

[54] **GOLF GAME WITH CLUB STROKER**

[72] Inventor: **David Joseph Barrios**, 5825 N. Kenmore, Chicago, Ill. 60626

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[51] Int. Cl.A63f 7/06, A63f 7/10

[58] Field of Search.....273/87, 87.2, 87.4, 69, 129; 401/112, 109, 195, 104

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Primary Examiner—Richard C. Pinkham

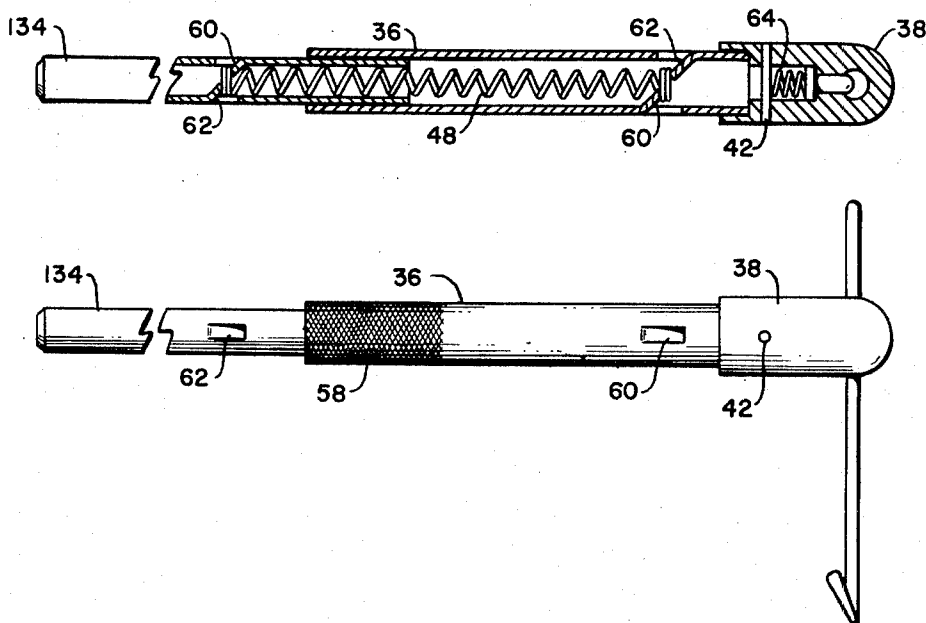
Assistant Examiner—Paul E. Shapiro

Attorney—Johnson, Dienner, Emrich, Verbeck & Wagner

[57] **ABSTRACT**

An indoor game played according to the rules of golf utilizing manually actuatable stokers to which miniature-sized golf clubs are releasably mounted for propelling a ball across a flexible playing surface which may be rolled into cylindrical form for storage. The playing surface has areas representing fairways, greens and hazards of a typical golf course, said areas being differently textured to affect the roll of a ball stroked thereacross. In one embodiment the club is secured to the stoker by interacting portions on the stoker and club respectively comprising a non-circular opening with locating portions therein in the stoker and a circular club having cut-out portions engaged by the locating portions. In a second embodiment the stoker has a spring biased detent extending into an opening and the club has a recess in its shaft engaged by the detent.

