Dec. 11, 1951 E. M. SIRE 2,578,375

SKEE-BALL GAME APPARATUS

Filed Jan. 28, 1950 2 SHEETS—SHEET 1

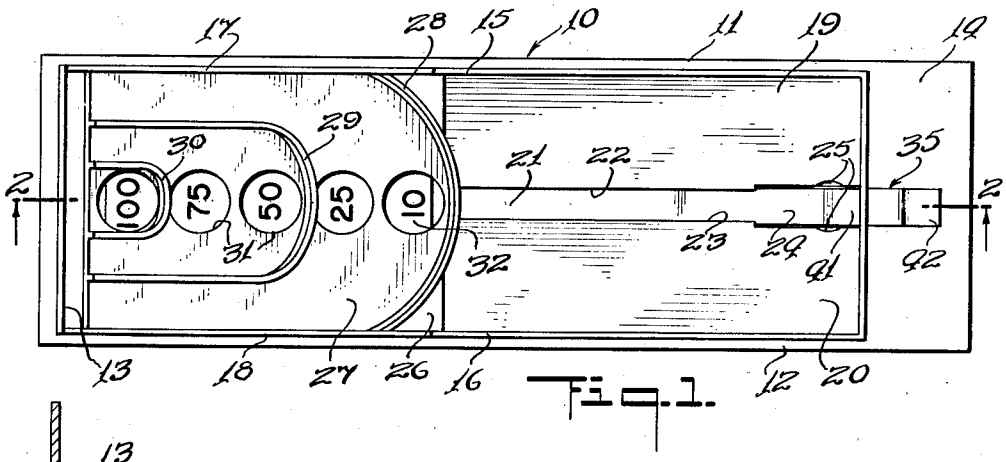


Fig. 1.

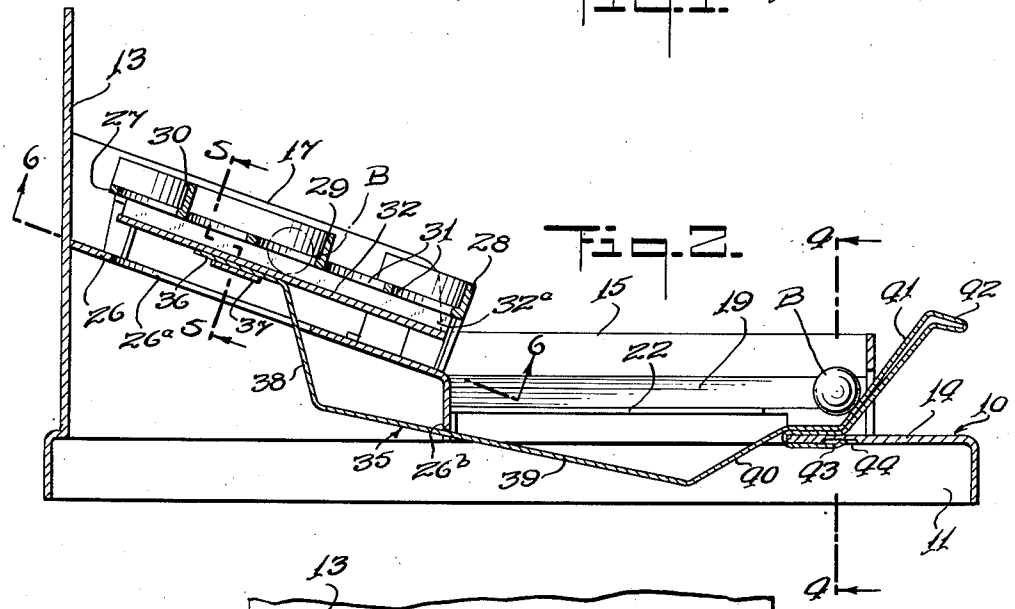


Fig. 2.

