Sept. 20, 1971 F. G. CHAPMAN 3,606,330

TOY FOOTBALL GAME

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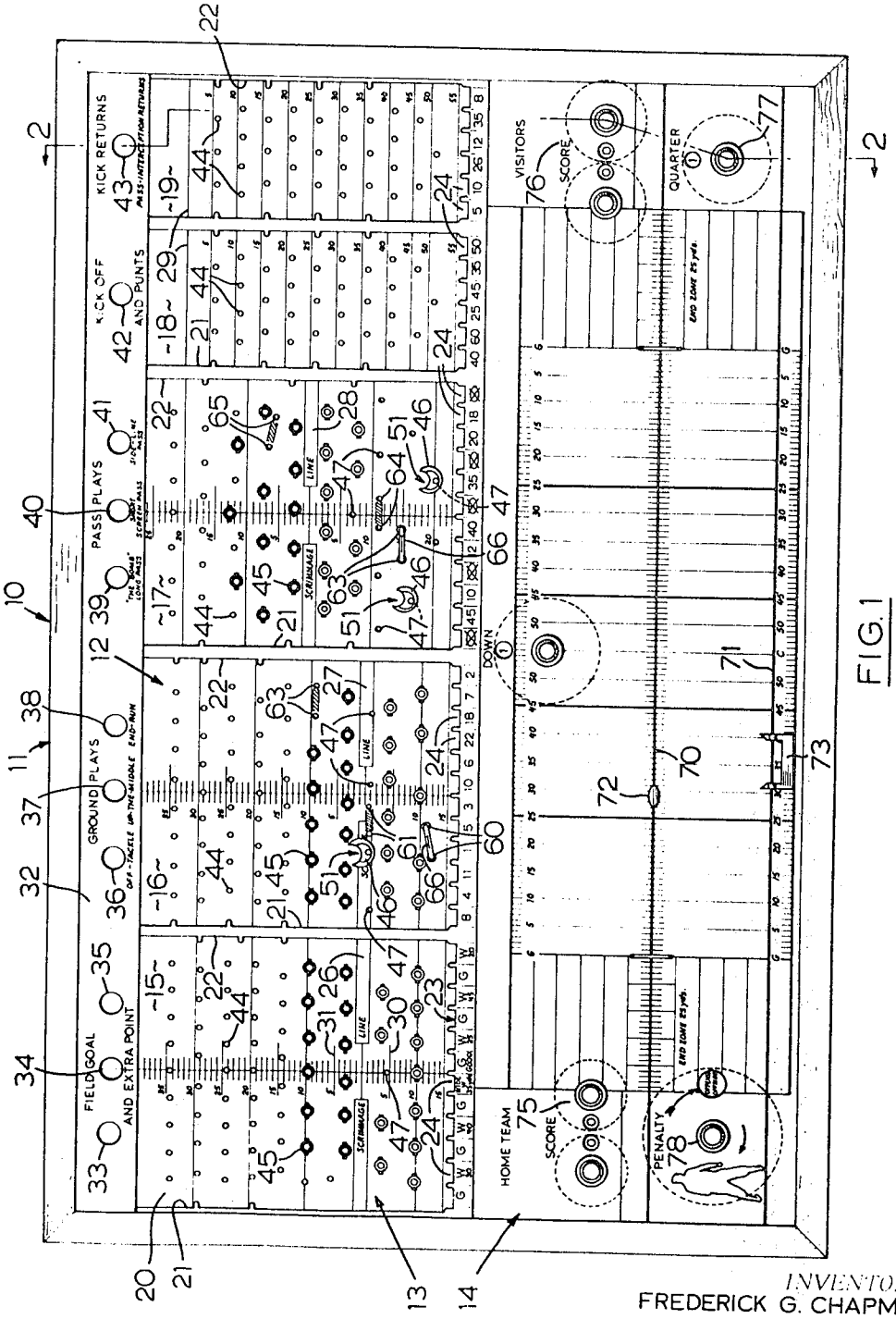


