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Rodman

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[54] **PUTTING PRACTICE GAGE**

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Related U.S. Application Data

[63] Continuation of Ser. No. 337,642, March 2, 1973, abandoned.

[52] **U.S. Cl.**..... **273/183 R;** 273/192; 273/186 C

[51] **Int. Cl.**[2]..... **A63B 69/36**

[58] **Field of Search** 273/192, 186, 187, 32, 273/191, 183, 35

[56] **References Cited**

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[57] **ABSTRACT**

A putting practice gage is constructed to place a golf ball on a normal putting surface such as a green and to gage the length, straightness and direction of the putter stroke and position of the ball for various stroke lengths and putter sizes. The gage has a backstop platform that lies on the green for arresting the putter position and determining the putter stroke starting point. Extending from the platform is a pair of parallel telescopic guide bars with distance indicia thereon for gaging straightness, lateral movement or twist of an unrestricted forward putter stroke. The ball is positioned at the end of the guide bars and intermediate them at a lateral position designated by a movable visual guide matching a mark on the putter. The visual guide may include a direction finder light beam which shines on the ball and serves to determine the direction of the shot toward a cup or target.

7 Claims, 6 Drawing Figures

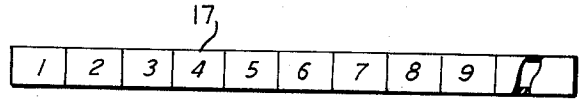
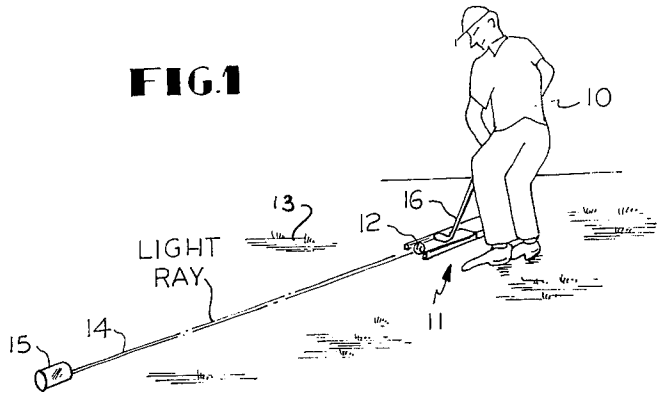


FIG. 1



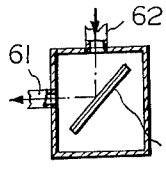


FIG. 6

FIG. 2

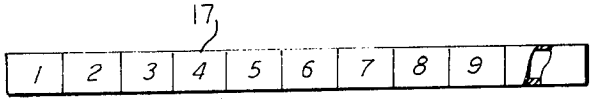


FIG. 3

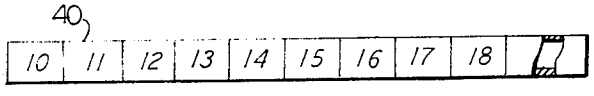


FIG. 4

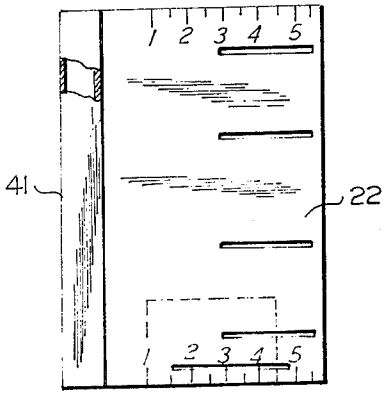


FIG. 5

PUTTING PRACTICE GAGE

This is a continuation of application Ser. No. 337,642, filed Mar. 2, 1973, now abandoned.

This invention relates to putting aids and more particularly it relates to devices for guiding a putter while practicing to attain a repeatable putting stroke and touch.

