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FOOTBALL KICKING TEE

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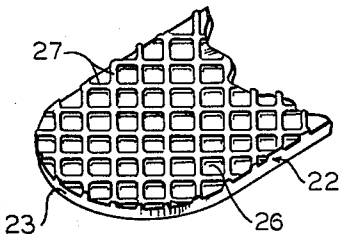


FIG. 2

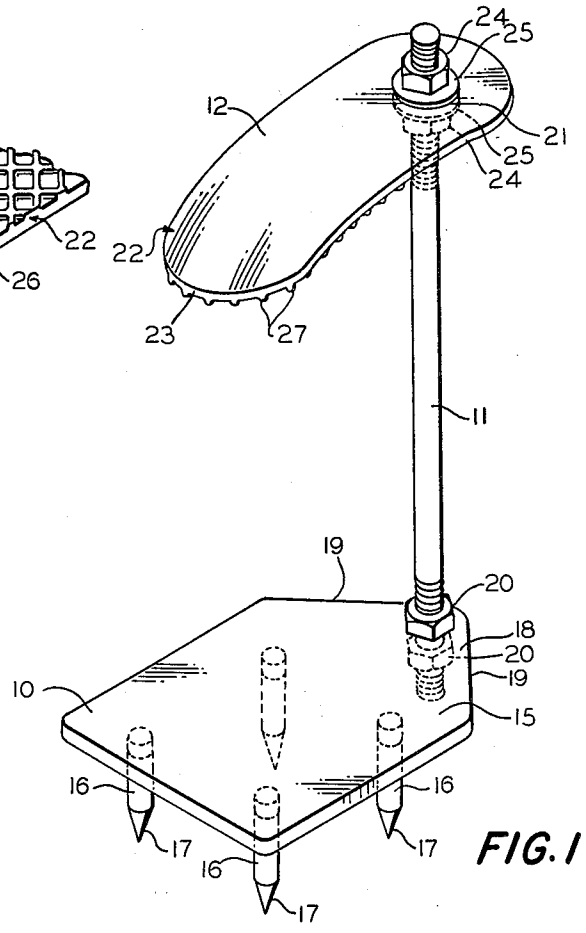


FIG. 1

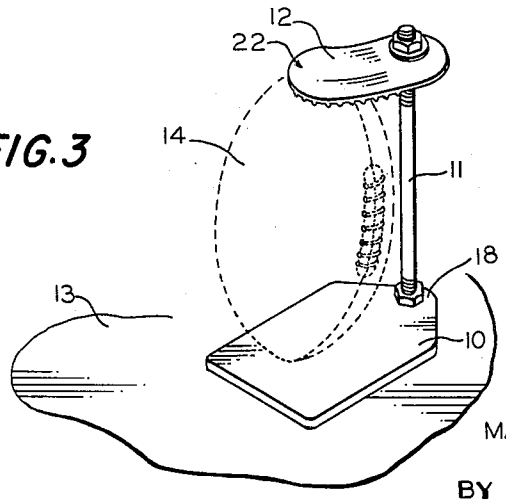


FIG. 3

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FOOTBALL KICKING TEE

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This invention relates to a football kicking tee and more particularly to a tee for holding a football in the desired vertical position by applying a downward pressure on the uppermost end of the ball.

Football kicking tees previously devised for the purpose of holding a ball for practice in kicking extra points or field goals usually only provide a supporting stand or block which position the ball vertically in an appropriately shaped socket or frame. The objective of utilizing a tee is to eliminate the necessity of another player to manually hold the ball during practice sessions as is required during regulation play. Previously devised tees have not proven adequate or satisfactory for this purpose as they are not capable of simulating the manual holding of the ball where a player upon receiving the ball from the center positions the ball in the desired vertical position for the kicker by placing his fingers on the upper end of the ball and applying a slight downward pressure while providing the necessary lateral stability. Such tees have proven inadequate in this respect as they do not simulate these conditions encountered during regulation play. To derive the maximum value from a tee utilized during practice sessions, it is necessary that the tee be capable of applying the slight downward pressure as well as providing the necessary lateral support to more closely simulate a manually held ball.