FIG. 1

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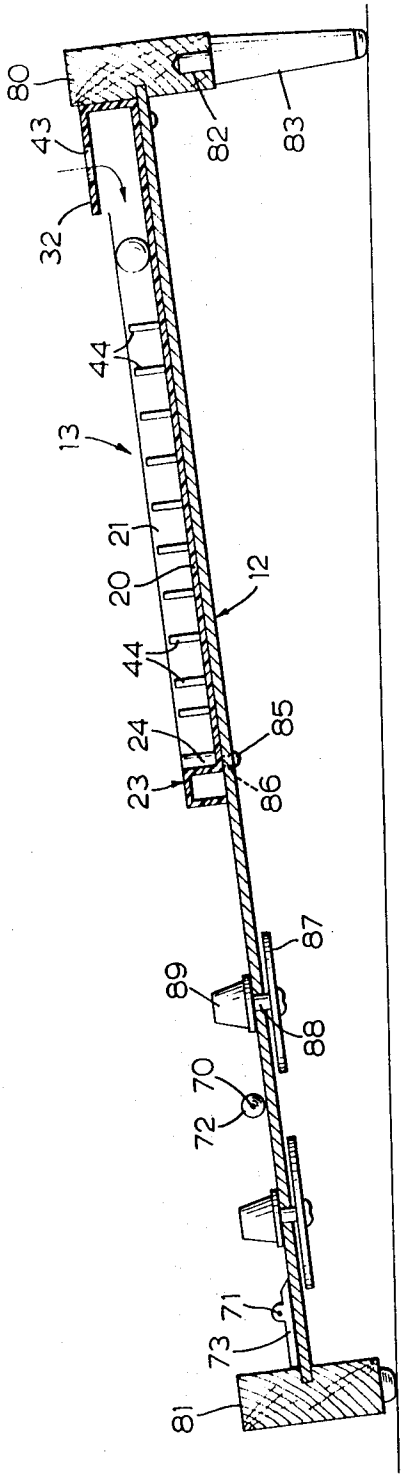


