March 28, 1967 S. SAMUELS 3,310,889

BASEBALL SHOE WITH INTEGRAL TOE AND INSTEP GUARD

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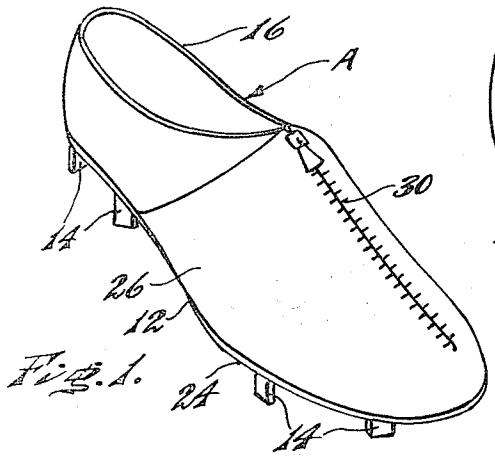


Fig. 1.

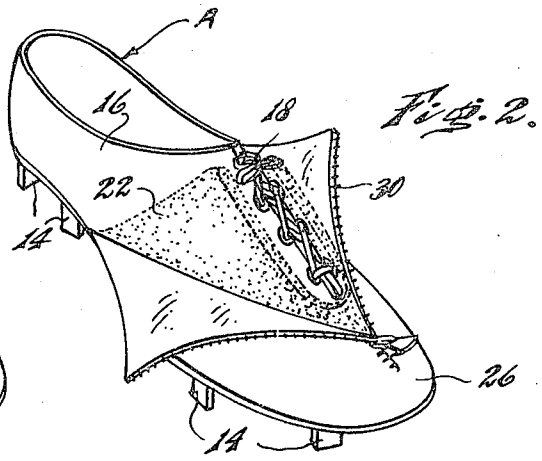


Fig. 2.

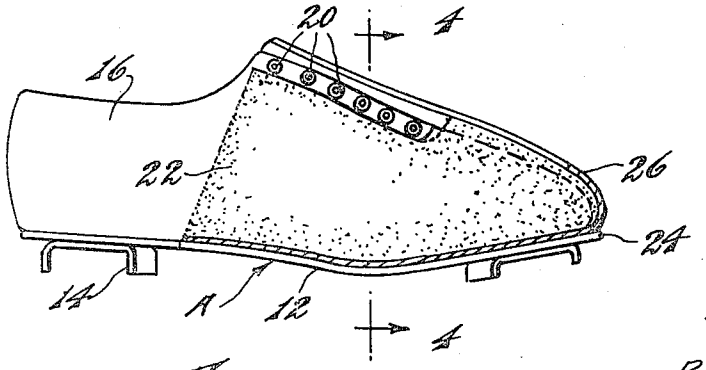


Fig. 3.

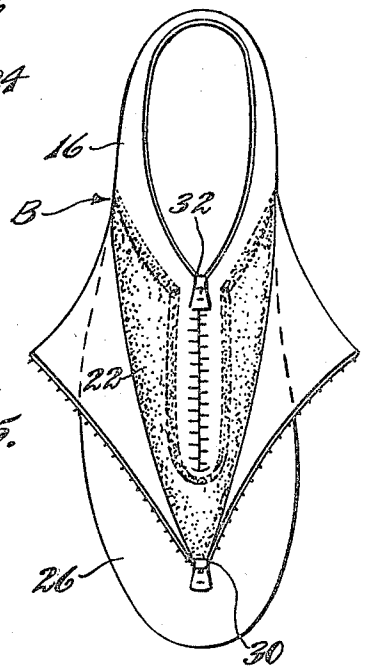
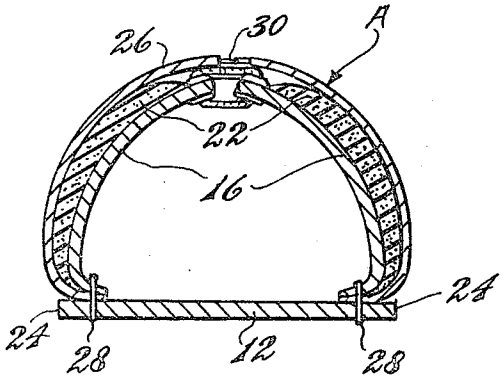


Fig. 5.

Fig. 4.



