United States Patent

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[54] GOLF TEE SETTER-POSITIONER

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[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63b 57/00**

[58] **Field of Search** 273/33

[56] **References Cited**

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A golf tee setter and positioner has a base comprised of a foot portion and a gauge portion. A tee holder is slidably mounted with respect to the base so as to be adjustably secured to the base at selected heights above the bottom of the foot portion. In this manner, the tee head is selectively positioned at a predetermined height above the ground. The tee holder is comprised of a dovetail opening that is cut into the structure's body portion which extends upwardly to terminate at a handle for setting the tee. In one embodiment, both the body portion and the base portion are split into halves along the structure's midline. The halves are pivotally separable so as to more conveniently withdraw the structure from over a tee that has been set and positioned in long grass.

16 Claims, 4 Drawing Figures

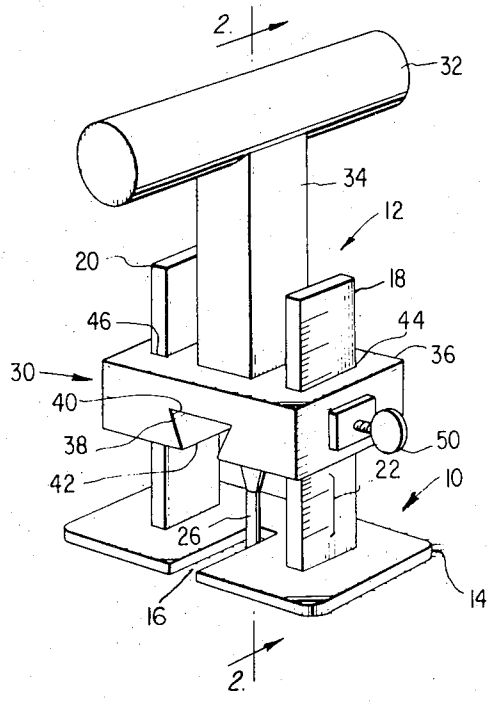


FIG. 1

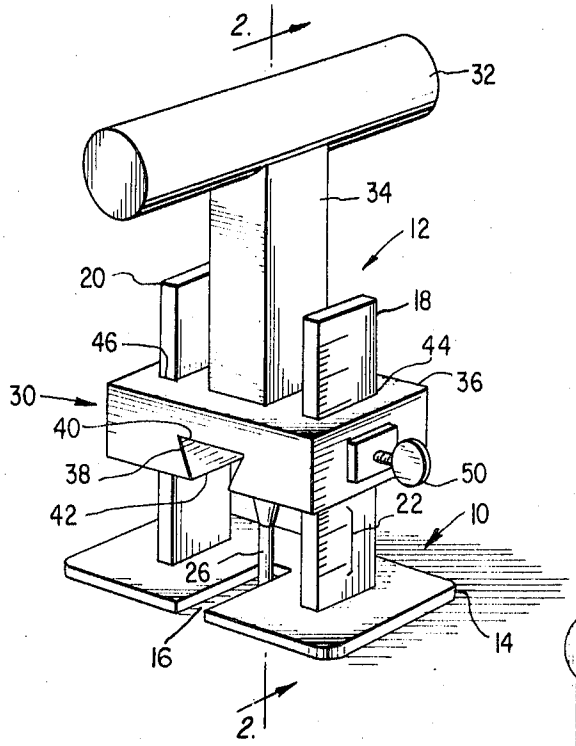


FIG. 4

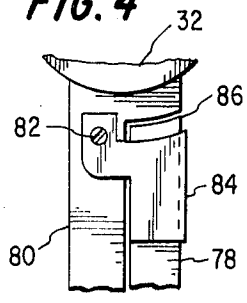
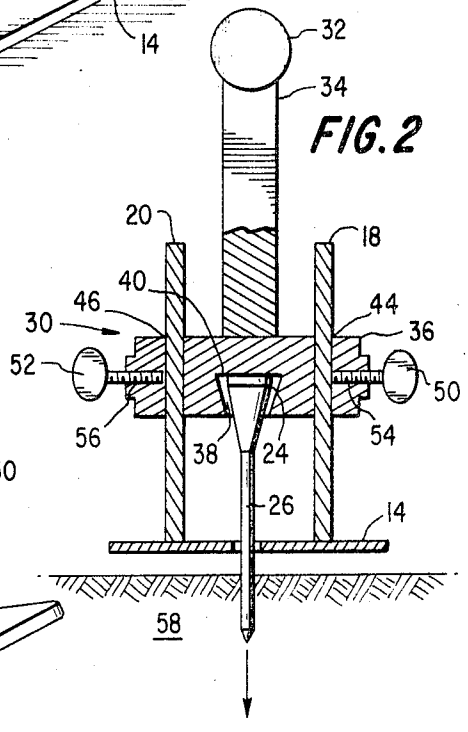


FIG. 2



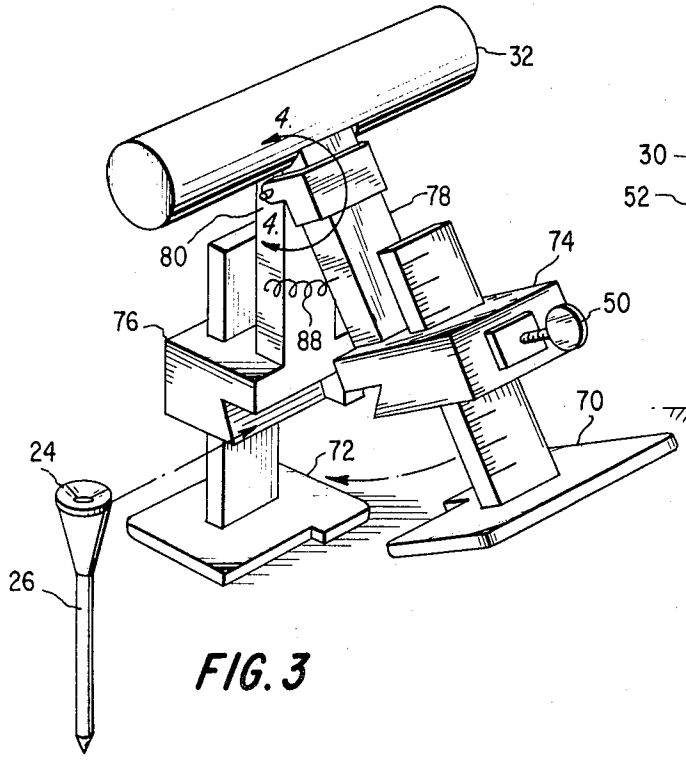


FIG. 3

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GOLF TEE SETTER-POSITIONER

BACKGROUND

A golfer's game is affected by many variables. One of these is the extent to which a tee is positioned above the ground. This invention relates to a device for mechanically setting a tee into the ground so that the tee-head extends a preselected height thereabove regardless of the condition of the ground or the length of the tee.

Many types of tee setters and positioners are presently available. These available devices, however, have structural disadvantages which have militated against their being readily accepted by golfers. Hence, it is an object of this invention to provide an improved tee setter and positioner that is neither structurally complex nor expensive to manufacture, but is nevertheless sufficiently convenient and accurate that it will be more readily accepted by today's golfers.

One of the presently available types of tee setters requires the golfer to retain the tee in the device with his finger while the tee is being inserted into the turf. This has resulted in the tee being cocked during insertion into the ground so that the thusly set tee is improperly aligned. Also, particularly when used to set tees in hard ground, these devices tilt off the tee and result in painful injuries to the golfer's finger. Hence, it is another object of this invention to provide a device for setting a tee so that its shank is substantially perpendicular to the ground and wherein the setting operation is accomplished without injury to the golfer.

