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[54] RACK FOR SPORTING EQUIPMENT

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[58] Field of Search. **211/14, 13, 60, 88, 90;**
248/108

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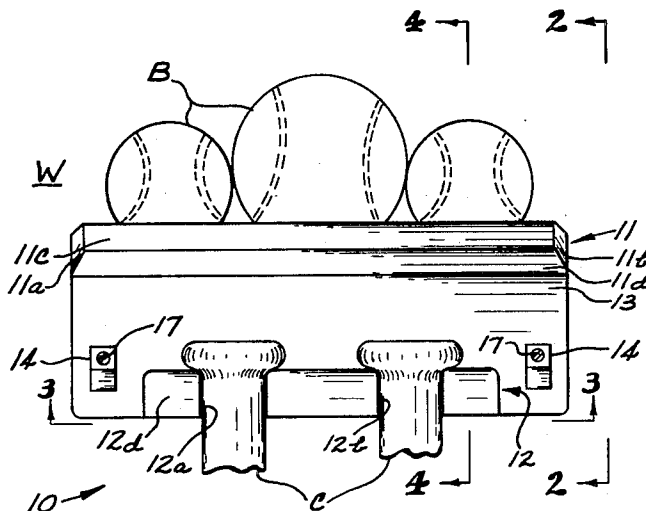
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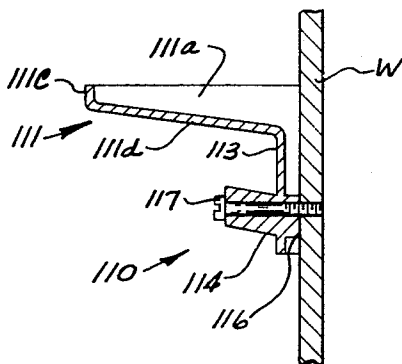
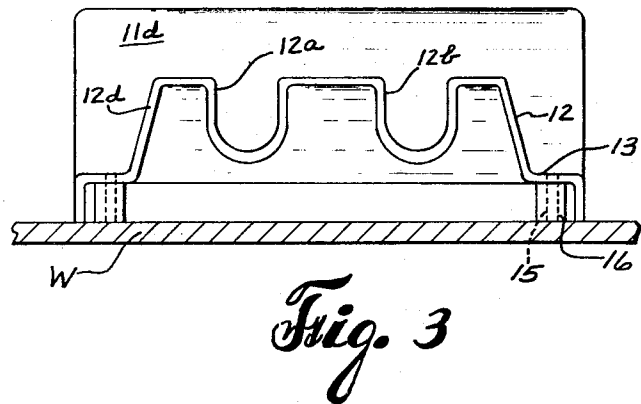
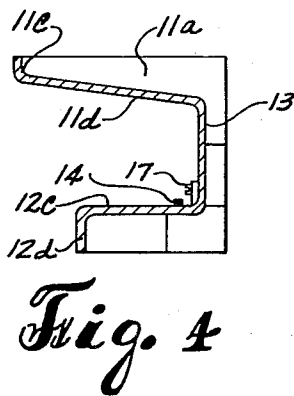
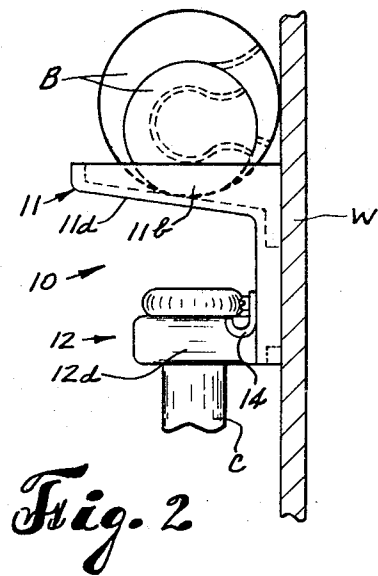
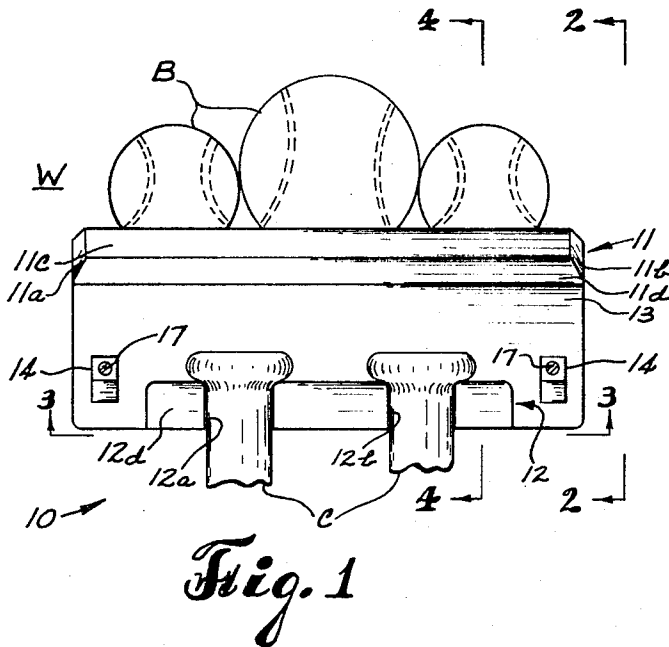
ABSTRACT

A wall mountable rack for storing small balls, baseball bats, baseball gloves and related accessories such as baseball caps and uniforms. The rack includes a single piece body with vertically spaced, upper and lower shelf-like projections extending away from a connecting backing structure. The top projection includes an upstanding, three-sided wall surrounding an inclined ledge. The lower shelf is indented to receive and hold the handle end of ball bats. The rack is adapted to be connected to a supporting wall by bolt or screw means. Two separable hooks employed to support gloves, caps, jackets and the like are secured to the main rack body below the upper shelf by the same screws or bolts employed to mount the body against the wall.