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BASEBALL SHOE WITH INTEGRAL TOE AND INSTEP GUARD

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This invention relates to a baseball shoe, and more particularly relates to protecting means integrally formed as part of the baseball shoe itself to guard the player against injury to his toe or instep as a result of spiking or foul tips.

It is well recognized that a baseball shoe must be light in weight in order that the player may be relatively free to run the bases with speed and to field the ball efficiently without undue impediment. At the same time, it is necessary that such shoes fit the player's feet comfortably and offer a minimum of interior obstructions and, with the exception of spikes, provide minimal exterior protuberances so that the player will not be hampered in his actions. Accordingly, the usual baseball shoe is of lightweight calf leather construction having a relatively stiff bottom sole to which the customary pair of triangularly-arranged spike plates are mounted at the toe and heel portions. The shoe upper is a low slipper and generally streamlined in configuration so as to furnish minimum air resistance.

As a result, the ordinary baseball shoe itself offers little protection against injury to the toes and dorsal metarsus and tarsus of the foot. Experience has indicated that extremely high injury rates have occurred in these areas as a result of spiking during base-running and foul tips while a player is at bat. Catchers are particularly subject to broken toes and fractures of the tarsal bones since the removable shin and ankle guards which they wear do not afford protection beyond the ankle itself.

It is therefore an object of this invention to provide a lightweight baseball shoe with integrally formed means therein to protect the player from injuries to his toes and instep.

Another object of this invention is to provide an integral toe and instep guard for a baseball shoe which is worn at all times during play without requiring removal as in the case of shin, chest protectors, masks, and helmets thereby offering full protection to the toe and dorsal metatarsal portions during all phases of play and avoiding game delays usually attendant to removable protectors.

Still another object of this invention is to provide an integral toe and instep guard for a baseball shoe which offers complete protection to these foot areas without sacrificing weight, comfort, and utility.

Yet another object of this invention is to provide a toe and instep guard for a baseball shoe which permits the shoe to be easily tied to the player's foot.

A further object of this invention is to provide a toe and instep guard for a baseball shoe which causes no undue external protuberances or internal encumberances.

Other objects of this invention are to provide an improved device of the character described that is easily and economically produced, which is sturdy in construction and both highly efficient and effective in operation.

With the above and related objects in view, this invention consists of the details of construction and combination of parts as will be more fully understood from the following detailed description when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawing in which:

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of a baseball shoe having an integrally formed toe and instep guard embodying this invention.

FIGURE 2 is a perspective view of the baseball shoe with the instep guard in flared open position to provide access to the laces.

FIGURE 3 is a side elevational view, and partly in section, with the outer jacket broken away to show the resilient foam rubber padding.

FIGURE 4 is a sectional veiw taken along lines 4—4 of FIGURE 3.

FIGURE 5 is a top plan view of a modified baseball shoe employing the toe and instep guard of the instant invention.

Referring now in greater detail to the drawings in which similar reference characters refer to similar parts, I show a baseball shoe A which embodies the improvement in toe and instep guard of the instant invention.

The baseball shoe A itself is generally of conventional construction and includes a bottom sole **12** to which the usual cleats or spikes **14** are secured. The upper **16** of the shoe is of the low silhouette or slipper-like construction and is preferably made of calf, kangaroo or soft pliable leather to provide a comfortable envelope for the feet and at the same time to withstand the rigors of baseball play. Inner soles of sock linings (not shown) may also be included but have been omitted in the illustration for purposes of clarity since they do not form a part of the instant invention. Shoe laces **18** are tied through the conventional eyelets **20** so as to facilitate the application and removal of the shoes upon the feet.

In carrying out my invention, I first cement a pad or cushion **22** of foam rubber to the outer toe portion and metatarsal-instep areas of the upper **16** so as to completely encapsulate these zones. The cushion **22** is preferably triple-density cured foamed natural or synthetic rubber latex and having a thickness of approximately ⅜ inch. The cushion **22** may be applied from cut strips or may be molded to fully cover the toe, extending downwardly to the shoe welt **24**, and project rearwardly in bifurcated metatarsal ears to a line terminating at the ankle and just below the eyelets **20**. A leather sheath **26** of pliable hard-wearing leather is stitched at **28** peripherally about the forward portion of the shoe A upon the shoe last between the upper **16** and the bottom sole **12** at the welt **24**. The sheath or jacket **26** is unitary at the toe but is split rearwardly thereof in two sections to the opposing edges of which is sewn a zipper **30**. Thus, the outer jacket **26** is adapted to fully encapsulate the cushion **22** about the defined dorsal metatarsal portion of the foot, as shown in FIGURE 1, and yet is capable of being flared open by the zipper **30**, as shown in FIGURE 2, so as to enable the player to lace or unlace his shoes.