4 Claims, 16 Drawing Figures



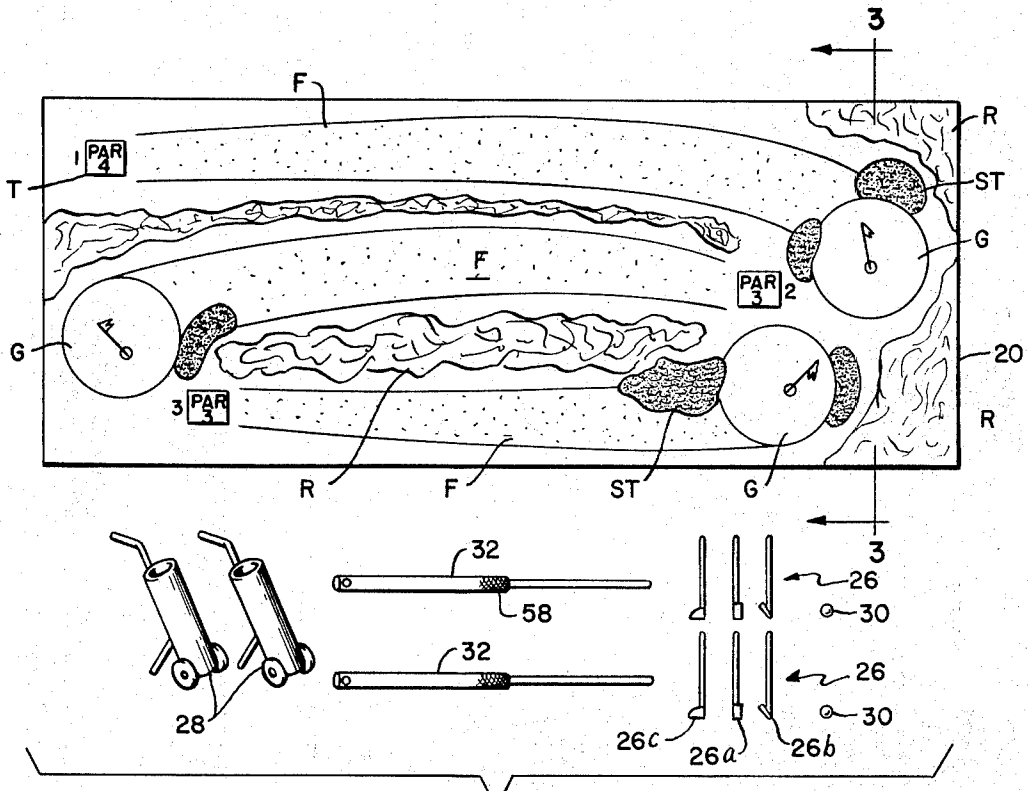


FIG. 1

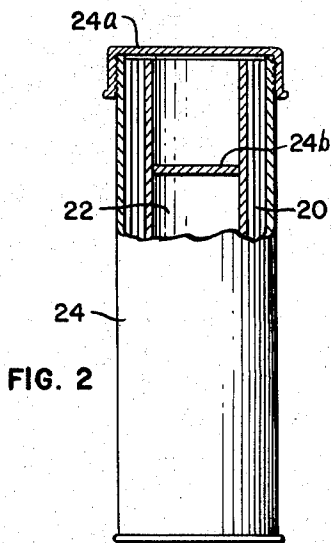


FIG. 2

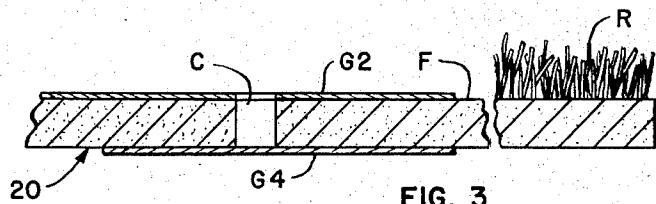


FIG. 3

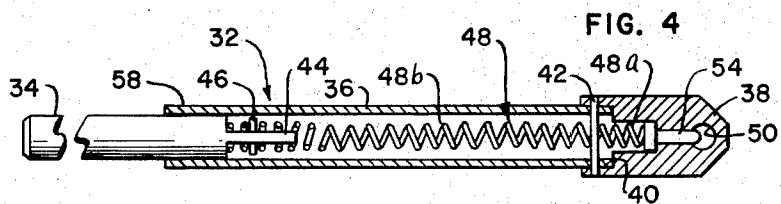


FIG. 4

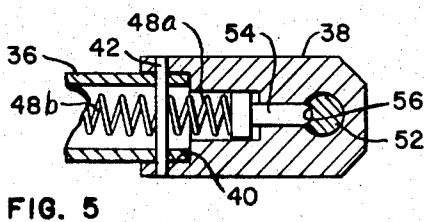


FIG. 5

FIG. 6

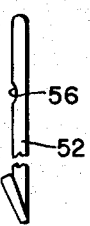
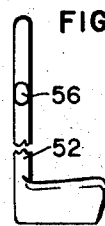


FIG. 7



INVENTOR
DAVID JOSEPH BORRIOS
 BY *Johnson Deeney, Enrich,
 Verbeck & Wagner*
 ATTORNEYS