While prior art putting aids are available, they are generally deficient in the most important aspect of putting, that of being able to gage the putting stroke and touch on a realistic putting surface, the putting green or an artificial turf carpet. Thus, practice on a board, sheet or deck cannot give a feeling of the proper touch and stroke length which is just as important as the posture of the club during the stroke. Also the prior art devices are deficient in direction finding. Thus, the aid should provide means for choosing the direction of orienting the ball toward a cup.

Accordingly, it is a general object of the invention to provide an improved putting practice aid for gaging the putting stroke and touch.

Another object of the invention is to provide a putting practice gage for overcoming the foregoing prior art deficiencies.

A more specific object of the invention is to provide a putting practice gage including direction finder means for indicating the path of the ball.

Therefore in accordance with the invention, a putting practice gage is provided which will indicate to a practicing golfer the length, straightness and direction of the stroke, and the position of the ball for a wide range of putter sizes and stroke lengths. The gage is made for use on a normal putting surface, the green, so that proper touch may be developed in practice.

The gage is made compact by mounting on a platform backstroke stop assembly of two telescopic guides between which the putter is stroked. The guides are extensible for gaged stroke lengths when the ball is placed at the end of the guides. The guides have intermediate them on the platform a laterally positionable visible sight for positioning the ball laterally and relative to different putter blade surfaces. Also, the distance between the guides is adjustable for different putter blade lengths.

A direction finder is incorporated for aligning by a light beam such as by a visual sighting device or a pencil like ray from an incandescent lamp to indicate the straight line proposed path of the putted ball.

Other objects, features and advantages of the invention will be recognized from the following more detailed description and the accompanying drawings, wherein:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a golfer using the gage afforded by this invention to practice putting on a golfing green surface,

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of a gage embodiment afforded by this invention,

FIGS. 3 to 5 are views partly broken away of disassembled elements of the embodiment of FIG. 2, and

FIG. 6 is an elevation view in section of an alternative direction finding device afforded by this invention.

Referring now to the views of FIGS. 1 and 2, a golfer 10 may use the practice putting gage 11 of this invention to direct a golf ball 12 rolling along a green surface 13 over a projected path 14 toward a target or cup 15 placed on the green. A putter 16 is guided substantially

normally and parallel the putting surface between two telescopic guide bars 17, 18 for a stroke length 19 shown on gage indicia 20. The limits of the gaged stroke length are at the backstop edge 21 of platform member 22 placed on the putting surface 13 and the position of ball 12 placed intermediate the guides 17, 18 at the end thereof.

By means of slots 30, the guide 18 is adjustable for different putter blade lengths as shown by gage index 31. The mechanical details of the slot adjustment and fastening are not shown underneath platform 22, but are well within the skill of those in the art and thus form no part of the present invention. Preferably in use the guides 17 and 18 are separated with a small amount of spacing from the ends of the particular putter blade 33 in use so that a straight stroke may be developed in practice by avoiding frictional contact of the putter with either guide 17 or 18. This improves skills in putting by forming putting habits that keep the putter 16 from twisting or tilting. The top of the guides 17, 18 also serve as a visual gage to see that the putter blade is manipulated substantially parallel and very slightly off the green surface 13.

FIGS. 3, 4 and 5 show the construction of the telescopic guide members 17, 40 and 41 and platform 22. Thus the hollow indexed guide member 17 is nested within a further hollow indexed guide member 40 which in turn is nested within the hollow guide member 41 which is affixed to or part of platform member 22.

In order to establish the putting direction and proper ball placement relative to the putter blade and thus improve judgment values for putting on the green without the help of the gage, indexing gage means is positioned on the platform assembly. Thus, a visual sight comprising rod 45 is adjustably positioned between the guides 17, 18 so that it may be aligned with a mark 46 on the putter blade 33 and indicate visually the intermediate position of ball 12 between the guides 17, 18 for proper putter impact. The human eye is a good judge of the position of the ball between the parallel guide members 17, 18 when sighted from behind the guide along rod sight 45 to establish the ball position. This feature improves judgment skills in placing the putter without use of the gage device afforded by this invention after practicing with it and using the various gaging means to indicate optimum individual performance at a repeatable set of conditions of stroke and ball position.