It is to be observed that the jacket **26**, when it is closed by the zipper **30**, presents a streamlined configuration substantially similar to the unguarded shoe and has no bulges or protuberances which might otherwise interfere with the player's freedom of motion. The toe and instep guard, at the same time, affords complete protection to the wearer's toe and metatarsal zones of his feet, and since the guard is integral with the shoe itself, it is retained on the shoe without the usual detachable features which interfere with normal all-around play. Hence, delay of the game is avoided as would occur during removal of the ordinary detachable protectors or shields.

It is also to be noted that the bifurcated portion of the pad **22** also protects against injuries along the line of the laces because of the elevated construction thereof and its cushioning effect when bridged by the zippered sheath.

In FIGURE 5, I show a modified shoe B which includes a zipper closure **32** to pull together the lateral edges of the upper **16** rather than the customary eyelet and lace combination. This zippered upper yields more affirmative support and eliminates the commonly occurring loosening of laces in play. The modified shoe B employs

the same cushion **22**, jacket **26** and zipper **30** guard for the toe and metatarsal instep.

Although this invention has been described in considerable detail, such description is intended as being illustrative rather than limiting since the invention may be variously embodied, and the scope of the invention is to be determined as claimed.

What is claimed is:

1. A permanently attached toe and instep guard for a baseball shoe having a separable upper and a sole including a welt, said guard comprising a resilient cushion having a toe encapsulating portion and a rearwardly-extending bifurcated portion cemented to the upper of the shoe upon the respective toe and instep portions thereof, a leather jacket secured only along its periphery to the welt of said shoe and extending upwardly therefrom in a pair of lateral portions, and a zipper detachably interconnecting the adjacent lateral portions about said cushion.

2. An instep and toe protective baseball shoe comprising a sole having spikes secured to the under portion thereof, a welt along said sole, an upper slipper portion having a toe enclosure and adjacently spaced lateral metatarsal sections, means to secure said lateral sections together, a foamed rubber cushion cemented to the toe enclosure and having a bifurcated portion cemented to the respective metatarsal sections, and a zippered jacket sewn along the welt of said shoe intermediate said upper and said sole and extending upwardly therefrom about said cushion, the line of sewing along said welt being the sole means of attachment of said jacket to said shoe, the line of the zipper extending to a medial point on said toe enclosure and overlying the securing means when closed so as to define a sheath for said cushion and permit access to the securing means when open.

3. The invention of claim **2** wherein said securing means comprises a zipper.

4. An athletic shoe with a combined permanently attached instep and toe protective guard comprising a sole having spikes secured to the under portion thereof, a welt on said sole, a relatively lightweight flexible upper slipper portion peripherally secured to the sole and defining a toe

portion, a metatarsal instep portion, and an ankle receiving portion for embracing the foot of a wearer, said metatarsal instep portion including a bifurcated portion having split lateral sections extending rearwardly from the toe portion, spaced eyelets along adjacent edges of said lateral sections, and laces received within the eyelets for drawing the lateral sections tautly about the wearer's instep, a foamed rubber cushion of substantially 3/8 inch thickness having a configuration complementary with the toe and instep upper slipper portions and being cemented to the upper surface thereof, said cushion including a toe zone encapsulating the toe portion and having a pair of rearwardly extending instep protective zones co-extensive with said lateral sections and terminating proximate the edges thereof just short of the margin of the eyelets, and a flexible leather jacket shaped conformably to and coterminous with the toe and metatarsal instep portions of said upper slipper portion and being sewn at the sole welt periphery so as to ensheath fully said cushion and terminate immediately adjacent said ankle receiving portion, said jacket having a forward area enclosing the cushioned toe zone about the upper toe portion and a pair of split dorsal flaps including a zipper member along adjacent edges of said flaps, the zipper member when closed drawing said flaps in smooth configuration overlying the laces and about the cushioned lateral sections to define a streamlined sheath therefor, and when open permitting access to the laces thereby allowing the shoe to be conveniently tied about the foot.

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