FIG. 9

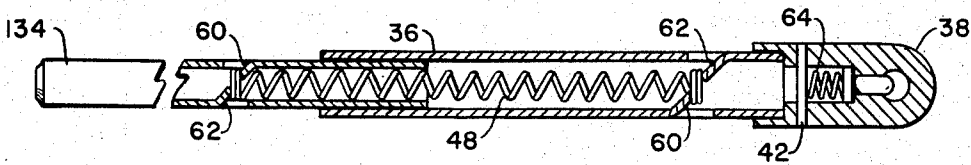


FIG. 8

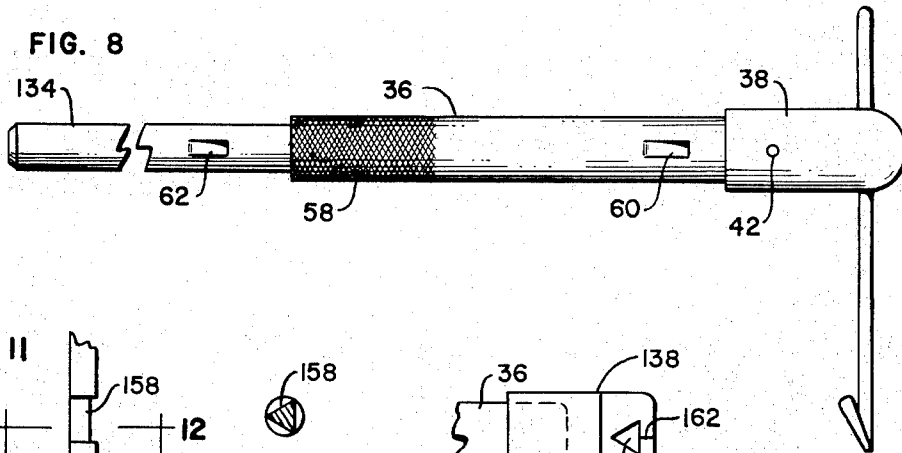


FIG. 11

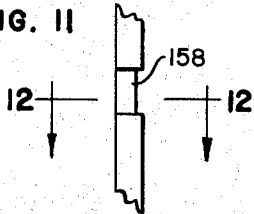


FIG. 12

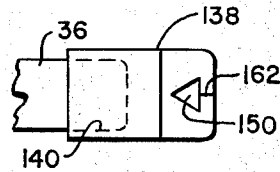


FIG. 10

FIG. 13

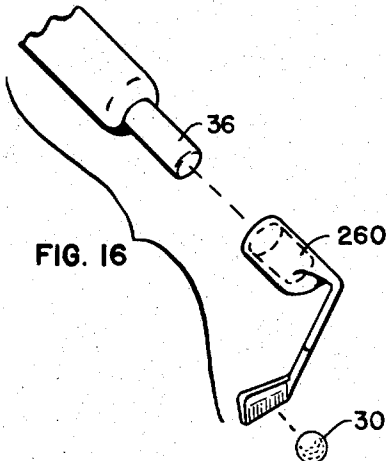
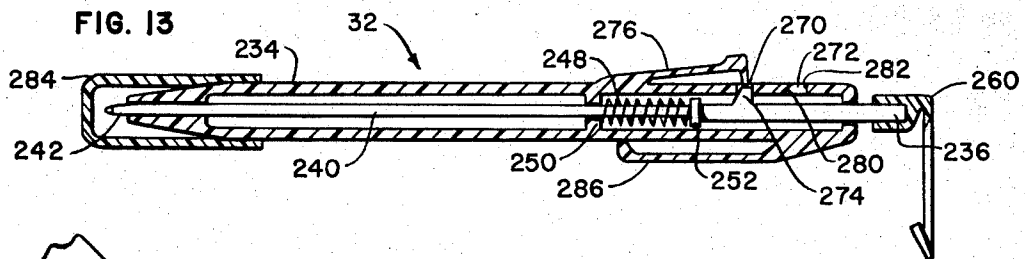


FIG. 16

FIG. 14

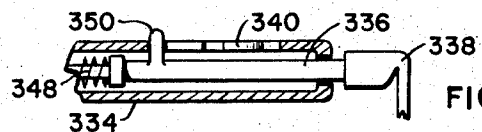
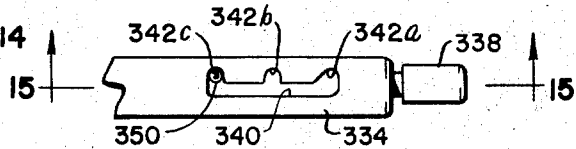


FIG. 15

INVENTOR
DAVID JOSEPH BARRIOS

BY *Johnson, Diemel, Emrich
Verbeek & Wagner*

ATTORNEYS

GOLF GAME WITH CLUB STROKER

This invention relates to an indoor game and particularly to one which has an appeal and attraction to those possessing a familiarity with the outdoor sport of golf.

Indoor golf games are not broadly new. However, in the past such games suffered in appeal for lack of realism. Usually, the game was played on a hard board so that in propelling the ball thereacross, the free roll of the ball detracted from the realism and any skill involved consisted in being able to accurately direct the ball so that it would roll into the hole on the first or second shot. Often, printed areas of the game board would be designated as hazards and penalties of one or more strokes would be awarded if the player's ball stopped in such an area. In these instances, the games depended more on chance than on a demonstration of skill. Usually also, the game boards were of limited size so that they could be conveniently stored.

