GAME ELEMENT FOR MANIPULATING A HOOP

FIG. 1

FIG. 2

FIG. 3

FIG. 4

FIG. 5

FIG. 6

FIG. 7
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GAME ELEMENT FOR MANIPULATING A HOOP
Nick N. Capalin, 1231½ W. 23rd St., 90731, and John J. Burich, 721 S. Ellery Drive 90732, both of San Pedro, Calif.
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4 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A game element having an inclined track at one extremity for receiving a hoop, and having an arcuate track at the other extremity for receiving and slowing the hoop, the game element also including a handle having an opening through which the user can project his fingers so that he can wrap his fingers around the track and around the rim of the hoop to keep the hoop from falling out of the track.

The present invention relates to a game element, and more particularly to a game element for manipulating a hoop.

It is an object of the present invention to provide a fascinating and entertaining game element which offers opportunity for the development of a player's skill and manual dexterity, but in which only rudimentary skill is necessary to provide amusement for everyone.

Another object of the invention is to provide a game element which is extremely simple and inexpensive to fabricate, and which is characterized by a long service life.

A further object of the invention is the provision of a game element which can be disposed in inclined relation to a playing surface to thereby receive a rolling hoop, and which includes an arcuate pocket adapted to receive the rolling hoop and abruptly stop its rolling movement. The arcuate pocket opens downwardly so that unless the hoop is immediately grasped, it will fall out of the pocket. Consequently, various games can be devised for scoring or rating the abilities of the various players to scoop up and catch the rolling hoop before it falls out of the arcuate pocket of the game element.

A related object of the invention is the provision of a game element of the aforementioned character which can also be utilized to propel or roll a hoop toward another player.

Other objects and features of the invention will become apparent from the following description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a game element according to the present invention, and illustrating the manner in which the game element is held;
FIG. 2 is an enlarged longitudinal cross sectional view of the game element of FIG. 1;
FIG. 3 is an enlarged view taken along the line 3—3 of FIG. 2;
FIG. 4 is an enlarged view taken along the line 4—4 of FIG. 2;
FIG. 5 is a top plan view of the game element of FIG. 1;
FIG. 6 is a side elevational view of the game element of FIG. 1, illustrating the game element being utilized to propel or roll a hoop; and
FIG. 7 is a side elevational view showing the game element being utilized to catch a rolling hoop.

Referring now to the drawings, there is illustrated a game element 10 which is adapted to manipulate a hoop 12, the game element 10 being utilized for both receiving and propelling the hoop 12, as will be seen.

Although the term "hoop" is used herein to describe a preferred element for use in conjunction with the game element 10, it is to be understood that the term is merely suggestive, is not used in a limiting sense, and is comprehensive of any circular device having a central opening by means of which it may be grasped and retained in position upon the game element 10, as will be seen.

Moreover, the term "upwardly" and like terms denoting direction are used throughout the present description to conveniently describe the orientation of the various portions of the game element as they are shown in FIG. 1. Obviously, if the game element is differently oriented, such terms should be construed accordingly.

The elongated body 14 is preferably made of molded plastic for reasons of cost, but it can also be made of any suitable lightweight material capable of hard usage by children.

The body 14 is characterized by a generally spiral configuration and includes a channel or track 16 to guide the hoop 12 along the body 14 between the lower extremity or entry extremity 18, and the upper or pocket extremity 20.

The track 16 is defined by a pair of parallel legs or flanges 22 coextensive with the body 14 and spaced apart sufficiently to provide a track slightly wider than the width of the rim of the hoop 12 to be received. Preferably, the depth of the track 16 is approximately one-half the corresponding thickness of the hoop. This facilitates guiding of the hoop along the length of the track in a plane substantially normal to the track, and without appreciable frictional resistances. The entry portion or throat of the track 16 is preferably flared to facilitate entry of the hoop 12 onto the track.

The entry extremity 18 is characterized by a gradual or relatively large radius of curvature so that the game element 10 can be placed adjacent the ground or other plane surface in inclined relation to receive a rolling hoop in the track. The radius of curvature of the body 14 increases toward the pocket extremity, curving upwardly and reversely to define a forwardly and downwardly-open arcuate pocket 24 which is adapted to receive the hoop 12. The downwardly-open character of the pocket permits the hoop 12 to fall out of the pocket 24 of its own weight, as will be seen.