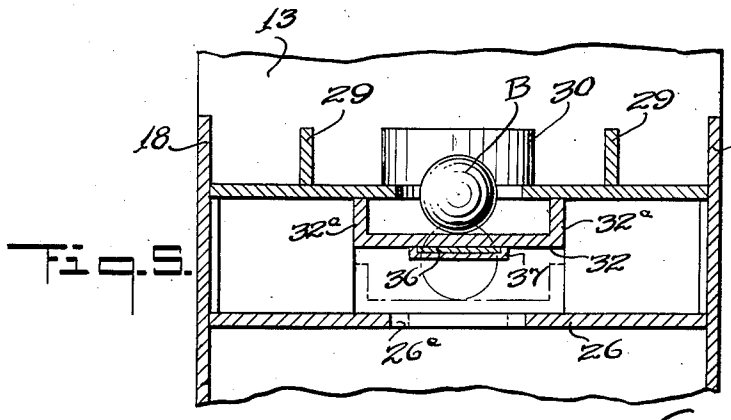


Fig. 5.

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SKEE-BALL GAME APPARATUS

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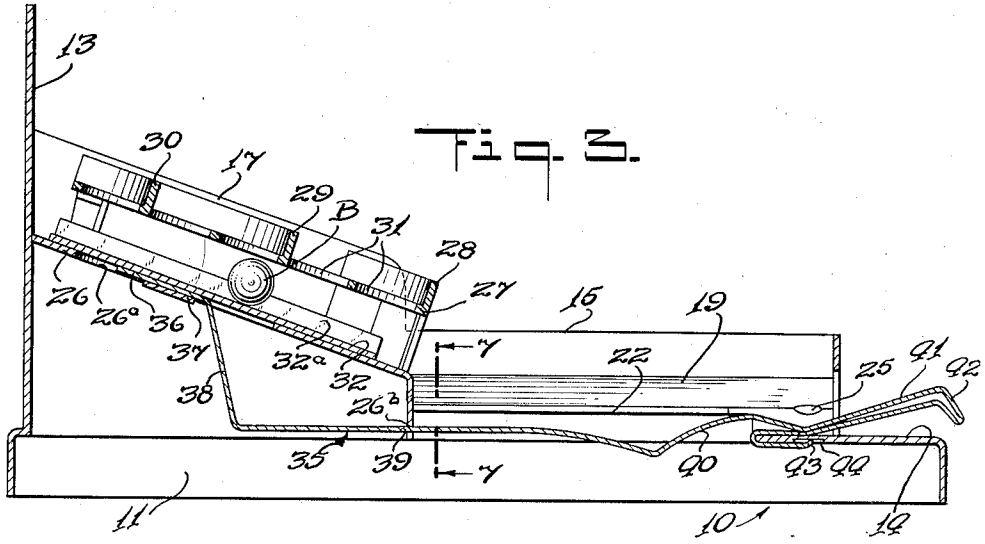


Fig. 3.

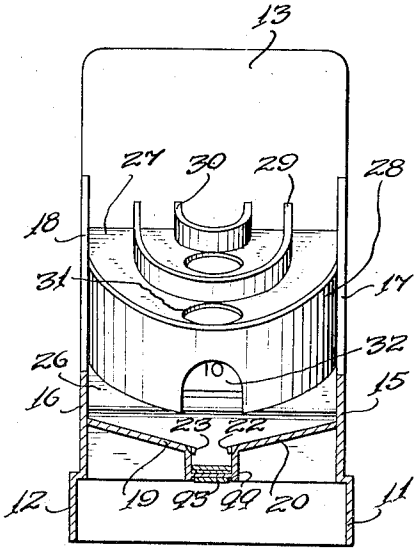


Fig. 4.

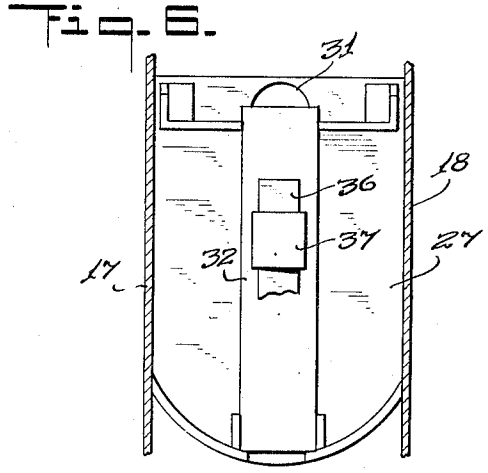


Fig. 6.

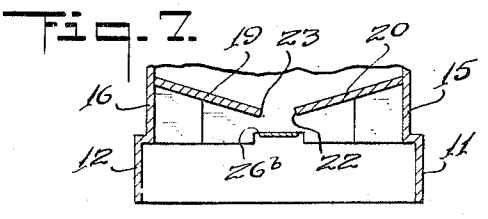


Fig. 7.