The principal object of the present invention is to devise a game which will draw on the golfing sense and skill of a player to beat his opponent and will not depend primarily on chance.

A companion object of the invention is to devise such a game in which the playing area, as well as the implements, including clubs and balls, will introduce realism to the game.

Thus, in accordance with the invention, a playing area is utilized on which is depicted one or more, preferably three, holes of a golf course. Each player is provided with a ball and a set of clubs scaled, insofar as practical, to the size of the playing area. Because such miniature-sized clubs cannot be conveniently handled, each player is also provided with a stroker on which he mounts one of his clubs and by means of which he is able to use a selected club to stroke the ball from the tee toward the green and into the cup of each hole following the rules of conventional golf.

One of the features of the invention is that the playing area is formed of a flexible material having a roll-retarding surface such that it can be rolled about a central core and stored within a cylindrical container. One end of the core or container will comprise a pocket into which the balls, clubs, stokers and other implements needed to play the game may be stored. Because the playing area is formed of flexible material, it may be of a relatively large size, as for example such that when unrolled it occupies the major area of a ping pong table, pool or billiard table, or a dining room table. In practice, the inventor has found that a convenient size is approximately 3 by 7 feet and is one on which he is able to lay out three golf holes scaled to depict the arrangement of greens, fairways and roughs of well known golfing holes. If desired, both sides of the flexible member can each be used to depict three separate holes so as to constitute a golf course having six holes and three such members would suffice to provide the player with a playing area corresponding to the conventional 18 hole course.

A further important feature of the invention is that the areas of the playing surface corresponding to the greens, fairways and roughs are differently textured so as to affect the roll of the ball which is also of a relatively small size, for example, not exceeding one-eighth of an inch when the playing area has the above described dimensions. For example, the rough may be produced

by way of a flocking process using varied color flock or it may comprise raised coarse nap through which the ball will move only poorly, whereas the fairways and greens may be of felt or foam rubber, differently textured, so that the ball will meet less resistance when moving across the fairway areas.

A particularly important feature of the invention is the novel construction of the stroker or implement on which the miniature sized golf clubs are selectively mounted for stroking or propelling the ball from the tee to the cup of each hole.

Thus the invention contemplates that each player is provided with several clubs and the stroker is so adapted that the clubs may be interchangeably mounted thereon. Thus, off the tee a player might want to use a "driver" while on the fairway an "iron" and a "putter" on the green.

In accordance with the invention, the stroker comprises a pair of telescoping elements, one of which is held in the player's hand while he retracts the other against a compressible spring. This second element, which is hereinafter referred to as a driven element, has its outer end provided with means by which one of the clubs can be removably mounted thereto. The stroker is operated by retracting the driven element against the spring so as to store energy therein which when the driven element is released can be transferred by the driven element to the supported club so as to stroke a ball with which the club is aligned and drive it across the playing surface.

In one form of the invention the stroker may be adapted as a retractable ball point pen or writing implement. In this form of the invention the stroker is also useful to record the player's score. Usually a removable cap will be provided to cover the writing end of the stroker and the stroker also may include a clip by means of which it may be supported conveniently over the edge of the player's pocket.

Still another feature of the invention is that the force with which the club is stroked against the ball may be adjusted. For example, a less powerful force is required when "putting on a fast green" as compared to when "driving off the tee". In some forms of the invention adjustment of the stroking force is obtained by varying the amount or distance the drive element is retracted into or relative to the handle. In other forms the stroker is provided with means by which the retractable element can be set as to impart a force pre-calculated for use with the putter, iron or wood.

Still other features of the invention include the novel means employed for releasably mounting a golf club on the retractable or driven element of the stroker.

Another feature is the novel means employed for providing the power to stroke the club.

A further feature of the invention is the simplicity of construction of the stroker which facilitates stroking of the elected golf club and at the same time comprises one that is entirely practicable and economical to manufacture.

