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(54) **GOLF CLUB PROTECTOR**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

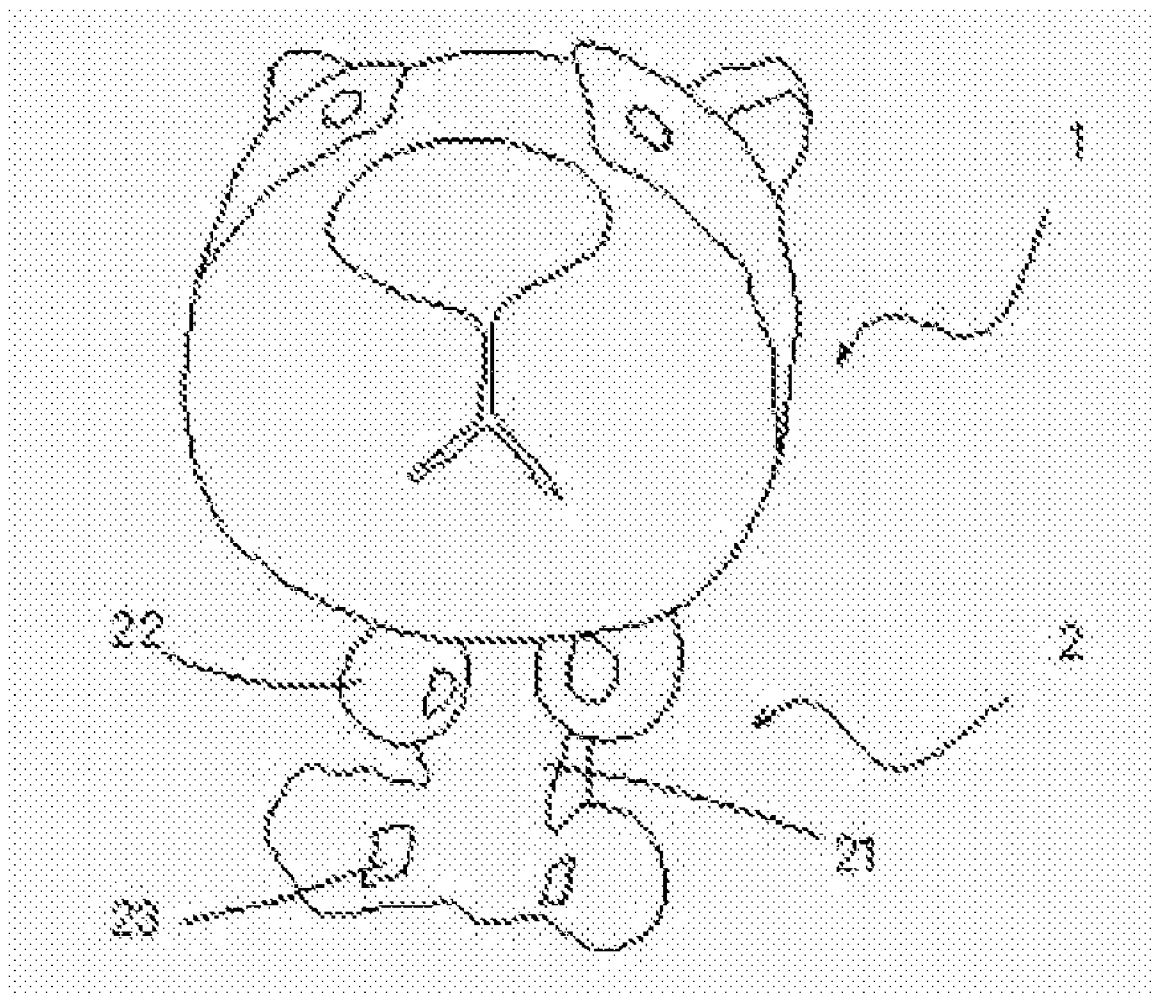
The present invention teaches an animal-shaped protector for golf clubs comprising a head enclosure having a mouth; and a shaft clamp; wherein the head enclosure and the shaft clamp are formed integrally; the head enclosure comprises a first shell having a first shell inner surface and a first shell outer surface; the first shell inner surface defines a cavity for receiving and protecting the head of a golf club; the shaft clamp comprises a body and a plurality of fastenings; the fastenings each have an elastic band attached at one end to said body and at the other end to a joining element being a part of the fastening; and the joining elements can be easily connected to and disconnected from each other.