Other types of golf tee positioners, while providing structure for more suitably guiding the tee, have not been adapted for convenient removal of the device from the tee after it has been set. Hence, it is another object of this invention to provide a tee setter and positioner of a type which not only meets the above noted objects, but which is also readily disengageable from the tee after it is set and positioned.

Still other types of tee setters are comprised of so many individual parts that they are simply too complex to be practical. In this respect, they are too expensive to manufacture on any type of a practical mass production basis. Also, in order to be useful, tee setters of the type contemplated must be suited for rough treatment. That is, they must be able to withstand being merely tossed into a golf bag and must be structured so that the removal or loss of a tiny part will not deprive the device of its utility. Consequently, it is another object of this invention to provide a golf tee positioner and setter that is sufficiently accurate but still simple and sturdy enough to withstand the rugged use to which it will be subjected by the golfer.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In accordance with principles of the invention, a tee setter and positioner has a body portion and a base portion. The base portion has a foot member and at least one scale or gauge member. The body portion includes a tee-head holder and a stem extending between the tee-head holder and a handle which is substantially perpendicular to the stem. The body portion is adapted to be slidably adjustable along the base's scale members; and fasteners retain the slides at desired locations along the scale elements so as to locate the tee-head at selected heights above the foot member as determined by tee-height indicia on the base portion's scale elements.

In cases where a golfer is likely to set his tees in relatively long grass, the base and body portions may be split and pivotally affixed to each other near the handle. In this manner the resulting two halves of the body portion's tee-head holder element are pivotally separable from the tee-head to facilitate easier disengagement of the setter-positioner from the tee. When this structure is employed, the structure's thusly separable halves are fastened together by means which both hold the structure's halves together while the tee is being set, and permit the halves to be separated during the time the structure is being disengaged from the tee-head.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The foregoing and other objects, features, and advantages of this invention will be apparent from the following more particular description of preferred embodiments thereof as illustrated in the accompanying drawings wherein the same reference numerals refer to the same parts throughout the various views. The drawings are not necessarily intended to be to scale, but rather are presented to illustrate the principles of the invention in clear form.

In the drawings:

FIG. 1 is a pictorial view of one embodiment of a tee setter-positioner of the invention;

FIG. 2 is a sectional view of the FIG. 1 embodiment taken along the lines 2—2 thereof;

FIG. 3 is a pictorial view of an alternative embodiment of the invention wherein the structure is split along its midline and the resulting two portions are pivotally attached to each other to facilitate removal of the device from over a suitably set and positioned tee;

FIG. 4 is a partially broken-away enlarged fragmentary view of the alternative embodiment's hinge portion taken along the arc 4—4 in FIG. 3.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In FIG. 1 the illustrated tee setter-positioner includes a base portion 10 and a body portion 12. The base portion is comprised of a foot member 14 having a slot 16 cut therein and scale or gauge portions 18 and 20 extending rigidly upwardly therefrom. In this respect, at least one of the scale members 18 and 20 is suitably marked with tee-head height indicia 22 for indicating the height of the head 24 of a tee 26 (see also FIGS. 2 and 3).

The body portion 12 is comprised of a tee holder member 30; an elongated handle 32; and a stem 34 extending between the tee holder and the handle and of sufficient length that the handle 32 is maintained a convenient height above the remainder of the device so that the golfer's hand is not skinned by the gauge members 18 and 20. Handle 32 is perpendicular to the stem and aligned in a direction parallel to the slot 16. In this respect, although not illustrated in the drawings, it has been found that if sharp edges remain on the tee setter-positioner the golfer's equipment is liable to be damaged and the golfer himself is susceptible to being injured when groping for the device in a pocket of his golf bag, for example. Hence, it is preferable that the structure's edges be "broken" to prevent such damage and injury.