Many other objects, as well as advantages and features of the invention will be at once apparent or will become so upon consideration of the description of the preferred forms of the invention which now will be described in connection with the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 illustrates the invention as embodying a flexible member on which the holes of a golf course are depicted together with clubs, stokers and club bag for two players;

FIG. 2, partly fragmented, shows the flexible member stored in its container;

FIG. 3 is a sectional view taken along lines 3—3 of FIG. 1 and illustrates the different textures and constructions employed for the green, fairway and rough;

FIG. 4 is a longitudinal sectional view taken through one form of stroker;

FIG. 5 is a sectional view taken along lines 5—5 of FIG. 4 illustrating the means employed for mounting the club on the retractable or driven element of the stroker;

FIGS. 6 and 7 illustrate, in front and side elevation respectively, a golf club which may be mounted on the stroker of FIG. 4;

FIG. 8 illustrates a second form of the stroker and FIG. 9 is a longitudinal sectional view taken therethrough;

FIG. 10 illustrates an alternate golf club mounting means which, for example, may replace the mounting means shown in the stroker of FIG. 8; said mounting means also may be utilized with the other illustrated forms of stroker;

FIG. 11 is a front elevational view of a golf club having a modified form of locating means particularly adapted for assembly with the form of club mounting means illustrated by FIGS. 8 and 9;

FIG. 12 is a sectional view taken along lines 12—12 of FIG. 11 and shows further details in the shape and arrangement of said locating means;

FIG. 13 is a longitudinal sectional view through a third form of stroker and shows still another form of golf club mount which also may be used with the other forms of stokers;

FIGS. 14 and 15 are fragmented views showing still another construction of stroker, FIG. 15 being a longitudinal sectional view taken along lines 15—15 of FIG. 14; and

FIG. 16 is an exploded view showing still another form of club mounting means which may be utilized with any one of the aforeillustrated stokers.

Referring now more particularly to the several views wherein like parts are identified by like reference numerals, and first to FIGS. 1, 2 and 3, the invention is illustrated as comprising a game of indoor golf which is played on a member 20 of flexible rollable material such as foam rubber or felt. Said member is illustrated in FIG. 1 in its unrollable playing form and in FIG. 2 is rolled about a core 22 and positioned within its cylindrical shaped storage container 24, the latter having a friction fitted screw-on type closure cap 26. As illustrated in FIG. 1, said member 20 has one or more golf holes, in this instance three holes depicted on one surface thereof, each of said holes including a tee T, a green G, a fairway F and a rough area R. One or more of the holes may also include a sand trap indicated at ST. Preferably, the peripheral portions of the areas about the playing surface, as well as the intervening areas between the fairways of the adjoining holes are designated as rough R. In other respects, it is contemplated that the layouts of the golf holes closely simulate existing holes, preferably those of some reknown. As

shown in FIG. 1, each player is provided with a set of clubs 26. The number of clubs provided each player may vary, but preferably will comprise at least a putter 26a, an iron 26b and a wood 26c. Each player is also provided with a bag 28 in which to contain his clubs and preferably the bag is molded of plastic and integral with a cart as illustrated in said FIG. 1. Other playing implements will include one or more balls 30 per player and a stroker 32. Although not essential, usefully the set of clubs 26, stroker 32, as well as bag and cart will be of the same color and which color will differ from that employed to identify the club, stroker and bag and cart of the other players.

Referring now to FIG. 2, one end of core 22 about which the flexible golf course depicting member 20 is rolled constitutes a pocket having an open end and a bottom wall 30 which is of a size to store the aforementioned playing elements, including clubs, bag and carts and stokers. In FIG. 2 core 22 is illustrated with its upper end substantially flush with the open end of the container 24. It will be understood, however, that, if desired, said storage pocket can be omitted and the container formed deep enough to accommodate a separately formed cylindrical container placed in the end of the container 24 over the core and utilized to store said implement. Also, if desired, either this separate container or the illustrated open end of the core can be provided with its own removable cover.

Considering now FIG. 3 with FIG. 1, as aforementioned, the golf course depicting member 20 is of a sufficient size that it may be scaled to correspond to actual holes of golf and the texture of its surfaces also preferably varied such that when the golf balls 30 are propelled thereacross, utilizing one of the clubs 26 in a stroker 32, as afterwards described, the balls, if correctly directed along a fairway F, will move a distance roughly approximating the distance with which a player on an outdoor golf course would be expected to drive a ball with a corresponding club. Where the balls comprise lead or steel shot of the order of one-eighth inch or three-sixteenths inch, convenient dimensions for the golf course depicting member 20 will be 3 x 7 feet. On such a rectangular play surface one par 4 and two par 3 golf holes can be conveniently laid out. In FIG. 1 such a course is shown as obtained by laying out hole 1 to include a dog leg.