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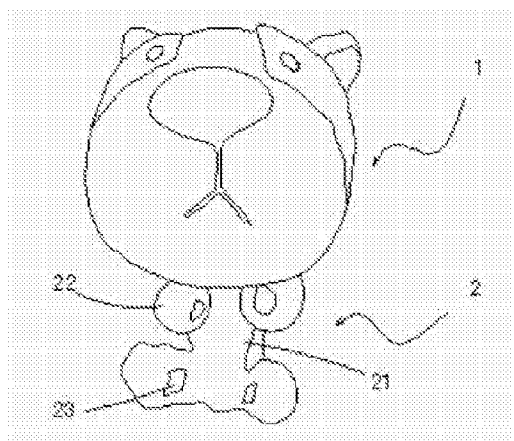


Fig. 1

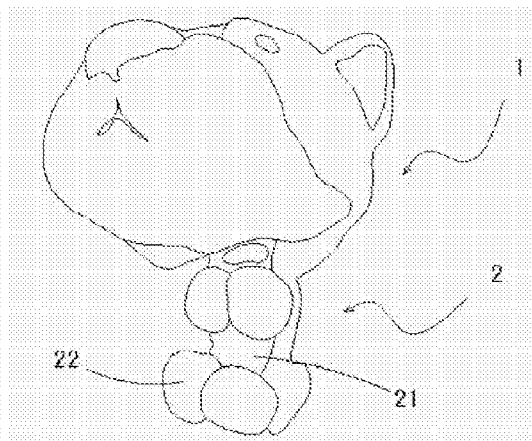


Fig. 2

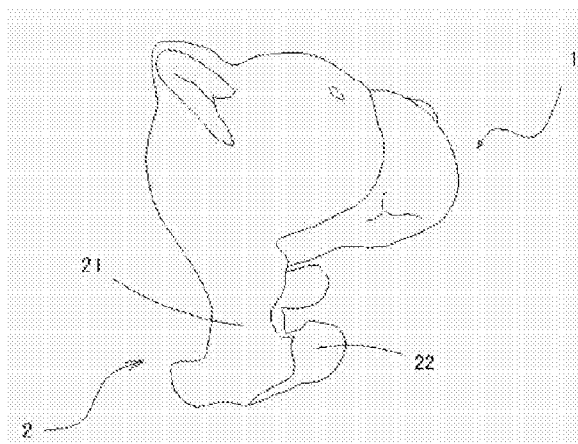


Fig. 3

GOLF CLUB PROTECTOR

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to golf club protectors, and more particularly to protectors capable of securely protecting golf club heads, yet allowing for an easy removal and reinsertion of the golf clubs.

[0003] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0004] The protection of golf clubs is quite important for optimizing their capability and lengthening their lifespan. The conventional way is to use a protector to shield the head of a golf club when not in use so as to prevent the golf clubs from striking and impacting against each other in a golf bag. A protector thus helps to avoid undesirable damage, and prolongs golf club usability and aesthetics.

[0005] Nowadays, various kinds of golf club protectors are available commercially. However, many of them suffer from the inability to allow for a quick removal and replacement of golf clubs and often lack the protection and visual characteristics that many golf players desire. Accordingly, much improvement remains to be done in the area of golf club protectors.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] In one embodiment the present invention provides a golf club protector for protecting a head of a golf club and a shaft of a golf club, or a portion thereof, comprising a head enclosure having a mouth and a shaft clamp.

[0007] In one class of the embodiment, the head enclosure and the shaft clamp are formed integrally.

[0008] In another class of the embodiment, the head enclosure comprises a first shell having a first shell inner surface and a first shell outer surface.

[0009] In another class of the embodiment, the first shell inner surface defines a cavity for receiving and protecting the head of a golf club.

[0010] In another class of the embodiment, the shaft clamp comprises a body and a plurality of fastenings.

[0011] In another class of the embodiment, the fastenings each have an elastic band attached at one end to said body and at the other end to a joining element being a part of said fastening.

[0012] In another class of the embodiment, the joining elements are detachably-connectable to each other.

[0013] In another class of the embodiment, the joining elements comprise a Velcro adhesive, a magnet, or a magnetic tape.

[0014] In certain embodiments, the head enclosure and the shaft clamp together form an animal-like shape.

[0015] In certain embodiments, the head enclosure and the shaft clamp together form a dog-like shape, a lion-like shape, or a cat-like shape.

[0016] In certain embodiments, the inner layer is made of a rigid or an elastic material, and the outer layer is made of a soft cushioning material.