The tee holder element 30 is comprised of a block 36 out of which a dovetail groove 38 is milled to about two-thirds of the block's depth. In this respect, the groove's dimensions are such that it is wide enough at its upper portion 40 and narrow enough at its lower portion 42 so that a wide range of conventional tee heads are able to slide in and out of the groove. The depth of the groove is similarly dimensioned.

The block 36 also has rectangularly cross-sectioned passage ways 44 and 46 milled therethrough so that the block 36 is slidable over the gauge members 18 and 20. In addition, a pair of wing screws 50 and 52 extend into internally threaded portions 54 and 56, respectively of the block 36 to engage the respective scale members 18 and 20. In this manner, the structure's body is vertically adjustable with respect to its base, and by virtue of the wing screws 50 and 52 can be adjusted so that the dovetail's upper surface 40 is located a predetermined distance above the ground 58 with which the lower portion of the foot 14 is brought into engagement as the shank of the tee 26 is urged downwardly by the golfer's pressure upon the handle 32. In this respect, it should be noted that some of the prior art golf tee setters are operative to merely control the depth to which a tee's shank extends into the ground. This, of course, destroys either the golfer's ability to satisfactorily adjust the height of the tee's head above the ground or limits the use of the device to a given tee length. Similarly, some of the prior art devices are indeed adapted to adjust the tee's height above

the ground but their tees are inserted by grasping the tee's shank or lower head portions. Hence, the top of the tee per se and, therefore, the height of the ball varies from tee to tee in accordance with the distance between the top of a given tee and the place on the tee where it is grasped by the setter for insertion into the ground. It will be appreciated, however, that the above described structure suffers none of these drawbacks. Similarly, the device is both structurally simple, but sufficiently rugged to withstand the abuses to which such structures are subjected.

It should also be noted that the tee **26** is suspended within the setter-positioner so that its shank portion extends through the slot **16** in the foot **14**. In this manner, there is no tendency for the tee to tilt to one side or the other while it is being inserted; and by virtue of the handle **32**'s being oriented in a direction parallel to the direction of the slot **16**, the golfer can easily control any tendency of the tee to tilt in a fore and aft direction within the slot **16** by merely controlling the angle of his downward pressure on the handle **32**. Hence, the structure of the invention permits a tee to be set without either requiring the golfer to separately hold the tee or subjecting him to injury if the tee slips from desired alignment as it is being set.

An alternative embodiment of the invention is illustrated in FIG. **3**. Therein, the structure's base and body portions are split along the setter-positioner's midline so as to form two foot members **70** and **72**; two block portions **74** and **76**; and two stem portions **78** and **80** one of which (**80**) is affixed to the handle **32**. The other (**78**) is pivotally affixed to the first by a pin **82** and bracket **84**.

The left hand stem member **80** extends across the top of the right hand member **78** at an arcuate joint **86**. In this manner, the right hand stem member **78** and its associated tee-holder block and base portions are pivotable away from the structure's left hand portions associated with the stem portion **80**.

The alternative embodiment illustrated in FIGS. **3** and **4** permits the setter-positioner structure of the invention to be more easily removed from a set tee. This is particularly helpful where the tee has been set in long grass. It will be noted, however, that in this embodiment the left and right hand foot members must be separately adjustable to the desired height. This, however, has not been found to present any substantial drawback. Moreover, as is illustrated in FIG. **3**, the two stem portions **78** and **80** are held together by a spring **88** which is suitably affixed to the stem members. The spring should be light enough so that the stem members can be easily separated for withdrawal of the device from about a tee, but strong enough to hold the left and right hand block members **74** and **76** together at the time the foot members are adjusted so as to more easily insure that both halves of the device are adjusted to the same height. Similarly, although not illustrated in the drawings, it is helpful to provide uniformly spaced indentations along the scale members **18** and **20**. These indentations are engageable by the ends of the wings screws **50** and **52**. In this manner, by engaging the wing screws in indentations that are equidistant from their respective foot members **70** and **72** there is assurance that the setter-positioner's base portions will be adjusted to the same height.

