ALTERNATIVE GOLF GAME

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ABSTRACT
An alternative to the game of golf utilizing any conventional golf course while incorporating a plurality of elevated target disks having a vertical planar attitude and a circular central opening, a ball having an outer diameter substantially lesser than that of the circular central opening in the target disks, and a variety of ball launchers each having the ability to accept various handle implements. The goal of the game is to either strike or penetrate the target disks in as few tosses as possible from the T-off point.
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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to an alternative to the game of golf wherein the present invention utilizes any conventional golf course but incorporates the following: a plurality of elevated target disks having a vertical planar attitude and a circular central opening, a ball having an outer diameter substantially less than that of the circular central opening in the target disks, a variety of ball launchers each having the ability to accept various handle implements. The goal of the game is to either strike or penetrate the target disks in as few tosses as possible from the T-off point.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The ever-popular game of golf has become one of the most enjoyed sports since the last decade or more. In some geographic areas, this sport became played year-round. However, in areas where winter months embrace the greens in a snowy blanket, the game simply halts. Furthermore, course owners generate no revenue during these downtimes.

[0003] The inventor sought to provide players and golf course owners with a solution to this dilemma, by creating an alternative to the conventional game of golf; in that, course owners can stay open, even during winter months, and players can continue playing an alternative to their favorite pastime.

[0004] Thus the inventor presents your commissioner with an alternative to the game of golf wherein: one target at or near each of the holes of a conventional golf course is provided, having a planar disk with a central opening thereof, mounted to a vertical post, which in turn is pierced into the ground, and a variety of launchers with long or short handles, and a ball.

[0005] While prior art teaches of a plurality of ball launching devices, the applicant has failed to uncover the scope of the present alternative to golf.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] It is thus the object of the present invention to provide players with an alternative to the game of golf; having a target disk, launchers and a ball.

[0007] In one aspect of the invention, the diameter of the central opening of the target is directly proportional to the diameter of the ball used in the game.

[0008] In another aspect of the invention, the target is mounted onto a vertical post.

[0009] In a further aspect of the invention, the target is mounted to a flotation device so as to enable play in a body of water.

[0010] In yet another aspect of the invention, the ball can be any generally dense ball, similar to a golf ball.

[0011] In another aspect of the invention, a spring is mounted between the launcher head and its handle so as to provide greater momentum at each power launch.

[0012] Accordingly, the device of the present invention therefore provides players with an alternative to the game of golf; having a target disk, launchers and a ball, that can be played virtually anywhere, anytime.

[0013] Although the preferred embodiment illustrates the use of the present game in conjunction with golf courses, the utility of the present invention includes but is not limited to such golf course.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] These and other advantages of the invention will become apparent upon reading the following brief description and upon referring to the drawings in which:

[0015] FIG. 1 is a perspective view from above of a curved launcher of the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 2 is a perspective view from above of a cupped launcher of the present invention.

[0017] FIG. 3 is a perspective view from above of a secondary handle for the launchers of the present invention.

[0018] FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view taken along lines 4-4 of FIG. 1 of the rail portion of the curved launcher of the present invention.

[0019] FIG. 5 is a perspective view from above of an alternate floating target of the present invention.

[0020] FIG. 6 is a front elevation view of the primary target of the present invention.

[0021] FIG. 7 is a perspective view from above of an alternate base for the target of FIG. 6.

[0022] FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view taken along arrows 8-8 from FIG. 1 of the curved launcher of the present invention. The dotted line in this Figure depicts a ball and its placement in a ready position.

[0023] FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view taken along arrows 9-9 from FIG. 1 of the curved launcher of the present invention. The dotted line in this Figure depicts a ball in various travel positions.

[0024] FIG. 10 is a cross-sectional view taken along arrows 10-10 from FIG. 7 of the target adapter of the present invention.

[0025] While the invention is described in conjunction with preferred illustrated embodiments, it will be understood that it is not intended to limit the invention to such embodiments. On the contrary, it is intended to cover all alternatives, modifications and equivalents as may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0026] In the following description, similar features in the drawings have been given similar reference numerals.

