

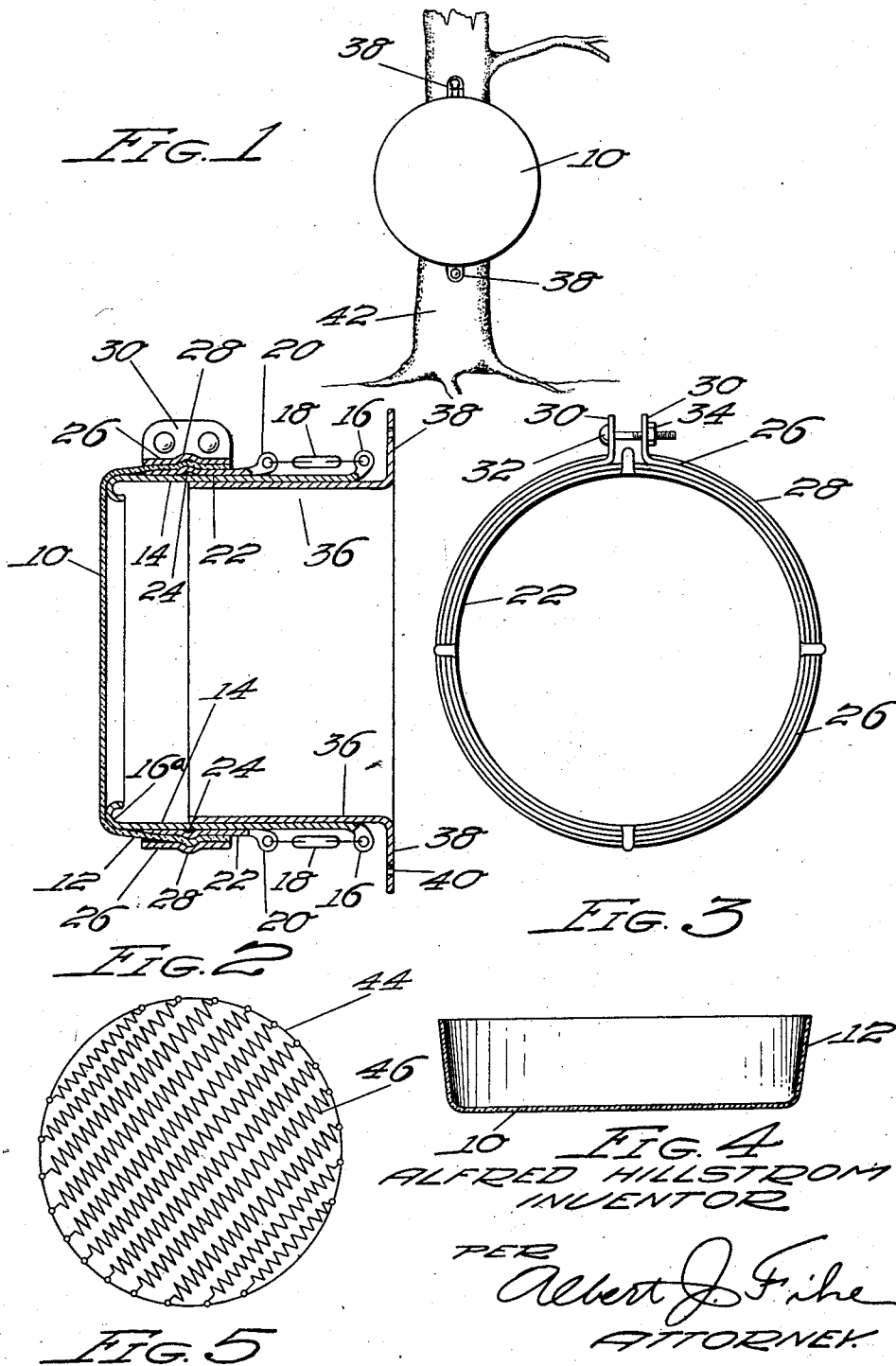
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PITCHER'S PRACTICE TARGET

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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PITCHER'S PRACTICE TARGET.

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This invention relates to an improved automatic ball pitcher and has for one of its principal objects the provision of means for automatically delivering or ejecting balls and particularly solid balls such as baseballs and the like, to a player operating the same.

One of the important objects of this invention is the provision in an automatic ball pitcher of means for perfecting the delivery or the pitching characteristics of any person desiring to operate the same and in combination with elements for returning the ball to the player.

Still another and further important object of this invention is to provide a means for automatically delivering baseballs or the like in a desired direction, elements for determining the direction of delivery of such baseballs or other missiles, such direction depending upon the accuracy of the initial delivery by the player.