While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. For example, the scale members could be cylindrical rather than rectangularly cross-sectioned; and the second embodiment's split portions could be horizontally separable by suitable sliding action rather than pivotally attached to each other so as to undergo arcuate separation. Similarly, although somewhat less convenient, the resilient spring **88** can be eliminated; or, if desired, a more rigid fastening means can be substituted therefor. For example, a hook on one of the stem members can be selectively engageable with a pin or eye affixed to the other stem member.

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A golf tee setter-positioner for setting a golf tee in the ground so that the golf tee's head is positioned at a selected predetermined height above the ground comprising, a positioning member and a setting member:

said positioning member including:

a foot member adapted for engagement with the ground about the point where the tee is to be set, said foot member including a slot for slidably accommodating the shank of said tee;

a gauge means attached to said foot member for engaging said setting member, said gauge means including an indicating means for indicating the position of said setting member along said gauge means; and

said setting member including:

a tee-head holder for holding said golf tee's head and for slidably engaging said gauge means;

a handle rigidly connected to said tee-head holder; and,

an affixing means for affixing said tee-head holder to said gauge means at selected positions which lie along said gauge means.

2. The apparatus of claim **1** wherein said handle is elongated and is longitudinally oriented parallel to the direction of said slot.

3. The apparatus of claim **1** wherein said tee-head holder includes a dovetail groove for slidable engagement with said tee-head so that the top of said groove is adapted to rest upon the top of said tee-head and urge said tee downwardly upon downward motion of said tee-head holder.

4. The apparatus of claim **3** wherein said handle is aligned parallel to said dovetail groove.

5. The apparatus of claim **4** wherein said handle is longitudinally aligned parallel to both said dovetail groove and said slot in said foot.

6. The apparatus of claim **1** including a stem for connecting said handle to said tee-head holder.

7. The apparatus of claim **1** wherein said gauge means is comprised of gauge members extending upwardly from said foot member and said indicating means are comprised of height indicia on said gauge members.

8. The apparatus of claim **7** wherein said tee holder is vertically slidable on said gauge members.

9. The apparatus of claim **8** including a stem for connecting said handle to said tee-head holder.

10. The apparatus of claim **9** wherein said tee-head holder includes a dovetail groove for slidable engagement with said tee-head so that the top of said groove is adapted to rest upon the top of said tee-head and urge said tee downwardly upon downward motion of said tee-head holder.

11. The apparatus of claim **10** wherein said handle is elongated and is longitudinally aligned parallel to said dovetail groove.

12. The apparatus of claim **11** wherein said handle is elongated and is longitudinally aligned parallel to both said dovetail groove and said slot in said foot.

13. The apparatus of claim **1** wherein the setter-positioner is split along a midline thereof so that at least said tee-head holder and said foot member are each comprised of first and second portions; and further including

means for permitting movement of said first portion with respect to said second portion.

14. The apparatus of claim **13** wherein said first portion is pivotally separable from said second portion.

15. The apparatus of claim **13** including resilient means for urging said first and second portions toward each other but adapted to be selectively overcome when it is desired to separate said first and second portions.

16. The apparatus of claim **1** wherein:

said foot member is comprised of first and second foot member elements;

said tee-head holder is comprised of first and second tee-head holder elements;

said gauge means is comprised of first and second gauge members, said first and second gauge members respectively extending upwardly from each of said foot member

elements, said first and second tee-head holder elements being selectively slidably adjustable on said first and second gauge, members respectively;

said indicating means affixed to said gauge means for indicating the height of said tee-head holder elements above their respective foot member elements;

first and second stem members respectively affixed to said first and second tee-head holder elements;

one of said stem members being affixed to said handle and pivotally attached to said second stem member so that said first foot member element and said first gauge member and said first tee-head holder element and said first stem element are pivotally movable with respect to said second such elements.

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