It is the primary object of this invention to provide a football kicking tee with a vertically spaced holding arm capable of applying the necessary downward pressure on a vertically positioned football in addition to the lateral support thereby closely approximating the conditions encountered when the ball is manually held.

Another object of this invention is to provide a football kicking tee comprising a supporting base and a vertically spaced holding arm for releasably engaging the upper end of a football vertically positioned therebetween.

Other objects and advantages of this invention will be readily apparent from the following detailed description thereof and the accompanying drawing.

In the accompanying drawing illustrative of an embodiment of the present invention:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of the football kicking tee;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged detail view of the corrugated under surface of the holding arm; and

FIG. 3 is a perspective view of the football kicking tee positioned on the ground with a football outlined in kicking position.

With reference to the drawing, the football kicking tee comprises a base plate 10, a supporting shaft 11 and a holding arm 12. The base plate 10 is of a generally rectangular shape fabricated from a smooth surfaced, flat sheet of rigid material, preferably steel plate, disposed in a horizontal plane for association with a supporting surface 13, which in this instance is the playing field. Width and length of the base plate 10 are dictated by the necessity of providing the required stability during the kicking process and a platform on which a football 14 (FIG. 3) may be vertically positioned on the upper horizontal surface 15 thereof. A plurality of calks 16 are rigidly secured to the lower horizontal surface of the base plate 10 and extend downwardly therefrom for engagement with the supporting surface thereby securely anchoring the tee at the appropriate position. The calks 16, four being utilized in the present embodiment and located at

the marginal corners of the base plate 10, are elongated cylindrical rods rigidly secured at one end thereof to the base plate 10 by threaded engagement therewith or, more conveniently, by welding. The opposite ends of the calks 16 are tapered to provide a conical point 17 enabling the calks to be readily inserted in the supporting surface 13. One end of the base plate 10 is longitudinally extended to provide a mounting bracket 18 for the supporting shaft 11 and its associated holding arm 12. The bracket 18 is integrally formed with the base plate 10 with the external marginal edges 19 thereof tapered inwardly toward the center of the bracket and outwardly from the base plate. A cylindrical bore is located at the apex of the angle thus formed in the bracket for reception of the supporting shaft 11.

The supporting shaft 11, an elongated cylindrical rod, is vertically positioned on the mounting bracket 18 with its lower threaded end extending through the cylindrical bore located therein. Two nuts 20 are threaded on the lower end of the shaft 11, one being located above the bracket and the other below. The shaft 11 is securely locked to the bracket 18 by rotating the nuts oppositely until they contact the opposite sides of the bracket thereby clamping it between them. It will also be noted that a vertical height adjustment of the shaft 11 relative to the base plate 10 may be readily accomplished by the simultaneous movement of the two nuts 20 in the same direction.

The holding arm 12 is positioned at the upper end of the shaft 11 in a parallel, horizontal relationship to the base plate 10. The arm 12 is an elongated section of flexible, resilient material, natural or synthetic rubber for example, substantially rectangular in shape. One end 21 of the arm 12 is rigidly attached to the upper end of the shaft 11 with the free end 22 extending outwardly therefrom vertically spaced from the base plate 10 and terminating in an arcuately curved edge 23. The end 22 must, of course, be directly above the central portion of the base plate 10 with which it cooperates in holding a football in the desired position. For the purpose of attaching the arm 12 to the shaft 11, a cylindrical bore is located in the end 21 through which the upper end of the shaft extends. The diameter of the bore is sufficiently greater than that of shaft 11 to permit the arm 12 to be moved in a horizontal plane. The vertical position of the arm 12 is maintained by a double nut 24 and washer 25 locking arrangement. Two washers 25 having an outer diameter substantially greater than the bore located in the arm 12 are positioned on the upper end of the shaft 11 adjacent to the arm, one being above the arm and the other below. The two nuts 24 are similarly positioned on the upper end of the shaft 11, which is cooperatively threaded, one being above a washer 25 and the arm and the other below the other washer and the arm. Rotating the nuts 24 oppositely will bring them together thereby clamping the arm 12 between the washers 25 securely positioning the arm at the desired point on the shaft 11. Vertical height adjustment of the arm relative to the base plate 10 may also be accomplished by the simultaneous movement of the nuts 24 in the same direction.