The different surface textures required for the greens, fairways, rough and sand traps may be provided in any convenient manner. However, I prefer to use felt or foam rubber of which to construct member 20, the surface texture of which I find particularly suitable for affecting the roll of the steel or lead shot across the fairways F. Although the greens G could also be made of the same felt or foam rubber, they also may be constructed by laminating a thickness G2 of a harder surface fabric, for example rayon or cotton to the felt or foam rubber member. An ancillary advantage thereof is that the greens are thus clearly outlined and are elevated slightly above the level of the fairways. The upper lamination of fabric G2 can be cut-out to provide a cup indicated at C. If desired, the greens G can be further raised by laminating a second thickness G4 of felt or foam rubber to the underside of the green G. By such means the rigidity of the surface of the green can be further increased. The rough areas R may be con-

stituted by flocking or by laminating a thickness of brushed or heavy nap material at selected areas on the foam rubber member 20, this material being of a character through which the balls will roll only with difficulty, or very slowly. Sand traps ST may be formed by adhesively securing fine sand particles to appropriate areas in the fairways F and about the greens G. The sand traps ST also may be constituted by cutting out contoured sections of the fairways and backing these cut-out areas with cloth having the fine sand adhesively secured thereto. The resultant depressions formed in the playing area add to the realism of the game. When both surfaces of the flexible member are used to depict golf holes, these added pieces will preferably be of felt or foam rubber, that is of the same material as the flexible member 20, and by reason of their thickness constitute hills or other variations in the terrain. Thus, it will be appreciated that considerable realism can be imparted to a flexible playing surface which may also be of sufficiently large size that when unrolled it will occupy substantially the full area of a large size surface, for example a dining room table, a pool table or a ping pong table. Obviously, it may also be unrolled across the floor of a reaction room, or even one's living room. At the same time, being flexible, member 20 can be conveniently stored in a container of usefully small compact size by rolling it about core 22, which is also useful for storing the implements utilized in the game. Although not essential, both the greens and the corresponding trees, as well as fairways, may be identified by printing numbers corresponding to the particular hole. Arrows and other indications may also be imprinted along the fairways to indicate directions of play and other necessary information. These may be printed, using conventional silk screen printing techniques, for example, by which technique the playboard 20 may also be appropriately colored. It will be understood, however, that the playboard may be also constructed by laminating layers of sheets which have been previously printed and/or colored. Many other variations and/or possibilities will also come to mind.

As previously mentioned, the balls 30 are preferably scaled to the dimensions of the playboard 20, as are also the golf clubs 26. Where the balls 30 have a diameter in the order of one-eighth or three-sixteenths inch, I have found that the clubs should have a dimension on the order of 1 1/2 or 2 inches. However, in such small dimensions, the clubs can be handled by the average individual only with difficulty. Accordingly, it is a feature of this invention that each player also is provided with a stroker, one end of which is adapted for releasably mounting a selected one of his clubs. The player then utilizes the stroker to stroke the selected club against the ball.

Referring now to FIGS. 4 and 5, one form of stroker in accordance with the invention is illustrated at 32. In this form of the invention the stroker comprises a first cylindrically shaped hand grip or handle 34 over one end of which is telescoped a second retractable or driven element 36. Element 36 has mounting means 38 at its outer end by which the player's clubs 26 are removably mounted thereto. Said club mounting means may be integral with said element 36 but, as shown in FIG. 4, is separately formed therefrom and includes a

socket portion 40 which frictionally fits about said outer end of the driven element 36 and is pinned thereto as by rivet 42. As illustrated by FIG. 4, hand grip element 34 includes a reduced stem 44 protruding into the hollow interior of the driven element 36. Pinned to stem 42 as by rivet 46 is one end of a spring 48 which is also pinned to the driven element 36 at a point remote from rivet 46, for example by the aforementioned pin or rivet 42. Club mounting means 38 includes an opening 50 extending therethrough at right angles to the axis of the stroker and which serves to receive shaft 52 of the club 26. At 54 is a detent which extends into opening 50 at right angles thereto and is backed by spring 48. As shown in FIGS. 6 and 7, shaft 52 of the clubs is provided with a recess 56 with which detent 54 aligns. Preferably detent 54 has a sharpened end which facilitates insertion of the club shaft through opening 50. Detent 54 under the bias of portion 48a of spring 48 thus serves to properly locate the club shaft and to resist its turning in opening 50. Spring 48 via pins 42 and 46 also serves to secure the two telescoping elements 36 and 34 in connected relation. In utilizing stroker 32 it will be understood that club 26 is first secured within the mounting member 38. The player then, while holding portion 34 in one hand, grasps knurled portion 58 of the driven element and telescopes it over element 34 against spring 48 and compressing its portion 48b between the two pins 42 and 46. Upon release of the element 36 by the player, the release force of the compressed spring 48 causes the element 36 to impart a force to the club which strokes the ball across the fairway in the direction in which the stroker is aligned. It will be understood that in accordance with the distance that element 36 is retracted on hand grip element 34, the driving force of the club against the ball can be varied. It will also be understood that the spacing between pins 42 and 46 is adjusted in accordance with the characteristics of the spring, such that a maximum retraction of element 36 over hand grip element 34 as determined by stem 44 will develop a force in spring 48 when compressed, which is capable of causing the clubs 26 to drive the ball across the fairway surface a distance consistent with the texture and surface characteristics of the fairway F to approximate a distance in the order of 200 yards, considering the scale on which the holes are laid out on the playing surface.