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SKEE-BALL GAME APPARATUS

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Application January 28, 1950, Serial No. 141,070

12 Claims. (Cl. 273—101)

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This invention relates to toys or games and has particular reference to a game which includes a score indicating device to increase the amusement value of the article.

A game popularly known as Skee ball is widely played at amusement parks or the like. This game includes a scoring area consisting of a number of circles into any one of which a ball may be projected and a number of such balls each of which is individual projected or thrown into the scoring area. A score is registered each time the ball falls into the scoring area whereupon it is returned to the supply of balls. According to the instant invention, a game of this type is provided in miniature form, and only a single ball is employed. The article includes means for releasing the ball from the scoring area and returning it to its projection point each time the ball projector is actuated. Thus, only one ball is required in the playing of the game. In the form shown, the ball is released from the scoring area by providing means whereby it falls through identified openings in such areas each time a spring-like ball projecting member is depressed, release of such depressed member actuating and projecting the ball.

The game further assumes extremely simplified form in that it consists of a minimum number of parts which are capable of facilitated manufacture and assembly. The particular method of realizing the action above referred to results in an economy of manufacture and assembly as well as a facilitated method of operation which further stimulates the interest of the operator.

The above and other advantages of the invention will be evident from the following description and drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is a top plan view of a game constructed according to the instant invention.

Fig. 2 is a cross-sectional view taken along the lines 2—2 of Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is a cross-sectional view similar to Fig. 2 but illustrating the depression of the ball projecting member preparatory to actuating the ball.

Fig. 4 is a cross-sectional view taken along the lines 4—4 of Fig. 2.

Fig. 5 is an enlarged, cross-sectional view taken along the lines 5—5 of Fig. 2.

Fig. 6 is a cross-sectional view taken along the lines 6—6 of Fig. 2; and

Fig. 7 is a cross-sectional view taken along the lines 7—7 of Fig. 3.

In the form shown, the game comprises a body or frame 10 which includes downwardly depending sides 11 and 12 and a backstop 13. Supported on the surface 14 of body 10, as by being integral therewith, are the upstanding sides 15 and 16 which rise at rearward portions 17 and 18 where they meet backstop 13. The sides 15 and 16 rise thus in order to enclose the scoring area, as will be made evident hereinafter. Connected to the front portions of the sides 15 and 16 are the ledges 19 and 20 which are separated from each other by a space 21. Ledges 19 and 20 are downwardly directed toward each other, (Figs. 4 and 7), so that a ball B falling on the ledges will gravitate toward the space 21 where it will be supported by the inner edges 22 and 23. It is obvious that the ball B should have a diameter somewhat greater than the width of space 21. Ledges 19 and 20 are further downwardly directed or biased from the back toward the front of the body so that the ball tends to roll down along space 21 and into its normal resting site 24. Resting site 24 is shown as slightly enlarged and includes depressions 25 formed in the ledge edges so that the ball always tends to assume the same rest position by settling in the depressions 25.

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Disposed on support 14, as by being integral therewith, as well as with the sides 15 and 16 and the backstop 13, is the slanted platform 26. Spaced above platform 26 and generally parallel therewith is platform 27 upon which are disposed arcuate barrier members 28, 29 and 30. Formed in platform 27 are a series of openings 31. It will be recognized that the projected ball may fall into any one of the areas defined by the barrier members 28, 29 and 30 and may further fall into any one of the five openings 31 illustrated so as to indicate the achievement of a particular score, whether it be 10, 25, 50, 75 or 100 or any other number or indicia desired.

Openings 31 are of a diameter slightly greater than the width of the projected ball as will be hereinafter understood so that the ball may freely fall through any score opening save for the provision of a movable chute or support 32 which underlies platform 27 and normally prevents the ball from falling through any opening. Chute 32, as may be seen in Fig. 5, is provided with sides 32a for guiding the ball B toward space 21 when the ball is released from the scoring area.

Chute 32 is maintained generally parallel to platforms 26 and 27 but is movable in a substantially vertical direction between said platforms for the purpose of providing either support or release of the ball. The score numbers are disposed on chute 32 and are seen through the openings so as to indicate the value of or otherwise identify each of the openings.