[0027] Turning to FIG. 1, a perspective view from above the primary ball launcher of the present invention comprising: a long handle 2, a spring 4, and a curved launch rail 6. The long handle 2 farther comprises; a male end having a spring nipple 9 therein, and a sleeve 11 having an inner diameter slightly greater than that of the outer diameter of the long handle 2 so as to enable longitudinal motion of the sleeve 11 along the long handle 2, and a plurality of perforations 17 along one side of said sleeve 11 to accept the spring nipple 9 therein. The sleeve 11 may be positioned over a portion of the spring 4 so as to partially and adjustably restrain the lateral flexing motion of said spring 4. As the player swings the ball-holding launcher forward, the launch rail 6 gravitationally exerts a rearward force against said spring thus, while the launcher handle 2 swings forward, the launch rail motion is delayed momentarily during the initial portion of the arc motion of the handle 2 until such a point where the arc’s momentum dimin-
ishes and the spring 4 begins to spring forward, along with the handle 2 thus substantially adding momentum to the ball equal to the velocity of the tip of the handle, below the spring, plus the velocity of the spring's upper end, thus exerting a greater launch effectiveness for greater distance to the ball’s travel. Furthermore, vent perforations 13 along the convex portion of the launch rail 6 are provided to decompress the air ahead of the ball, hence reducing drag during launch.

[0028] Turning now to FIG. 2, a perspective view of a secondary ball launcher wherein this launcher incorporates the very same handle 2, male connector 7 and spring 4 features of the primary launcher, however, a tapered cup 10 is used in the place of a launch rail. This secondary launcher is useful for short-distance tosses, and for retrieving balls from sand and/or water. The cup 10 is adapted with elongated perforations through its side and rear surfaces so as to allow greater air flow through the cup 10 in order to reduce drag during a toss.

[0029] FIG. 3, illustrates an alternative short handle 17 for use in place of the long handle previously described. The short handle 17 is also adapted with a male end 7 similar to that of the long handle. The male end 7 inserts within an opening of generally the same size as that of the outer diameter of the male end 7. A spring nipple 9 springs out through a mating perforation within the side portion of the receiving end 15 of the various launch head assemblies.

[0030] Turning now to FIG. 4, a cross-sectional view taken along lines 4-4 of FIG. 1, illustrating the launch rail portion of the primary launcher of the same Figure wherein a ball 12 is guided along raised ridges 14 within the inner portion of the launch rail 6, reducing the surface contact area between the ball 12 and rail 6. Additionally, as a ball 12 travels the launch rail 6 path, air ahead of the ball 12 compresses, thus creating drag. A plurality of spaced perforations 13 traverses the central area of the curved rail 6, decompressing the air ahead of the ball and reducing this further drag.

[0031] Referring now to FIG. 5, a perspective view from above of a floating target of the present invention comprising: a base 20 having a plurality of openings 21 therethrough so as to lighten its weight, an array of floats 22 fixedly attached to floats struts 28 also attached to the base 20, a central target mount 23 fixedly attached to the center upper portion of the base 20, a target disk 26 having a planar circular sheet-like form and a numeric indicia on one or both faces of said target, a disk bracket 25 fixedly attached to the lower most area of the target 26, and a lock bolt 24 threadedly engaged within a matingly threaded opening through one edge of the central target mount 23. In addition to reducing weight, the openings 21 through the base 20 also serve as scoring means whereby the player(s) may desire to use the target disk 26 as a rebound board while targeting one of the openings 21, which may have various score values assigned thereto.

[0032] Turning now to FIG. 6, a front elevation view of a primary target of the present invention wherein, a post 36 having a pointed lower extremity 39 for easier entry into soil, a foot bar 37 to enable installer to press the post 36 into the ground with his/her feet, and a target adapter 40—between the target mount 25 and the post 36—similar to that utilized on the floating target. The target 35 in this figure comprises: a generally planar disk having an opening 38—through its center—as a smaller target to increase the difficulty level of the game, a target bracket 25 fixedly attached to the lower portion of said target 35 having a lower portion adapted to frictionally engage within a vertical opening in the target adapter 40.

[0033] Turning to FIG. 7, a perspective view of an alternate post assembly for use with either targets 26 or 35 of FIGS. 5 and/or 6 wherein, the post 31 is simply and relatively shorter and is fixed attached to a disk-shaped planar base 31 by means of a bolt or a weld joint. The target bracket 40 is also generally similar to those of FIGS. 5 and 6. This target base can be used indoors, or outdoors where driving a post is not an option, or on iced lakes and the like.

[0034] Referring now to FIG. 8, a cross-sectional view taken along arrows 8-8 from FIG. 1, illustration in more detail the tabs 5 extending above and toward the inner portion of the rail launcher 6. A ball 12, can therefore maintain its position prior to launch by being frictionally engaged under said tabs 5.

[0035] This Figure also depicts in more detail, the positioning of the vent perforations 13 at the central ridge of the rail launcher.