In a modified form, the rack is integrally formed in a single piece with pegs projecting from the backing structure of the rack body. The pegs include bores extending through their lengths through which a bolt or screw means may be employed to simultaneously secure the rack to the wall and provide reinforcing for the pegs.

6 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures





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RACK FOR SPORTING EQUIPMENT

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to storage means. More specifically, the present invention relates to wall-mounted rack means for storing sporting goods such as balls, bats, baseball gloves, baseball caps and related accessories commonly employed in the games of baseball and softball.

2. Brief Description of the Prior Art

The equipment normally associated with the game of baseball or softball includes ball bats, various sized balls, ball gloves, hats, uniforms and a variety of related accessories. It is desirable to store this equipment in a convenient, readily accessible, safe location when it is not in use. This is particularly apparent where the equipment is used by children since it is desirable to maintain the equipment at one location to prevent its loss and to prevent accidental injury caused by tripping over balls or bats.

One device (which is not necessarily prior art) of which applicant is aware stores balls, bats and related equipment on a single shelflike ledge. The ledge includes indentations for receiving the ends of baseball bats, pegs extending from the ledge for receiving caps and gloves and round holes formed in the ledge itself for holding balls. The ledge required for storing three bats and two balls in this device is relatively long since the single ledge provides storage for the balls, bats and gloves.

In the previously described device, the pegs employed for receiving gloves or hats are positioned at the front edge of the retaining shelf ledge. This disposition of the pegs is undesirable in that the pegs extend out away from the shelf increasing the overall shelf size and contributing to the possibility of injury caused by falling against the rack. Moreover, the described positioning of the pegs creates an undesirably large stress acting against the shelf when heavy items such as jackets and the like are hung on the pegs.

Conventional wall-mounted racks designed to store tools and the like do not lend themselves to modern molding and fabricating techniques. In addition, these devices are not well suited for holding objects having the form of baseballs and baseball bats.

Generally speaking, the prior art has lacked a suitable, low cost wall-mounted rack for compactly and safely storing the equipment associated with the games of baseball and softball.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The rack of the present invention employs upper and lower shelves to reduce the overall dimensions of the rack. Balls are positioned on the top shelf while the bats are positioned on the bottom shelf. The top shelf is formed substantially in the shape of a tray and includes upstanding front and side walls. The bottom wall of the tray slopes backwardly toward the rear portion of the rack. When the rack is mounted against a wall, the sloping disposition of the bottom wall tends to roll the balls against the supporting wall causing them to remain in place on the top tray. The design of the top tray also permits different sized balls to be stored and obviates the necessity of special placement within a receiving hole.

The main rack body is formed in a single piece, easily molded design. The rack body is mounted against a supporting wall by means of screws or bolts or other suitable means which also secure suspending hooks to the rack. By forming the hooks and rack body separately, molding costs are reduced and the strength of the rack is increased in that the stress exerted by heavy articles suspended from the hooks is transmitted directly to the mounting bolt or screw rather than to the rack body.

In a modified form of the rack of the present invention, the means employed for suspending baseball gloves and caps and the like comprises a peg rather than a hook. The peg is integrally formed with the rack body and is provided with a mounting bore which extends through its length. The bolt or screws employed to secure the rack to the mounting wall ex-

tend through the bores formed in the center of the pegs to simultaneously mount the rack against the wall and provide increased structural strength for the pegs. In both forms of the invention, the suspending hooks or pegs are positioned below the top tray which shields them and prevents snagging of clothing or accidental injury caused by brushing by or falling against the rack.

The foregoing and other objects and advantages of the present invention will become more apparent from the following specification and related drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 of the drawings is a front elevation of the rack of the present invention mounted against a supporting wall;

FIG. 2 is a side elevation of the rack of the present invention taken along line 2—2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a bottom view of the rack of the present invention taken along the line 3—3 of FIG. 1 and having the balls and bats removed from their storage position;

FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view taken along the line 4—4 of FIG. 1 with the balls and bats omitted for clarity; and

FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view of a modified mounting structure for the rack of the present invention.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The rack of the present invention is indicated generally at 10 in FIG. 1 as it appears when mounted against a supporting wall W. The rack 10 includes a top tray 11 and a bottom shelflike projection 12 which extend from a supporting backing 13. The top tray 11 is designed to hold a plurality of different size balls B while the lower shelf 12 is indented at 12a and 12b to receive the handle end of two bats C which have been partially illustrated in the drawings.