FIG. 2

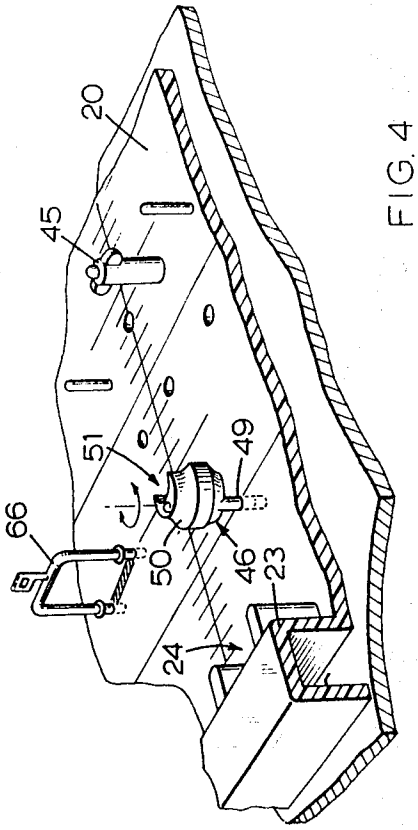


FIG. 4

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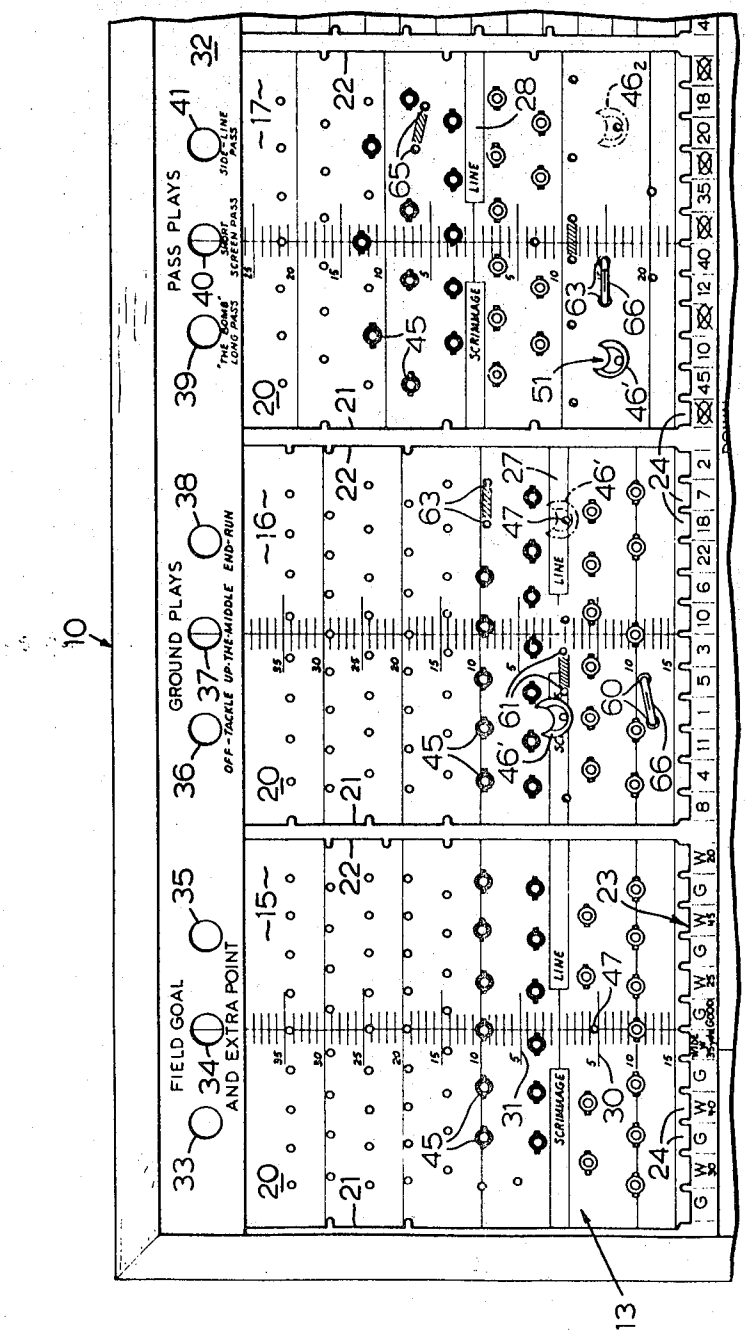


FIG. 3

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United States Patent Office 3,606,330 Patented Sept. 20, 1971

3,606,330

TOY FOOTBALL GAME

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Filed Oct. 29, 1969, Ser. No. 872,187
Claims priority, application Canada, Sept. 29, 1969, 62,726
Int. Cl. A63f 7/06, 7/14
U.S. Cl. 273—94R 10 Claims

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A toy football game in which the individual plays are determined by the movement of a playing ball over a selected one of a number of inclined playing surfaces each with upstanding pins and game pieces. Each of the playing surfaces represents an individual kind of football play. The positioning of the pins is predetermined on each surface as is the position of most of the game pieces, but certain of the game pieces are movable into a limited number of chosen positions. These latter game pieces are shaped to receive the playing ball, and, in the chosen positions may be rotated by interaction with the ball. The result of the play is determined by the final resting position of the playing ball either, in the case of the ball coming to rest against a game piece or pin, from markings on the play area floor relative to a scrimmage line, or, when the ball rests in one of a series of terminal stall, from the markings indicated on the individual stall. Penalties are incurred by the movement of the playing ball over the predetermined paths and determined by random selection. Provision is also made for indicating the state of the game by a representation of a football field, a movable miniature football, and movable yardage markers.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates to games for simulating football games.

Many attempts have been made to provide a game which represents or simulates football games with varying degrees of complexity and success.

The game of football is considered to be scientific, at least theoretically. The offensive team, the team possessing the ball, is regarded as having an advantage on each individual play in that the skilled quarterback can determine the strategy of the defensive team and select a play which will lead to an advance of the ball for the offensive team. On each play each individual player of each team has a predetermined role. If the members of the offensive team execute their individual roles properly the play should be successful.

In practice due to one or more variables such as human error, injury of a player, absence of skill, the weather, or chance the play may break down. A fumble, improper executions or inferior skill are examples of such variables and they introduce an element of chance. Prior simulated games have to a large extent depended on chance or dexterity. The game of the present invention minimizes dexterity. It has an element of chance, as does the actual game, in that the result of the play is determined by random travel of a ball, but the possible results are limited by the arrangement of upstanding pins in predetermined positions, the movable capacity of certain of the game pieces, and a statistical limitation of the possible results of any one play.