A further feature of this invention is that of direction finding. Thus, a light ray beam 50 is directed from a box 61 holding an incandescent lamp and battery and switch and a lens system 52 providing a collimated or pencil-like ray 50. A long tubing can be used to collimate the light rather than lens system 52 in a conventional manner if desired. The box 51 is movably affixed to the platform 22 along the backstop edge 21 to project the light beam 50 parallel to the guides 17, 18 at a selectable position intermediate them. Thus before the putter blade 33 is positioned in place the light beam 50 will strike the ball 12 and indicate its position. Also before the ball is in position the light beam may show the projected straight ball path 14 (FIG. 1) to the target. This is a necessary feature for practicing on a green that may curve the ball away from a straight line for gaining from practice with the direction finder gage judgment in putting direction.

As shown in FIG. 6, the light beam may be replaced by a visual optical sight comprising a simple reflection

mirror surface **60** and collimated light passageways **61**, 62. This may be placed on the platform and viewed peep-sight like by a standing golfer to provide an indication of ball position between guides **17, 18** and the projected straight line ball path toward the target cup **15.**

Having thus described the features and construction of the invention, those features of novelty believed descriptive of the nature and scope of the invention are defined with particularity in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A putting practice gage for relatively positioning a golf ball and putter on an external green putting surface adjacent a hole for judging variable stroke lengths and for guiding the direction of the stroke to improve skills in putting stroke and touch, comprising in combination, a backstop member to be placed on said green putting surface with structure enclosing an unobstructed portion of the green surface upon which the ball is to be placed near the hole for a full putting stroke into contact with the ball, the backstop being positioned for arresting movement of the putter stroke adjacent said green putting surface at the back end of a stroke, said structure including gage structure including a pair of parallel guides extending from the backstop member which constitutes the sole connection member therebetween in contact with the green and the guides located on opposite sides of the putter thereby to receive the ball therebetween in contact with the green for impact by a stroke from the putter adjacent the green surface being confined only to a normal position between the two guides to gage the putter stroke through a straight putting stroke of predetermined length with unrestricted view along the green in front of the putter while stroking and impacting the ball in the putter path along and substantially parallel to said green putting surface, and indexing means on said guides to mark the position of the ball to be placed on the putting surface intermediate the ends of said guides at a predetermined distance from the backstop member thereby to establish a stroke length gage, whereby the ball is placed on said green putting surface, said gage structure establishing the putter placement position at said backstop and confining the putter movement only at the backstop and sides along said guides to establish the direction of the stroke and gaging the length of the stroke along the green surface from the backstop to the ball placement impact position by said indexing means at a marked position whereby a person can use the gage to establish and repeat proper putting stroke lengths and impact positions with the putter and ball normally positioned on the actual green surface.

2. A device as defined in claim **1** including optical gaging means positioned on said backstop member containing structure for passing a line of sight visible to a person putting a ball between the backstop member and a ball placed on said green for aligning the position and path of the ball intermediate said guides.

3. A device as defined in claim **2,** wherein the optical gaging means comprises a visible sight extending upwardly from said backstop for aligning with a guide line on the putter when positioned at said backstop member.

4. A device as defined in claim **2,** wherein the optical gaging means comprises a lens for sighting a line along the projected path of a putted ball.

5. A device as defined in claim **4,** wherein said means for sighting a line comprises an optical sight with a reflection surface and two passageways disposed to reflect optical images therefrom into directions respectively toward a ball positioned on said green surface and in the view of a person using the gage, whereby the alignment of the ball may be viewed.

6. A device as defined in claim **2,** wherein the optical gaging means comprises a lamp with a light ray beam therefrom projected along a line designating the projected path of a putted ball.

7. A device as defined in claim **2,** wherein said optical gaging means is selectively laterally movable between said guides.

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