Other and further important objects of this invention will be apparent from the disclosures accompanying drawings and following specification.

The invention in a preferred form is illustrated in the drawings and hereinafter more fully described.

In the drawings:

Figure 1, is a front elevation of the improved automatic ball pitcher of this invention showing the same mounted in operating position.

Figure 2, is a vertical sectional view of the device.

Figure 3, is a rear view of the apparatus, parts being removed.

Figure 4, is a sectional view of the resilient ball receiving and returning element.

Figure 5, is a front elevation illustrating a slight modification of the invention.

As shown in the drawings:

The reference numeral 10 indicates generally a circular target or the like comprising the ball receiving and returning element of this invention. This element 10 comprises preferably a sheet of rubber or other resilient material of sufficient strength to operate satisfactorily.

From an inspection of Figures 2 and 4, it will appear that this circular sheet of rubber 10 is provided with integral rear-wardly extending flanges 12. These flanges adapt the device to be stretched over a circular frame 14, cylindrical in shape and having its out-

ward edges curved rear-wardly and inwardly as shown at 16^a in order to avoid sharp edges.

The rear edge of this cylindrical member 14 is turned outwardly and at certain portions along said edge, rings 16 are affixed. These rings in turn supporting turn-buckles 18 which have their other ends connected to similar rings 20 forming part of a cylindrical member 22 which slides on the frame 14.

An annular ridge 24 is formed in the cylindrical element 22 near the forward edge thereof and rear-wardly extending walls 12 of the target 10 are fitted over this member 22 with the annular ridge 24.

Clamped upon the walls 12 is a retaining element 26, also cylindrical in form and having an annular ridge 28 extending therearound in cooperative relation to the ridge 24. At the top of this ring like member 26 is formed a pair of clamping elements 30 held together by means of bolts 32 and nuts 34, whereby the tension of the ring 26 may be adjusted. In this way the target 10 is positioned over the drum 14 and by operation of the turn-buckles 18, the tension of said target may be adjusted over quite a considerable range.

Fitted inside the drum 14 is a supporting element 36, also preferably cylindrical in shape and provided with integral upwardly and downwardly extending lugs 38 through which are openings 40 adapted for the passage of nails or screws whereby the entire device may be conveniently attached to a tree or the like 42 or in position against a wall fence or any other suitable support.

In Figure 5 is illustrated a slight modification of the invention whereby the rubber drum head or the like 10 is supplanted by circular frame 44 having stretched across its face a series of helical springs 46 whereby the same result is accomplished.

It will be seen that herein is provided a means for playing ball which will automatically return a pitched ball to the pitcher with substantially the same force and momentum as that of the originally delivered ball. Further, the direction of the ball returned by this apparatus will be wholly dependent upon the accuracy of the original throw by the operator as if the ball strikes in the middle of target 10, it will be directly returned along the same line. If, however, the ball strikes near the sides or edges of the

target, its direction of return will be correspondingly altered, owing to the angular relation between those portions of the target on either side of the point at which the ball strikes.

I am aware that many changes may be made and numerous details of construction varied throughout a wide range without departing from the principles of this invention and I therefore, do not purpose limiting the patent granted hereon otherwise than as necessitated by the prior art.

I claim as my invention:

1. A pitcher's practice target including in combination a resilient target and means for supporting said target, said means comprising a cylinder over which the target is stretched and clamping means for the target edges slidable on the cylinder.

2. A pitcher's practice target including in combination a resilient target and means for supporting said target, said means comprising a cylinder over which the target is stretched and clamping means for the target edges slidable on the cylinder, together with means for adjusting the relation of the clamping means to the target supporting cylinder.

3. A pitcher's practice target including in combination a resilient target and means for

supporting said target, said means comprising a cylinder over which the target is stretched and clamping means for the target's edges slidable on the cylinder, together with means for adjusting the relation of the clamping means to the target supporting cylinder, said means comprising a series of turn-buckles.

4. A pitcher's practice target including in combination a resilient target and means for supporting said target, said means comprising a cylinder over which the target is stretched and clamping means for the target edges slidable on the cylinder, together with means for adjusting the relation of the clamping means to the target supporting cylinder, and additional means for supporting the entire device, said means comprising a cylinder fitted inside the target supporting cylinder.

5. A pitcher's practice target including in combination a resilient target and means for supporting said target, said resilient target comprising a circular frame and a plurality of helical springs stretched across said frame.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature.

ALFRED HILLSTROM.