As in a real game in this present invention the offensive team has the advantage of surprise and the defensive team has the facility of altering its defense to contain probably offensive plays.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is the main object of the present invention to provide a toy football game which simulates a real football game.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a toy football game to which the rules and tactics of real football games are applicable.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide a toy football game in which the element of chance approximates that of a real football game while permitting the players to exhibit the skill and judgment which characterizes the real game.

In accordance with these objects provided in this invention there is provided a game apparatus for determining the individual plays in a toy football game comprising: a ball and an inclined board, said board including a plurality of discrete areas representing field goals and extra points, ground play, pass play, kick-off and punts and kick returns and pass interception returns, respectively; each of said areas comprising a floor with markings to represent an appropriate area of a playing field relative to a line of scrimmage, side walls, a lower end wall, and at least one ball play port in each of the respective areas, adjacent the upper end thereof, for putting the ball in play, said lower end wall having a plurality of stalls for receiving the ball, each of said stalls being marked with a predetermined result for a play, a plurality of upstanding pins in each of said areas for intercepting with the travel of said ball down said floor; said pass, ground, and field goal play areas further including upstanding game pieces representing the members of two opposed football teams, one offensive and one defensive; and means for varying the position of at least one of the said game pieces of said defensive team.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The above and other objects together with the features and advantages of the present invention will be more apparent from the description of the preferred embodiment of the invention with reference to the drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a general plan view of a game board in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a side view section taken along line 2—2 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is an enlarged plan view of part of the game board shown in FIG. 1 and serves to illustrate individual plays to the game; and

FIG. 4 is a fragmentary perspective view of part of a game board in accordance with the invention illustrating the structure of the playing pieces and their relationship to the game board.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

One embodiment of a game apparatus made in accordance with the present invention is illustrated in plan view in FIG. 1. As shown the apparatus generally indicated at **10** comprises a substantially rectangular frame **11** within which a board **12** is mounted in any suitable fashion to provide a play area. The playing area, in turn, comprises two main areas, an individual play determining area, **13**, and a second area, **14**, which serves to show the state of the game at any instant.

The individual play determining area **13**, is subdivided into five further areas **15**, **16**, **17**, **18** and **19** which for convenience will be termed the field goal and extra point area, the ground play area, the pass play area, the kick-off and punt return area, and kick return and pass interception return areas, respectively.

Each of these areas is provided with a floor **20**, a pair of side walls **21** and **22**, and a lower end wall **23**. The lower end walls are each provided with a series of stalls,

such as **24**, which extend into the play area and are dimensioned to receive a playing ball. The floor of each area is marked to represent an appropriate area of the field of play relative to a scrimmage line. For example, in the field goal area **15**, the scrimmage line is indicated at **26**, in the ground play area at **27**, in the pass play area at **28**, and in the kick-off and punts and kick return areas **18** and **19**, the scrimmage line is represented at **29**. Field markings relative to the scrimmage lines are also marked out and as illustrated in the field goal area **15**. These indicate as at **30** and **31**, advances or losses in yardage with respect to the scrimmage line. The kick-off and punt and kick return areas are marked only to represent advances from their line of scrimmage, **29**.

Extending across the individual play areas adjacent to the top end thereof there is provided a play identifying strip which has ports therein to permit a playing ball to be put into play. This strip is indicated at **32**, and the individual ports, in the field goal area, are indicated at **33**, **34** and **35**, in the ground play area at **36**, **37** and **38**, in the pass play area at **39**, **40** and **41**, and in the kick-off and punt, and kick return areas at **42** and **43**, respectively.

From the floor of each of the individual play areas fixed upstanding pins **44** extend upwardly in a predetermined arrangement. There is also provided in each of the field goal, pass play, and ground play areas on opposed sides of the scrimmage lines game pieces which represent the offensive and defensive teams. The game pieces are of two types indicated at **45** and **46**, respectively. Those indicated at **45** are fixed. Those indicated at **46** may be moved to vary the defensive alignment according to the offensive play suspected by the defensive team. Only three game pieces such as **46** are provided and for convenience in this description they will be termed "guards."