The position of chute 32 is controlled by an

elongated, flat spring 35, one end 36 of which is slidably received in a slot formed between the floor of chute 32 and an integral strap 37. Spring 35 further comprises a second portion 38 which depends downwardly from end portion 36, a main or center portion 39 which extends from under the scoring area through a slot 26a formed in platform 26 and through slot or cut-out 26b formed in the lower edge of platform 26 to under and along the space 24, a portion 40 which extends upwardly from portion 39, and a ball striking portion formed by folding the other end of the spring 35. Such ball striking portion is formed by folding the spring so that it includes a striker 41 and a finger rest 42. The extreme end of spring 35 is turned inwardly to form a gripping finger 43 which lodges and nests in a depression 44 in support 14 so as to anchor the spring thereto, the inherent spring action of spring 35 thereby maintaining it in position.

The game is played by initially disposing the ball B at its resting site in depressions 25. For a better understanding of the invention, it will be assumed that the ball has been already projected and has come to rest within one of the openings 31. The player then presses down on finger rest 42 preparatory to effecting another projection of the ball. Depression of finger rest 42 with the consequent cocking of striker 41 automatically releases the ball from the scoring area so that it rolls downwardly along inclined chute 32 and onto the inclined ledges 19 and 20 to its resting site. As the player releases the cocked striker, the ball is again projected to indicate the succeeding score. It will be recognized therefore that cocking of the striker automatically releases the ball from the scoring area and effects its return to its resting site so that release of the cocked striker causes another projection of the ball. This results from the following action:

When the spring 35 is in its normal state as illustrated in Figs. 2 and 5, the chute 32 is in its upward position where its sides 32a make contact with the underside of platform 27. As such, the ball B is supported within an opening (Fig. 5). When the finger rest 42 is depressed by the player, the spring assumes the position illustrated in Fig. 3. It will be observed that the striker 41 becomes cocked, and the spring portion 40 flexes as does the center portion 39. Pursuant to the lever action between the striker as one arm thereof and the remainder of the spring as the other arm, the fulcrum being at the ball resting site, the tendency is for the rear portion of the spring to rise upwardly as the striker is depressed. However, this tendency is resisted by the upper edge of cut-out 26b which functions as a second fulcrum and causes a downward movement of the rear end of spring portion 39 as illustrated in Fig. 3. The spring end portion 36 accordingly slides slightly in the slot formed by strap 37 and the chute 32 is brought down to the broken line position illustrated in Fig. 5 where the chute may rest on platform 26. This provides sufficient clearance between platform 27 and chute 32 so that the ball may freely fall through the opening, roll down the chute onto the inclined guideway formed by the ledges, and drop into its normal rest position. The player thereupon releases the striker so as to hit and project the ball once again. This automatically restores the chute 32 to ball supporting position so that the score may be again indicated. It will be understood therefore that the ball is supported within a score opening when the striker is in normal position after having been operated and that the ball is automatically released and restored to its projection site as the striker is depressed preparatory to a succeeding play. It will be further evident that any number of players may participate and scores may be accumulated.

The automatic action described greatly facilitates manufacture and production of the game and reduces costs to a minimum while nevertheless accomplishing all the practical requirements of a game of this type. The unitary nature of the spring 35 which provides a simple striker while further providing ball releasing action is of considerable importance in achieving this objective as is the minimum number of parts required to make up the game.

Whereas the spring 35 which is herein disclosed has a number of bends for accomplishing the desired depression or lowering of the rear end thereof when the striker portion is depressed, it will be understood that this spring may take various other forms, particularly in eliminating many of the bends herein illustrated.

What is claimed is:

1. A game comprising a body including a normal resting site for a ball to be projected, a ball striker disposed adjacent said resting side for hitting and projecting the ball, a scoring member having a plurality of ball receivers formed therein whereby the projected ball may fall into any one of said ball receivers, a ball release member disposed adjacent to said scoring member ball receivers, said ball release member being shiftable and adjacent to one end of said striker so as to be shifted thereby when the striker is actuated, shifting of said ball release member being operative to effect the discharge of the ball from any ball receiver when the striker is actuated preparatory to hitting the ball, said discharge returning a projected ball to its normal resting site.

