The invention described and illustrated herein relates to the sport of basketball. It is an improvement of known ball-return devices, such as that of F. J. Hatley, U.S. Patent No. 1,765,269. The object of the invention is to provide a means whereby basketballs are returned to the spot from which the player shoots the balls or to any other place on the court as predetermined by the placement of the bottom end of the device. This invention will greatly increase the number of shots possible to an individual practitioner in a given time, owing to the skill of the practitioner. This invention will enable the practitioner to concentrate on shooting from a selected spot on the playing floor without moving to retrieve the ball, so long as he makes the basket or, in one modification of the invention, if he comes close enough for the ball to be directed into the return device.

This device is easily attached, easily dismantled, compactly stored, and economically manufactured. The invention provides a reward for success, or near success. The invention is designed to be used on a regular basketball backboard assembly with no damage to any part thereof. Its weight is so slight that it can be handled by virtually any young boy. There is no possibility of injury from the device falling or breaking.

Further objects and features of the invention will be apparent from consideration of the accompanying drawings illustrating several embodiments of the invention.

FIGURE 1 shows a perspective view of one embodiment of the invention.

FIGURE 2 is a plan view of FIGURE 1.

FIGURE 3 is a perspective view of another embodiment of the invention.

FIGURE 4 is an elevation view of a stand for fixedly positioning a lower end of a basketball return device.

Referring now to the drawings, for detailed description of the embodiments illustrated, it is seen that in FIGURES 1 and 2 there is shown a conventional backboard assembly 10 which, for purposes of illustration is shown as being attached to a supporting means 11 which depends from the ceiling of a gymnasium or the like, it being understood that the supporting means may also be an upright post secured in the ground surface of a playing area.

The backboard assembly 10 is comprised of a backboard 12 of any conventional shape, and a basket assembly 13. The basket assembly 13 is comprised of a rim 14 and a net 15, all of which are conventional and well known.

A chute 16 is formed in the shape of a tube and is preferably constructed of netting but may be of other material such as canvas or heavy cloth. The chute 16 has an elevated portion 17 and a lower portion 18. The elevated portion 17 is attached to the backboard assembly 10, and the lower portion 18 is suitably affixed to a portion of the playing surface S as is shown in FIGURE 2. The elevated portion 17 of the chute 16 is shown as affixed to the rim 14 of the basket assembly 13 by suitable attaching means 19 which may be simple S-shaped hooks as shown in the drawings, or split, ring-type fasteners, or any other suitable detachable means.

The lower portion 18 of the chute 16 is shown as being attached to the playing surface S by suitable attaching means which may be a telescopically adjustable stand 21 having suction type cups 20 and hooks (shown unnumbered) for attaching lower portion 18 to the stand 21, as shown in the drawings. It is also within the purview of this invention to use ordinary thumb tacks, weights, or any other suitable means to attach the lower portion 18 to the playing surface S so as to prevent undesired movement of lower portion 18 of chute 16.

It is a very important concept of this invention that the lower portion 18 of the chute 16 is removable from the playing surface S so that said lower portion may be moved from one position to another relative to said backboard assembly 10. This feature of the invention makes it possible for a practitioner to practice a numerous variety of shots from an infinite number of spots on the playing surface S at varying distances from said basket assembly 13 and at various angles with the plane of said backboard assembly 10. It should be noted that in moving the lower portion 18 of the chute to various positions on the playing surface S it is unnecessary to make any adjustment to the attaching means portion of the chute 25 is unhooked from the stand 21, the tubular chute 16 will become twisted and will interfere with free passage of the ball therethrough. Thus, when changing the position of the tubular chute 16, it is desirable to unhook the lower portion 18 from the stand 21 and revolve the tubular chute 16 about its longitudinal center line until the aforementioned twist is removed. The lower portion 18 is then re-hooked to the stand 21. As shown schematically in FIGURE 2, the lower portion 18 of chute 16 can be moved from a position A at the foul line 22, to a position B offset at a different angle to the plane of the backboard assembly 10 and at a distance greater than when in position A. A third position C shows that the lower portion 18 of chute 16 can readily be positioned in the extreme corner of the conventional basketball court.

A modification of the device is shown in FIGURE 3, wherein there is a substantially tubular chute, generally indicated by the numeral 25. The chute 25 includes an elevated portion 26 and a lower portion (not shown) which is the same as the lower portion 18, as shown in FIGURES 1 and 2. It is to be understood that the lower portion 25 is to be suitably affixed to the playing surface S by any suitable means such as suction cups, which are attached to the lower portion, or by being attached to the stand 21.

The elevated portion 26 and the lower portion (not shown) are preferably constructed of conventional netting but may also be made from other material such as canvas or heavy cloth.

The elevated portion 26 is provided with a top section 23 and a bottom section 24. The top section 23 is attached to the forward portion of the rim 14 by any suitable fastening means, and the bottom section 24 is suitably fastened along the bottom edge of the backboard 12.

As is shown in FIGURE 3, the top section 23 and the bottom section 24 merge with the elevated portion 26 at a juncture, generally indicated by the numeral 27. In this form of the invention, some errant shots will be guided into the tubular chute 25 by the bottom section 24 and be returned to the player.

It is to be understood that the above described embodiments of my invention are for the purpose of illustration only and various changes may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention.

I claim:

1. A device for retrieving basketballs comprising a backboard assembly, said backboard assembly comprising a backboard, means for supporting said backboard, and a basket assembly, said basket assembly comprising a rim and a net; a chute, said chute having
elevated and lower portions, first means for attaching said elevated portion of said chute to a portion of said backboard assembly, and second means for fixing said lower portion of said chute relative to the playing surface of a basketball court, whereby the lower portion of said chute is selectively attachable to one of an infinite number of positions on said playing surface, said elevated portion of said chute being divided into two sections, a top section and a bottom section, said top section being attached to a portion of said rim and said bottom section being attached to said backboard, said top and bottom sections merging to form a tubular section.

2. A device for returning basketballs, said device comprising a flexible tubular chute, said chute having a first portion and a second portion, said first portion being adapted to encircle the net and rim of a conventional basketball basket assembly, first means for attaching said first portion to said basket assembly such that a basketball may pass through said rim and said net and be received within said flexible tubular chute, and second means for selectively fixing said second portion of said chute to one of an infinite number of positions on a conventional basketball playing surface.

3. A device as defined in claim 2 wherein said second means is removably attached to said second portion, said second portion of said chute being movable relative to said first portion of said chute while said first portion remains attached to said basket assembly.

4. A device as in claim 2 wherein said first means attaches said chute to said rim.

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