Guards **46** each comprise a rod **49**, which extends downwardly and is rotatably engageable with any one of a series of predetermined holes, such as **47** arranged in a selected manner about the floor of the respective field goal, ground play and pass play areas. Above the rod **49**, an enlarged circular body **50** extends eccentrically with respect to the rod **49**, with on one side a concavity **51**, which is dimensioned to receive a playing ball. The positions in which the guards **43** may be inserted on the field goal area is limited to one as indicated, on the ground play area there are only four positions along the scrimmage line, and on the pass play area all are, as indicated, rearward of the scrimmage line.

The positioning of the guards **43**, will be discussed later.

On the ground play and the pass play areas, respectively, two further series of pairs of holes such as **60**, **61**, **62**, **63**, **64** and **65** are provided. The individual members of these pairs of holes are connected by means of black marking lines and serve to indicate the positions for the insertion of a hoop-shaped penalty marker, indicated at **66**. The penalty markers may be moved into the indicated positions. Their function will be more fully discussed later in the specification with reference to the description of the play.

The structure of the game pieces **45** and **46**, the penalty markers **66** and their relationship to the board is more fully illustrated in the fragmentary sectional view shown in FIG. 4 of the drawings.

As mentioned previously each of the individual play areas is provided with an end wall **23**, in which stalls **24** extend in the manner shown.

In each stall, the result of a play is indicated and the result of the play may either be determined from the final resting place of the playing ball either with reference to the markings such as **30** or **31** on the board or from those indicated in the individual stalls. These results and the method of play will be described later.

The second area of the board, **14**, which serves to indicate the state of the game, has a typical football field marked on it. Typical at least for the Canadian game.

Appropriate markings may be made for the game as it is played in the United States.

Extending longitudinally of the field down the centre and along one side line are two wires **70** and **71**, which are supported by the side walls of the frame **11**. These wires serve to support a movable ball marker **72**, and a movable yardage marker **73**.

On the centre strip a down marker **74** is mounted and scoreboards **75** and **76** are mounted at either end of the field.

As mentioned previously, the individual play area **13** is subdivided into five further areas and the view in FIG. 2 shows a section through the kick return area **19**, with its ball port **43**, side wall **21**, end wall **23**, stall **24**, and pins **44**. In the embodiment which now exists these components are of clear moulded plastic and the markings with respect to the scrimmage line are printed on the board **12**, so that they are visible through the floor. The floor **20** is secured to board **12** by engagement of pins **85** with corresponding holes **86**.

The score indicator **76**, and the quarter indicated at **77** typify the structure of the down indicator and the penalty indicator. As shown these comprise a disc **87** secured to the underside of the board by a rod **88** which extends through the board and is surmounted by a finger knob **89**. The score, penalty, quarter or down is indicated on the upper surface of the disc and is viewed through a hole on the board **12**.

The board is tilted by the insertion of legs **83** in sockets such as **82** although any other suitable means may be employed.

The operation of the game is best described with reference to several plays and for convenience the description will be with respect to the Canadian game.

The penalty markers **66** are placed in their prescribed positions on the ground play and pass play areas respectively. During the first quarter they are placed in the ground play area **16**, across holes **60**, and in the pass play areas, across holes **63**. In the second and third quarters they are placed in holes **61** and **62**, and **64** and **65** respectively, and in the fourth and final quarter they are returned to holes **60** and **63** respectively. When the playing ball passes between the legs of the penalty marker **66**, a penalty is incurred.

The footall is moved along to the 45-yard line of the team which has the kick-off. The player for the kicking team drops the playing ball through port **42** of the kick-off and punt area **18**, and the ball will roll down the inclined board either coming to rest against one of the pins **44** or in one of stalls **24**. If the ball comes to rest against a pin on the 30-yard line marker then the kick-off length is determined as 30 yards. If the ball comes to rest in one of the bottom stalls **24** then the kick-off length kick is determined by the length indicated by the yardage in the appropriate stall.