2. A game comprising a body including a normal resting site for a ball to be projected, a ball striker disposed adjacent said resting site for hitting and projecting the ball, a scoring member having a plurality of openings formed therethrough whereby the projected ball may fall into any one of said openings, a ball support normally disposed immediately below said openings so as to maintain the ball within an opening and prevent it from falling therethrough, said ball support being adjacent to one end of said striker so as to be contacted thereby, and means for shifting said ball support by the action of said striker for releasing the ball from any opening and returning it to its normal resting site when the striker is cocked preparatory to hitting and projecting the ball.

3. A game comprising a body, a ball striker disposed at one end of said body for hitting a ball to be projected, a scoring member at the other end of said body having a plurality of openings formed therethrough for receiving the projected ball into any one of said openings, an inclined guideway from said scoring member to a point adjacent to said striker for guiding the ball thereto upon discharge of the ball from said scoring member, a ball support normally disposed immediately below said openings for retaining a projected ball in one of said openings, said ball support being connected to said striker for downward actuation when the striker is operated for hitting the ball, downward actuation of such support permitting the ball

to fall through an opening and along said support to said inclined guideway.

4. A game comprising a body, a ball striker at one end of said body for hittng a ball to be projected, a scoring member at the other end of said body and having a plurality of ball receivers formed therein whereby the projected ball may fall into any one of said ball receivers, a ball release member disposed adjacent to said scoring member ball receivers and spring means connected between said striker and said ball release member, operation of said striker preparatory to hitting the ball being operative to actuate said ball release member so as to effect the discharge of the ball from any ball receiver, said discharge returning a projected ball to a position adjacent said ball striker.

5. A game comprising a body, a ball striker disposed at one end of said body for hitting a ball to be projected, a scoring member at the other end of said body having a plurality of openings formed therethrough for receiving the projected ball into any one of said openings, an inclined guideway from said scoring member to a point adjacent to said striker for guiding the ball thereto upon discharge of the ball from said scoring member, a ball support normally disposed immediately below said openings for retaining a projected ball in one of said openings, an elongated spring element having its respective ends connecting said ball support to said striker, said elongated spring element having a bend formed at its connection to said striker so as to form a lever of said spring element and said striker whereby depression of said striker at one end of said spring element urges the other end of said spring element connected to said support in an upward direction, and means disposed between said bend and said other end of said spring element resisting said urge in an upward direction, said last-named means operating thereby as a fulcrum point so as to effect downward actuation of said other end of said spring member whereby said support is correspondingly downward actuated so as to permit the ball to fall through an opening and along said support to said inclined guideway.

6. A game according to claim 5 and wherein said spring element and striker are integrally formed from a single length of spring material.

7. A game according to claim 6 and wherein said single length of spring material is folded upon itself adjacent to one end thereof to form said striker, the extreme end thereof adjacent to said one end being further folded to form a spring finger, said spring finger clasping said body so as to connect said length of spring material thereto.

8. A game according to claim 7 and wherein said striker is folded with an off-set portion serving as a finger rest.

9. A game comprising a body, a ball striker disposed at one end of said body for hitting a ball to be projected, a first platform at the other end of said body having a plurality of openings formed therethrough for receiving the projected ball into any one of said openings, a ball support normally disposed immediately below said openings for retaining a projected ball in one of said openings, a second platform below said ball support, an inclined guideway from said second platform to a point adjacent said striker for guiding the ball thereto upon discharge of the ball from said support, an elongated spring element integral with said striker and connecting said support thereto, said spring element and integral striker being jointly formed as a lever and having a fulcrum at the commencement of said striker and abutting said body so that depression of said striker arm tends to raise said spring element, and a second fulcrum disposed substantially centrally of said spring element for resisting said tendency and for correspondingly effecting a downward actuation of the support connecting end thereof so as to actuate said support downwardly when the striker is depressed, downward actuation of said support releasing the ball from any opening and discharging it along said support to said inclined guideway.

10. A game according to claim 9 and wherein said ball support is formed with indicia visible below each opening.

11. A game according to claim 9 and wherein said inclined guideway is formed with a depression adjacent said striker, said depression serving as a normal resting site for the ball.

12. A game according to claim 9 and wherein said spring element is slidably connected to said support, said support being actuated by said spring element between said first and second platforms when said striker is operated.

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