitting both the facing ply 40 and the backing ply 42, and then spreading the margins formed by the slits so that a star-shaped opening 70 exists in both plies 40 and 42. More specifically, both plies 40 and 42 are slit centrally between the two side margins 44 and in a direction generally parallel to those margins. Both plies 40 and 42 are also slit in a direction perpendicular to the side margins 44 and parallel to the outer margin 48. The latter slits also approximately bisect the backstop 30 as well as the first slits and terminate prior to the run of stitching 50 somewhat inwardly from the side margins 44. The first slits on the other hand terminate prior to the run of stitching 52 at one end and prior to the arcuate portion of the run of stitching 50 at its other end. The corresponding slits in each of the plies 40 and 42 align with one another or in other words are in marginal registration. In general, the star-shaped openings 70 are presented centrally within the facing and backing plies 40 and 42, and likewise within the backstop 30.

Interposed between the facing and backing plies 40 and 42 is a spreader ply 72 which extends across the openings 70 and is secured to the two plies 40 and 42 by a run of stitching 74 located immediately outwardly from and parallel to the margins of the aligned openings 70. The spreader ply 72 not only blocks the star-shaped openings 70 in the plies 40 and 42, but also resists any tendency of the margins forming those openings to close. Since the plies 40 and 42 assume a generally flat disposition when the margins of the opening 72 close or come together, the

spreader ply 72 maintains the plies 40 and 42 in a concave or pocket-shaped configuration.

The spreader ply 72 may be formed from a material of contrasting color to the material of the facing and backing plies 40 and 42 so that the star-shaped opening 70 stands out boldly on the backstop 30 and thereby serves as attractive ornamentation.

The backstop 30, a pocket in itself, forms a pocket-like continuation of the palm area 18 of the glove body 4, and consequently the pocket 34 within the glove 2 is considerably deeper and more pronounced than the pocket formed by a mere flat web across the thumb and finger sections of a glove as is the case with conventional gloves. Thus, any ball which enters the pocket 34 goes deep into the glove 2 where it is easily retained, yet easily retrieved also. Moreover, should any ball enter the glove obliquely from the area of the heel 20, it will not pass on through the pocket 34 and along the backstop 30, but on the contrary it will be entrapped in the portion of the pocket 34 created by the concavity of the backstop 30. Also balls which strike the glove 2 near the outer margin 41 of the backstop 30, will more likely be deflected toward the deep center of the backstop 30 or into the crotch 22 than outwardly across the margin 41 as is true of gloves provided with conventional flat backstops.

This invention is intended to cover all changes and modifications of the example of the invention herein chosen for purposes of the disclosure which do not constitute departures from the spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. In a ball glove including a glove body having a ball-receiving pocket and spaced apart thumb and finger sections, a backstop forming a continuation of the ball-receiving pocket of the glove body and attached to the thumb and finger sections for substantially closing the space between those sections, the backstop comprising at least one ply of flexible material having at least one slit therein, the margins of which are spread apart so that an opening is formed in the ply and the backstop assumes a concave shape, and means bridging the slit to retain the margins of the slit in spread apart relation, whereby the concave configuration of the backstop is maintained.

2. The structure according to claim 1 wherein the ply is provided with two slits which cross at the approximate center of the backstop, whereby a star-shaped opening is formed in the ply.

3. The structure according to claim 1 wherein the means bridging the slit is a spreader ply of flexible material which is secured to the ply containing the slit.

4. The structure according to claim 3 wherein a second ply is provided having a slit which forms an opening located in approximate marginal registration with the opening in the first ply; and wherein the spreader ply is interposed between the first and second plies and is secured to both the first and second plies to maintain the openings therein and the concave shape thereof.

5. The structure according to claim 4 wherein the first ply at its outer end is doubled back across a portion of the second ply and is secured to the second ply so as to form a tunnel across the backstop; and wherein a flexible lacing extends through the tunnel and into the ends of the finger section and thumb section of the glove body.

6. The structure according to claim 5 wherein the first and second plies have side margins which intersect the outer margin formed by the double back portion of the first ply, and a shaped inner margin which merges into the side margins.

7. The structure according to claim 6 wherein the finger and the thumb sections of the glove body are joined through a crotch; wherein the side margins of the first ply are attached to the thumb and first finger sections of the glove body; and wherein the shaped inner margin of the first ply is attached to the crotch of the glove body.

8. The structure according to claim 4 wherein the first

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and second plies are each provided with two slits which cross at the approximate center of the backstop and are in approximate marginal registration, whereby star-shaped openings are formed in the first and second plies.

9. The structure according to claim 8 wherein loops extend from the side and shaped margins of the backstop; and wherein flexible binding material extends alternately through the loops and the finger section, crotch, and thumb section of the glove body for attaching the backstop to the glove body.

10. The structure according to claim 9 wherein the loops comprise tab-like portions of flexible material which extend outwardly from one of the plies and are doubled back upon themselves, the ends of the tab-like portion

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being interposed between the two plies and caught in the stitching to form loops at the edges of the backstop.

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JAMES R. BOLER, Primary Examiner

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

Patent No. 3,588,915 Dated June 29, 1971

Inventor(s) Roland N. Latina

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent are hereby corrected as shown below:

The Assignee should be: "by mesne assignment to A-T-O Inc., Willoughby, Ohio; an Ohio Corporation".

Signed and sealed this 12th day of October 1971.

(SEAL)
Attest:

EDWARD M. FLETCHER, JR.
Attesting Officer

ROBERT GOTTSCHALK
Acting Commissioner of Patents