Let it be assumed that the ball travels down the floor **20**, into the stall marked **60**. The miniature football **72** is then moved down to the five yard line of the receiving team. The receiving team player then drops the playing ball through port **43** of the kick return area and the ball travels down the board coming to rest in the box marked "**10**." The miniature football is then moved to the 15-yard line of the receiving team.

The defending player selects his defence. With the ball in the present field position, on the offensive team's 15-yard line, the quarterback would normally select a ground or running play.

Only three guards, **46**, are provided in the present embodiment, although this number may be varied, and no more than two guards are permitted on any one playing area at any one time.

The down marker is set at 1 so that the players will be reminded of the number of downs remaining, in the Canadian game a total of three downs is permitted, and

the yardage marker **73** is set to indicate the 10 yards necessary to complete the first down.

In FIG. 3 the positions selected by the defending player for the guards are shown in the dotted outline at **46'**.

The offensive player who assumes the role of the quarter-back then places the playing ball in play dropping the ball through his selected port.

The ground play line-up of the defensive team shows both guards on the line of scrimmage with a possible penalty on a play "up-the-middle." The pass play defence indicates greater success possibilities on a "side-line" play. But with the ground play "off-tackle" there is a chance of making yardage as compared to the side-line play where the chances are approximately 3 to 2.

Assume the offensive player drops the playing ball through the "off-tackle" port **36**, the ball may either come to rest against any one of the pins or game pieces, in a stall **24**, after passing through the penalty marker **66**, in a stall without passing through the penalty marker, in the concavity **51** of the guard **46**, or the ball may contact a guard **46** causing it to swivel and continue to come to rest in a stall.

If the ball comes to rest on a pin **44**, the penalty marker **66**, or any one of the game pieces apart from the guard **43**, the progress of the ball is determined by its final resting position relative to the scrimmage line of that area. If the ball comes to rest in the concavity, **51**, of a guard then the defending team has blocked the ball carrier. On the ground plays the ball is represented as a player running with the ball. And if the ball hits a guard **46**, but does not rest there then the ball is deemed to have been tipped by the defence but the final result is still determined by where the ball comes to rest.

The ball having been dropped through the "off-tackle" is now assumed to have come to rest in the stall indicating an advance of one yard. Ball marker **72** is moved to the 16-yard line. It is now second down with 9 yards to go.

A pass play is indicated. The chances of gaining the 11-yard stall of the pass play area, **16**, are remote, and an end-run with a guard in position **46** on the right end of the line will limit the chances of making the 22- or 18-yard stall. The defensive player leaves the right guard **46'** on the ground play area **16** and moves the middle guard **46** over to the pass play position 46_2 shown in the dotted outline.

With the defence thus aligned the offensive player would more than likely choose a "short screen pass" and would drop the playing ball through port **40**. Again, the ball may come to rest in a stall or against a pin or playing piece either a guard **46** or a fixed piece **45**, and it may travel through the penalty marker **66**.

If the ball comes to rest against a playing piece behind the scrimmage line **28** then there would be a loss on the play accordingly to the markings on the floor. Similarly, if it comes to rest in advance of the scrimmage line **28**, but not in a stall then the advance is as indicated on the floor.

Let it be assumed that the ball comes to rest in the 12-yard stall after passing through penalty marker **66**. The penalty is determined by turning the penalty marker **78** to show the next penalty. As shown in FIG. 1 the penalty is against the offensive team for "off-side" since the penalties in this game are those of a real football game the 12-yard advance is nullified and the offensive team penalized 5 yards from the scrimmage line. The football marker **72** is then pushed back to the 11-yard line and the offensive team on its third down, will be required to advance the ball 14 yards. This is a kicking situation and the offensive player would, while he still has the option of ground or pass play, kick. Accordingly, the ball is dropped through the kick-off and kick return ports **42** and **43** in sequence to determine the net gain and the former roles of offense and defence are switched.

If in the course of the third down the pass play described above, the playing ball came to rest in one of the concavities **51** then the pass is said to be intercepted and the defensive team or player would make a return by playing the ball through the kick return and pass interception returns port and mark the miniature ball down on the resultant yardage determined either from the markings on the board or stall.

If the ball comes to rest on a stall marked ⊗ then the pass is incomplete.