The pocket 24 has a conformation or radius of curvature sufficiently small to abruptly stop the hoop as it rolls into the pocket 24. For this purpose, at least the last 90 degrees of arc of the arcuate pocket 24 are preferably in coextensive engagement with the corresponding 90 degrees of arc of the hoop so that the hoop 12 is constrained against rolling out of the pocket 24, but instead is brought to an abrupt halt.

The end of the pocket extremity 20 is spaced from the diametrically opposite portion of the pocket extremity 20 a distance sufficient to permit the hoop to fall out of the pocket, that is, such distance is slightly greater than the greatest diameter of the hoop 12.

By reason of the foregoing arrangement, the hoop 12 comes to a complete stop immediately after entry into the pocket 24, and thereafter falls out of the pocket 24.

However, the object of the usual game played with the game element 10 contemplates that the player will grasp the hoop 12 in the short interval between its stoppage in the pocket 24 and its falling out of the pocket of its own weight. For this purpose, the pocket extremity 20 includes a handle or thong 26 for holding the game element 10.

The handle 26 is preferably longitudinally slit, as at 28, so that the hand can be passed through the slit and thereby locate portions of the handle 26 on opposite sides of the hand or wrist of the player.
In playing a game with the game element 10, each of several players take turns in catching and throwing the hoop 12 with his respective game element 10. More particularly, the game element 10 is used to propel or roll the hoop toward another player by placing the hoop in the pocket 24, grasping the rim of the hoop with the fingers to keep the hoop in the pocket, bringing the game element 10 backwardly and thence downwardly in a rapid, curving motion, and simultaneously releasing the hoop 12 to permit it to roll rapidly down the inclined track of the entry extremity 18 and onto the playing surface. The released hoop then rolls on the ground toward one of the other players. This sequence is best illustrated in FIG. 6.

The other player can receive the rolling hoop by merely orienting the entry extremity 18 in inclined relation to the ground to permit the hoop to enter the flared entry throat of the track, roll up the inclined surface of the track 16, and into the pocket 24. The player immediately grasps the stopped hoop before there is an opportunity for it to fall out of the pocket.

The object of a number of types of games played with the game element 10 is to throw and receive the hoop 12 at greater and greater speeds, and at various inclinations relative to the ground. In receiving the hoop, the players endeavor to first guide it into the track 16 and thereafter catch it before it falls out of the game element 10. Such manipulations require a considerable amount of skill and the game element 10 has been found to be very entertaining and fascinating.

We claim:

1. A game element for manipulating a hoop having a central opening, said game element comprising:
   an elongated body having a track for guiding hoop from one extremity to the other extremity of said body, said one extremity being adapted to be oriented in inclined relation to receive the rolling hoop in said track, said other extremity being upwardly and reversely curved to thereby define a downwardly opening arcuate pocket adapted to receive the hoop, said pocket having a radius of curvature sufficiently small to abruptly stop the hoop rolling into said pocket,
   the end of said other extremity being spaced from the diametrically opposite portion of said pocket a distance sufficient to permit the hoop to fall out of said pocket for rolling engagement of said track; and
   a handle defining an opening adjacent said pocket operative to receive the fingers of the user whereby the user is enabled to wrap his fingers about the adjacent portion of said track and through the central opening of the hoop in said pocket to thereby simultaneously hold said game element and the hoop after it stops in said pocket and before it falls.

2. A game element according to claim 1 wherein said track is defined by a channel having a depth sufficiently great to maintain the hoop substantially vertical to facilitate entry thereof into said pocket.

3. A game element according to claim 2 wherein said channel is flared outwardly at said one extremity of said body to facilitate entry of the hoop into said track.

4. A game element according to claim 1 wherein the end portion of said pocket is characterized by a constant radius of curvature approximately that of the hoop to thereby provide substantially coextensive engagement with the hoop and abruptly halt rotational advance of the hoop beyond said end portion of said pocket.

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ROBERT PESHOCK, Primary Examiner
CHARLES R. WENTZEL, Assistant Examiner

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