A second form of stroker is illustrated in FIGS. 8 and 9. In this form both the driven element 36 and hand grip element 134 comprise hollow tubular members. However, in this form both the hand grip member 134 and the cooperating driven elements 36 have spring engaging portions which comprise diametrically opposite inwardly deflected tabs 60, one of which tabs 60 is deflected rearwardly and the other of which tabs 62 is deflected forwardly. Thus, as illustrated by FIG. 8, projection tabs 60 of the two telescoping elements 36 and 134 constitute hooks which restrict separation of the telescoping element 36 and 134, whereas projections or tabs 62 constitute stops which resist movement of the spring elements as element 36 is telescoped over element 134 so as to effect compression of the spring element. In this form of the invention the club mounting means 38 is identical in construction to the club mounting means shown in FIG. 4. However, in this

form portion 48a of the biasing spring has been replaced by a second spring 64 and the full length of spring 48 constitutes the power supply for the stroking of the golf club.

FIG. 10 illustrates a modified form of club mounting means 138 having a socket portion 140 which frictionally fits over the outer end of driven element 36. In this form of stroker no detent or spring biasing thereof as aforescribed is required. Rather, the club shaft receiving opening 150 of said means 138 is of a triangular shape and communicates with the outer edge of means 138 by slots 162. As shown in FIGS. 11 and 12, the shaft of the club has a reduced or recessed section 158 of triangular shape complementing the triangular shape of opening 150. The golf club is assembled by forcing the pointed end of said triangular section locating portion of the club shaft 158 through said slots 162 into opening 150, the material of the club mounting means 138 being sufficiently resilient to allow the two halves of said means 138 to separate far enough to allow said entry. When received within said triangular shaped opening 150, the club shaft is obviously held against rotation.

In still another form of the invention illustrated by FIG. 16, the shaft of the club is formed integral with a socket portion 260 which fits over the outer end of the driven element 36. In this form of the invention, the shaft is sharply angled to the socket portion and may be substantially thinned to introduce an amount of flexibility corresponding to the "whip" characteristic given the shaft of some golf clubs.

In FIG. 13, still another form of stroker is illustrated. In this form, stroker 32 constitutes a writing element. Thus, its hand grip element 234 has a hollow bore through which extends the reduced stem section 240 of the driven element 236. As illustrated, reduced stem section 240 comprises a reservoir or writing fluid and has a communicating association ball point nib at its outer end which extends through the open end 242 of the hand grip element 234. About stem 240 is a spring 248 biased between shoulders 250 on the hand grip element 234 and shoulder 252 on the driven element 236. Secured to the outer end of the driven element 236 is socket means 260 illustrated by FIG. 16 as constituting means by which its outer end shaped as the shaft and head of a golf club is secured to the driven element. In this form of the invention, hand grip portion 234 is provided with a pair of axially spaced openings 270 and 272 adjacent one end and through which projection 274 on element 236 is selectively extendible. By pushing in on the club mounted element 260, driven element 236 may be forced further into the bore of the hand grip element 234 so as to compress spring 248 between shoulders 250 and 252 and locating projection 274 within opening 270 as illustrated by FIG. 13. To actuate the stroker the player simply pushes down on actuator 276 releasing projection 274 from opening 270 whereupon the compressed spring 248 acts on driven element 236 to move it outwardly of the hand grip portion 234 until said projection registers with opening 272. It will be noted that opening 270 included a stop surface 276 which is at right angles to the axis of the stroker and opening 272 has a surface 280 which is inclined to facilitate exit of the projection from said opening when the projection is depressed therein. Sur-

face 282 of opening 272, however, is at right angles to the axis of the stroker and so resists further axial movement of the projection 274 and prevents separation of the telescoping element under the force of the spring 248. It will be appreciated from FIG. 13 that with the driven element 236 in its retracted position end 242 of the writing element 240 will extend outwardly of the hand grip portion 234 sufficiently far to be useful in marking on the score card or the like. A cap 284 is provided which frictionally fits over said end to prevent possible accidental marking of the player's apparel when the stroker is mounted on his clothing as by means of a clip 286.