The options open to an offensive team when in the same position in the defending team's goal area are of course quite different. And when the offensive team is on the 15-yard line of the defending team with 14 yards to go on the third down the offensive team would normally attempt to kick a field goal. This play is determined by the defending player placing one of the guards **46** in the hole **47** in the field goal area and the ball being dropped through one of the ports **33**, **34** or **35** and the outcome of the play is again determined by where the ball comes to rest. The marking "G" indicates a good kick and "W" indicates wide kick. If the ball does not reach the bottom then it is a fake field goal attempt and the advance or loss is determined by the marking on the floor where the ball comes to rest.

If the ball is wide and travels 40 yards then under Canadian rules on this sequence of plays there is a single point for the offensive team. However, if the kick is wide and travels less than 15 yards then the defending team has the option of conceding a single point or attempting the kick return by dropping the ball in port **43** and determining the length of the run-back.

When there has been a touch-down scored by the offensive team moving the ball over the goal line but still within the end zone the offensive team then gets an opportunity to attempt the extra point in the same manner as the field goal attempt.

The basic rules of football be they American or Canadian are applicable to this game and the ball is put into play after field goal attempts, touch-downs, and extra points attempts as they are in conventional football. The penalties are also the same.

If, during the course of play, the player drops the playing ball it is considered to be a recovered fumble and the player dropping the ball is penalized one down.

The present embodiment has been described with reference to the Canadian game. In order to simulate the American game provision may be made for four downs, a shorter field and one less game piece on each team. The markings for the areas would also be substantially the same except for ground play stall markings which would show lesser gains. In practice the results obtained in a game of the embodiment described very closely reflect the actual results obtained in a real game. This is due to the placement of the pins and the statistically determined results. The movable guards **43**, also give an element of skill in that their disposition and the limited positions available for their placement preserve the possibility of the offensive team exploiting the observable weaknesses of the defending teams while, at the same time, preserving the element of chance which characteristizes the real game.

What I claim as my invention is:

1. Game apparatus for determining the individual plays in a toy football game comprising:

a ball and an inclined board, said board including a plurality of discrete areas representing field goals and extra points, ground plays, pass play, kick-off and punts and kick returns and pass interception returns, respectively; each of said areas comprising a floor with markings to represent an appropriate area of a playing field relative to a line of scrimmage, side walls, a lower end wall, and at least one ball play port for each of the respective areas adjacent the upper end thereof, for putting the ball in play, said lower end wall having a plurality of stalls for receiving the ball, each of said stalls being marked with a predetermined result for a play, a

plurality of upstanding pins in each of said areas for interfering with the travel of said ball down said inclined floor; said pass, ground, and field goal play areas further including upstanding game pieces representing the members of two opposed football teams, one offensive and one defensive; and means for varying the position of at least one of said game pieces of said defensive team.

2. Game apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein:
a plurality of selected game pieces are movable into a limited number of predetermined positions on each of said field goal, ground play or pass play areas.

3. Game apparatus as claimed in claim 2 wherein:
said selected members are rotatable in said predetermined selected positions, and said selected members are shaped to engage the playing ball.

4. Game apparatus as claimed in claim 1 including:
means for determining the occurrence of a penalty on a play.

5. Game apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein:
said means for determining the occurrence of a penalty comprises a pair of gates each being movable into a number of predetermined positions on said ground play and pass play areas, respectively.

6 Game apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein:
said field goal, pass play, and ground play areas are each provided with plurality of ball play ports adjacent the upper end thereof, said ball play ports being spaced apart to provide different initial travel paths for said ball.

7. Game apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein:
said board includes a further area representing a football field, said further area including means for indicating the state of a simulated game.

8. Game apparatus as claimed in claim 7 wherein:
said means for indicating the state of a game comprises game pieces depicting a football and a yard marker, respectively, to indicate the position of the football.

9. Game apparatus as claimed in claim 7 wherein:
said board includes means for determining a penalty to be assessed on a play.

10. Game apparatus as claimed in claim 1 wherein:
the positions of said upstanding pins and certain of said game pieces are predetermined.

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U.S. Cl. X.R.

273—120R