[0017] In a class of these embodiments, the soft cushioning material is plush or velvet.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] The objects and advantages of the present invention will become more readily apparent after reading the

ensuing description of the non-limiting illustrative embodiments and viewing the accompanying drawings, in which **[0019]** FIG. 1 is a front elevational view of a golf club protector in accordance with one embodiment of the invention;

[0020] FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a golf club protector in accordance with one embodiment of the invention; and

[0021] FIG. 3 is a right side elevational view of a golf club protector in accordance with one embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0022] With reference to the accompanying drawings, a golf club protector in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention comprises a head enclosure **1** and a shaft clamp **2**. The head enclosure **1** comprises a first shell having a first shell inner surface and a first shell outer surface. The first shell inner surface defines a cavity for receiving and protecting the head of a golf club. The first shell further comprises an inner layer (a layer closer to the cavity) and an outer layer. The inner layer is made of rigid or elastic material, the outer layer is made of soft cushioning material, such as plush or velvet.

[0023] The head enclosure **1** and the shaft clamp **2** are formed integrally. The head enclosure **1** and the shaft clamp **2** together form an animal-like shape, for example, the shape of a four-legged animal, and particularly without limitation, a dog-like shape, a lion-like shape, a cat-like shape (as shown in figures), or a shape of any crawling or walking creature, such as a bug, spider, and the like. In certain embodiments, the outer layer is made of knit synthetic fur or the like, and is printed and dyed with highly simulated animal head pattern, presenting lifelike postures of the head of an animal, and is thus esthetically pleasing.

[0024] A mouth **3** for receiving the head of a golf club (not shown in drawings) is disposed in the head enclosure. The head of a golf club is insertable through the mouth **3** into the cavity for receiving and protecting the head of a golf club. Since the outer layer is made of soft cushioning material the head of a golf club is protected effectively and securely.

[0025] As shown in the accompanying figures, the shaft clamp **2** comprises a body **21** and a plurality of fastenings **22** (which in correspond in the drawings to limbs of the animal), wherein a portion of the shaft of a golf club is surrounded and held together by the body **21** and the fastenings **22**. The fastenings **22** comprise joining elements **23** and elastic bands which are at one end attached to the body **21**. The fastenings **22** are placed in the open position by pulling them apart from each other for easy inserting and removing of the golf club from the golf club protector. Once the golf club is inserted into the golf club protector, i.e., the head of the golf club is within the cavity for receiving and protecting the head of a golf club, the fastenings **22** are joined together by means of bringing together the joining elements **23** as illustrated in FIG. 2.

[0026] In certain embodiments, the joining elements **23** each comprise Velcro adhesive, or a magnet, or a magnetic tape, and preferably a magnet or a magic tape, which causes them to be detachably-connectable with each other. This is to say that one joining element can be connected to another joining element when a golf club is to be protected and can be disconnected from adhering to each other when a golf club is to be removed from a protector. This type of design

allows for an easy and quick removal of a golf club from a protector, and a similarly quick and easy reinsertion of the golf club back into the protector.

[0027] In certain embodiments, the fastenings comprise two groups of hold bands simulating the upper limbs and the lower limbs of an animal respectively, each group of hold bands consists of two hold bands at the left and right side respectively, the rear end of each hold band is attached to the inner layer, a jointing element is set at the front end of each hold band and serves to connect the front end of the hold band with that of the other hold band in the same group.

[0028] While particular embodiments of the invention have been shown and described, it will be obvious to those skilled in the art that changes and modifications may be made without departing from the invention in its broader aspects, and therefore, the aim in the appended claims is to cover all such changes and modifications as fall within the true spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A golf club protector for protecting a head of a golf club and a shaft of a golf club, or a portion thereof, comprising a head enclosure having a mouth; and a shaft clamp; wherein said head enclosure and said shaft clamp are formed integrally; said head enclosure comprises a first shell having a

first shell inner surface and a first shell outer surface; said first shell inner surface defines a cavity for receiving and protecting the head of a golf club; said shaft clamp comprises a body and a plurality of fastenings; said fastenings each having an elastic band attached at one end to said body and at the other end to a joining element being a part of said fastening; and said joining elements are detachably-connectable to each other.

2. The golf club protector of claim 1 wherein said joining elements comprise a Velcro adhesive, a magnet, or a magnetic tape.

3. The golf club protector of claim 1 wherein said head enclosure and said shaft clamp together form an animal-like shape.

4. The golf club protector of claim 3 wherein said head enclosure and said shaft clamp together form a dog-like shape, a lion-like shape, or a cat-like shape.

5. The golf club protector of claim 1 wherein said inner layer is made of a rigid or an elastic material, and said outer layer is made of a soft cushioning material.

6. The golf club protector of claim 5 wherein said soft cushioning material is plush or velvet.

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