In the previously described embodiments of the invention the force with which the club is caused to strike the ball is a function of the distance the driven element is retracted over or into the hand grip element. In the embodiment according to FIG. 13, the stroker can be preset to deliver a predetermined force to the club by locating projection 274 in opening 270 and this power can be released by simply depressing the projection 274. The power thus supplied, however, is constant. The force with which the putter is swung in regular golf is, however, usually not the same as the force with which the player would desire to swing one of his woods or irons and it will, in fact, usually be much less. As described, in the present invention the player is able to vary the force with which he hits the ball with a club by varying the distance which he retracts the driven element 36 relative to the hand grip element 34. Referring to FIGS. 14 and 15, such an arrangement is, however, illustrated wherein the stroker may be preset to impart one force when a putter is mounted on a stroker, a second and greater force when an iron is mounted thereon and a third and still greater force when a wood is mounted thereon. Thus, as shown in said FIGS. 14 and 15, the hand grip element 334 of the illustrated stroker has an axially extending elongated slot 340 which is provided with three spaced notches 342 communicating with one side thereof. The driven element 336 is biased as in the previously described embodiments by means of a spring 348 which is this time restricted between the inner end of the element 336 and a shoulder 344 provided about a locating stem (not shown) on the hand grip element 334. The outer end of the driven element 336 is provided with a club mounting element 338 which may be constructed as described in any of the earlier mentioned embodiments. Element 336 has a radially extending projection 350 which extends through slot 340 and which may be selectively moved by rotation of element 336 into one of the three notches 342a, 342b, or 342c, with which it is aligned. It will be understood therefore that by locating projection 350 in one of said three notches the stroker may be set to supply forces of three different values. For example when using the putter it may be more convenient to set the stroker with projection 350 in locking notch 342a. When using an iron to locate projection 350 in notch 342b and when using a wood, as off the tee, to locate the projection 350 in notch 342c. It will be further recognized that if the projection is not located in one of the notches the player still has the option of varying the force supplied to the club at any amount between the maximum presented a full retraction at 342c and a minimum retraction at 342a.

From the aforesaid description, it will be apparent that all of the recited objects, advantages and features of the invention have been demonstrated as obtainable in a highly practical and completely convenient manner and furthermore that the described structure provides an indoor game which may be played according to the rules of golf and at the same time requires both skill and golf sense by the participating players.

Thus having described my invention, I claim:

1. In an indoor game which utilizes a playing surface depicting a course over which a ball is to be stroked in simulation of a game of golf, the combination of a golf club and a stroker for operating the golf club, the stroker comprising a handle, a driven element slidably received on one end of the handle, means for mounting the golf club to the outer end of the driven element, and resilient means within the handle which is reacted by sliding the driven element on the handle thereagainst, said resilient means when thus reacted storing energy which is releasable against the driven element to force it in a direction outwardly of the handle and against a ball aligned with the club to stroke the ball across the playing surface, said mounting means on the outer end of the driven element having an opening through which one end of the club is extended, said opening being non-circular in shape and the club end which fits therethrough being circular in section, the mounting means further having locating portions within said non-circular opening and the club end having cut-out portions engaged by said locating portions of said mounting means to frictionally retain the club in said opening.

2. In an indoor game which utilizes a playing surface

depicting a course over which a ball is to be stroked in simulation of a game of golf, the combination of a golf club and a stroker for operating the golf club, the stroker comprising a handle, a driven element slidably received on one end of the handle, means for mounting the golf club to the outer end of the driven element, and resilient means within the handle which is reacted by sliding the driven element on the handle thereagainst, said resilient means when thus reacted storing energy which is releasable against the driven element to force it in a direction outwardly of the handle and against a ball aligned with the club to stroke the ball across the playing surface, said mounting means comprising a hollow shell which fits over the outer end of the driven element, said shell including an opening through which a club handle extends, said hollow shell supporting a spring biased detent member which engages the club handle positioned in said opening, and said club handle having a recess which receives said detent member to locate the club handle and hold it against turning in the opening.

3. The combination of claim 2 wherein the driven element comprises a hollow tube and contains a compressible spring pinned thereto intermediate its ends, one end of said spring biasing the detent of the club holding means and the other end portion of the spring comprising the resilient means reacted by sliding the driven element into the handle of the stroker.

4. The combination of claim 3 wherein the other end portion of the spring is secured to the stroker handle within the hollow of the driven element.

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