To effect a more effective gripping of the upper end of a football positioned between the arm 12 and the base plate 10, the lower horizontal surface 26 of the arm may be corrugated, as shown by FIG. 2, to susbtantially eliminate slippage. In the present embodiment, the corrugated surface comprises a plurality of outwardly extending, integrally molded spaced ribs 27 extending over a substantial portion of the free end 22 of the arm 12. The ribs 27 are arranged in two sets with one set being disposed transversely to the other resulting in a lattice type corrugation.

A football kicking tee constructed in accordance with this invention is particularly adaptable for utilization during practice sessions where it is advantageous to eliminate the necessity of another player holding the ball as is required during regulation play. The tee is appropriately positioned on the playing field relative to the goal posts with the base plate 10 and the holding arm 12 oriented transversely to the proposed line of flight of the ball and the vertical supporting shaft 11 located to the right or left thereof accordingly as the kicker uses the right or left foot, respectively. The tee is then pressed downward until the lower surface of the base plate 10 is in contact with the supporting surface 13 and the calks 16 are fully inserted in the ground thereby securely anchoring the tee at the desired location in an upright position. The football 14 is then vertically positioned on the tee with one end contacting the upper horizontal surface 15 of the base plate 10 approximately at its center and the other end in contacting engagement with the corrugated lower surface 26 of the holding arm 12. To obtain the desired downward force on the football, it may be necessary to adjust the vertical spacing between the holding arm 12 and base plate 10 as, preferably, the spacing should be slightly less than the length of a football. The free end 22 of the arm 12 will accordingly be displaced upwardly and its resiliency will create a downward force on the ball 14 while providing the necessary resistance to lateral movement. It is obvious that the frictional contact of the arm will maintain a ball in a vertical position and prevent the lateral movement thereof with consequent dislodgment of the ball from a vertical position by such forces as wind. The tee will also be equally effective in holding a ball in slightly inclined position which may be required under certain playing conditions when it is necessary to obtain a higher arcing trajectory.

It is readily apparent that with a football tee as provided by this invention the player may conveniently practice place kicking under the closely simulated conditions of regulation play. With this tee, the player may kick the football in the usual manner and obtain the same effect as a manually held ball having a downward pressure applied to its upper end with the consequent greater accuracy. The flexible, resilient holding arm permits a

ball to be readily released when kicked and offers no more obstruction to the kicker as his foot follows through than is encountered in a manually held ball. The football is also given the desired lateral stability to prevent undesired movement occasioned by gusts of wind or other causes. The tee presents, approximately, the same physical structure of a player that is in immediate association with the ball thereby avoiding the usual psychological facts accompanying a change from a tee to a manually held ball which negates a large part of the value derived from utilizing a practice tee. A tee of the present construction is readily utilized requiring only that the calks be pressed into the ground to provide the necessary stability and may be easily moved to the desired location.

According to the provisions of the patent statutes, the principles of this invention have been illustrated and described in what is now considered to represent the best embodiment. However, it is to be understood that, within the scope of the appended claim, the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically illustrated and described.

Having thus described this invention, what is claimed is:

A football kicking tee comprising an elongated, rigid supporting shaft having means attached to one end thereof for engaging a supporting surface and maintaining said shaft substantially vertically disposed relative to said surface, and holding means attached to said shaft in vertically spaced relationship to said means including an elongated, resiliently flexible arm extending a distance laterally from said shaft with the space between said arm and said means being unobstructed except for said shaft, said arm being provided with a surface adapted to frictionally engage a football and being normally spaced a distance slightly less than the height of the ball when in kicking position whereby the arm will resiliently maintain the ball in position but will readily release same when kicked.

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