As may be seen by joint reference to FIGS. 1, 2 and 4, the upper tray 11 includes side walls 11a and 11b and a front wall 11c. The three walls 11a, 11b, and 11c extend upwardly from an inclined bottom 11d which slopes downwardly from the front wall 11c toward the backing 13.

The lower shelf 12 includes an upper surface 12c which mates with a downwardly extending, supporting lip 12d.

Two separable hook structures 14 constructed of metal or other suitable material are affixed to the front face of the backing 13 in the manner illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2. Bores 15 indicated in dotted line in FIG. 3 extend through the backing 13 and through a supporting mounting structure 16 at the rear of the backing to receive mounting means such as metal wood screws 17. The screws 17 serve the dual purpose of mounting the rack 10 against the supporting wall W and securing the hooks 14 to the rack. By means of the illustrated arrangement, heavy items such as coats or the like which may be hung upon the hooks 14 exert stress directly against the screws 17 rather than the backing 13 which protects the rack from overload.

A modified form of the invention indicated at 110 in FIG. 5 includes pegs 114 rather than hooks. The peg 114 is integrally formed with the main rack body which is in all other respects similar to the rack body illustrated in FIGS. 1-4. In FIG. 5, like parts have been identified with reference characters which are greater than the corresponding reference character of FIGS. 1-4 by 100. In the form of the invention illustrated in FIG. 5, the mounting means such as a screw 117 extends through a cylindrical peg 114 and simultaneously acts to provide structural strength to the peg and to anchor the rack 110 to the support walls W. As with the hooks 14, the pegs act as supports from which gloves, caps and other articles may be suspended.

The rack of the present invention is preferably constructed of a suitable high strength plastic which may be formed by conventional molding techniques. It will be understood that while provision has been made for mounting two bats on the lower shelf, any number of indentations may be provided for mounting any desired number of bats. In addition, while the hooks 14 are preferably constructed of metal, it will be un-

derstood that they may be formed from plastic or other suitable material.

From the foregoing, it will be appreciated that the rack of the present invention includes means for storing different sized balls without the need for special placement within circular cutouts. In addition, the backwardly inclining disposition of the bottom wall in the ball tray tends to maintain the balls against the rear supporting wall.

The illustrated manner of mounting the rack against the supporting wall permits one entire wall to be omitted thereby contributing to the ease of manufacturing the device and reducing its overall cost. In both forms of the invention, the means provided for suspending such things as jackets, gloves, caps or the like is closely positioned with respect to the supporting wall W to protect the supporting rack structure from undue stress. In addition, the hooks 14 and pegs 114 are disposed below the overhead tray 11 and 111, respectively, which shield the suspending devices to prevent accidental injury or snagging of clothing. In general, it will be appreciated that the rack of the present invention provides a compact, easily manufactured, strong device for quickly and efficiently storing balls, bats, gloves and related sporting equipment.

The foregoing disclosure and description of the invention is illustrative and explanatory thereof, and various changes in the size, shape and materials as well as in the details of the illustrated construction may be made within the scope of the appended claims without departing from the spirit of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A rack for storing balls, bats and related equipment comprising:

- a. first shelf means having a front and side retaining means connected with bottom wall means sloping downwardly from said front retaining means toward the rear of said first shelf means whereby balls positioned on said first shelf means tend to roll toward the rear thereof;
- b. second shelf means vertically spaced below said first shelf means and including at least one indentation for receiving and holding the handle end of a ball bat;
- c. backing means extending between the rear of said first and second shelf means;
- d. mounting means included with said backing means for securing said rack to a supporting structure; and

e. support means included with said mounting means below said first shelf means and supported independently of either of said shelf means for suspending articles such as ball gloves, caps and jackets.

2. A rack for storing balls, bats and related equipment as defined in claim 1 wherein:

- a. said support means is closely positioned with respect to said backing means; and
- b. said mounting means further includes attachment means adapted to extend through said support means and said backing means for securing said support means and said rack to said supporting structure whereby the weight of said articles suspended by said support means is directly carried by said attachment means.

3. A rack for storing balls, bats and related equipment as defined in claim 1 wherein:

- a. said support means includes separable hook means; and
- b. said mounting means further includes attachment means adapted to extend through said hook means and said backing means for simultaneously securing said hook means to said rack and securing said rack to said supporting structure.

4. A rack for storing balls, bats and related equipment as defined in claim 1 wherein:

- a. said support means includes peg means; and
- b. said mounting means further includes attachment means adapted to extend lengthwise through said peg means and to extend through said backing means for simultaneously increasing the structural strength of said peg means and securing said rack to said supporting structure.

5. A rack for storing balls, bats and related articles as defined in claim 4 wherein:

- a. said retaining means include upstanding wall means; and
- b. said first and second shelf means, said retaining means and said support means are integrally formed in a single piece of plastic material.

6. A rack for storing balls, bats and related equipment as defined in claim 1 wherein:

- a. said retaining means include upstanding walls connected with said bottom wall means; and
- b. said first and second shelf means, said retaining means and said support means are integrally formed from a single piece of plastic.

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