[0036] Turning now to FIG. 9, a partial cross-sectional view taken along arrows 9-9 from FIG. 1, of the rail portion of the curved launcher 6, wherein as the ball 12 travels the launcher's rails in an increasingly augmenting velocity, air pressure ahead of said ball 12 compresses significantly 29, thus creating undue drag in the ball's 12 travel. Vent holes 13 simply, allow this compressed air 29 to decompress during travel.

[0037] Turning now to FIG. 10, a partial cross-sectional view taken along arrows 10-10 from FIG. 7 wherein a target bracket 40 is depicted comprising: a molded thick-wall tubular insert having an outer diameter generally and slightly lesser than that of the inner diameter of the post 36 in which it is inserted, a circumferential channel 42 having a depth equal or lesser than the insert's wall thickness and located at the lower half of the insert's height, an outwardly protruding lip 44 extending the thickness of the mating post's 36 wall thickness. The post 36 is adapted with a welded and threaded nut 43 centrally located at a perforation through said post 36 at a height equal to the circumferential channel 42. A lock bolt 24 is threadedly engaged with the nut 43, and traverses the post's 36 inner wall while extending within the circumferential channel 42 thus preventing upward movement of the target bracket 40 while allowing rotational movement of said target bracket 40 within the post 36. Therefore, the target, frictionally inserted within the center opening 41 of the insert 40 becomes rotationally adjustable on a vertical axis.

[0038] Upon referring to the drawing figures and the above specification, it can be understood that the alternative game of golf—as presented in the above specification and appended drawings—provides players with a variety of alternatives to golf, especially when true golf is not an option. Furthermore, golf course owners can now remain open for business during long winter months.

1-16. (canceled)

17. An alternative game of golf comprising:
   a. a land target further comprising a disk shaped planar rigid sheet having a central opening, a mounting plate, and markings on one face of said disk shaped planar sheet,
   b. a water target further comprising a base having a plurality of openings therethrough so as to lighten its weight, an array of floats fixedly attached to floats struts also attached to the base, a central target mount fixedly attached to the base, a target disk having a planar circular sheet-like form and a numeric indicia on one or both faces of said target, a disk bracket fixedly attached to the lower most area of the target, and a lock bolt threadedly
engaged within a matingly threaded opening through one edge of the central target mount,
c. a ball,
d. a curved launcher further comprising: a launch rail having a generally C-shaped side view and a U-shaped cross section having inwardly raised ridges within the inner portion of the launch rail, reducing the surface contact area between the ball and rail, perforations traversing the central area along the length of the curved launch rail, a handle, and a spring secured between both the handle and the launch rail, and
e. Score keeping means.

18. The alternative game of golf of claim 1 wherein the target is mountable onto a pole-like ground-penetrating post adapted to accept the target mounting plate.

19. The alternative game of golf of claim 1 wherein the target is mountable onto a non-ground-penetrating pedestallike post having a planar rigid horizontal sheet fixedly attached to the base of said pedestallike post.

20. The alternative game of golf of claim 1 wherein the curved launcher further comprises a plurality of spaced perforations traversing the central area along the length of the curved launch rail, decompressing air ahead of the ball thus reducing drag.

21. The alternative game of golf of claim 1 wherein a spring is located between the launcher and the handle.

22. The alternative game of golf of claim 1 wherein the handle further comprises a long handle, which said handle is adapted to releasably attach to the bottom end of the spring.

23. The alternative game of golf of claim 1 wherein the handle is a short handle generally the length of an opened hand, which said handle is also adapted to releasably attach to the bottom end of the spring.

24. The alternative game of golf of claim 1 wherein either handle is attached to the lower portion of the spring by means of a male-female joint releasably held together by a spring nipple.

25. The alternative game of golf of claim 1 wherein a tubular cylindrical sleeve having an inner diameter only slightly greater than the outer diameter of the handle and spring so as to enable longitudinal motion of said sleeve over said handle and spring.

26. The alternative game of golf of claim 1 wherein the sleeve has a plurality of perforations along its length so as to enable the spring nipple to also traverse one of same perforations.

27. The alternative game of golf of claim 1 wherein the sleeve provides longitudinal sliding motion of the player's upper hand along the long handle during a launch.

28. The alternative game of golf of claim 1 wherein the sleeve has a plurality of perforations along its length so as to enable the spring nipple to also traverse one of same perforations.

29. The alternative game of golf of claim 1 wherein the alternative game of golf easily adapts to present day golf courses.

30. The alternative game of golf of claim 1 wherein the use thereof is to provide players and golf course owners or the like the opportunity to enjoy continued use of a golf course regardless of seasonal situations.

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