The present invention is using a ball hopper as a highly visible tennis court target. This is accomplished by attaching a bright colored target accessory to the ball hopper. The attaching fasteners can be implemented as separate elements or they can be integrated into or attached to the target accessory. There is a vast choice of fasteners that are appropriate for this invention, some of which are eye and hook pairs, Velcro tape, various types of laces, ribbons, self latching plastic fasteners, etc. The listed fasteners may be permanently attached to non-elastic or elastic ribbons that are permanently attached to the targeting accessory or are integral part of it. In one embodiment of the present invention the target accessory is built as a sleeve that is pulled over the handle of a ball hopper in order to place it in the desired working position without fasteners.
figure 5
TENNIS COURT TARGET COMPRISING A TENNIS BALL HOPPER AND A TARGET ACCESSORY

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of Invention

The present invention relates to a tennis court target comprising a tennis ball hopper and a target accessory providing an alternative application for the tennis ball hopper as a highly visible tennis court target.

2. Description of Prior Art

When players practice it is common for them to aim and hit towards targets as a way of improving ball placement and shot accuracy. Sometimes players and coaches use colored cones or markers to signify target areas of the court. However coaches shy away from using these visual aids as they are considered cumbersome and a nuisance to bring to practices. Instead many coaches prefer to instruct players where to hit their shots during a drill without the use of visual aids. However oral explanations cannot substitute the use of visual aids and often lead to confusion during a drill. Visual aids are far more effective as they serve as a constant reminder as to where players should aim their shots. Occasionally coaches use ball hoppers as targets since they are already an essential item at any given practice for picking up and carrying balls and would otherwise sit idle at the side of the court during practice. However ball hoppers in their current form are not an ideal representation of brightly colored targets as they are difficult to see due to their wiry, basket-like form and dark color. Using an object such as a ball hopper as a sports target that is supposed to be highly visible and evident seems less than adequate. To overcome these shortcomings the present invention implements an accessory for a ball hopper with fasteners for attaching the unit to a ball hopper without being obtrusive or obstructing the hoppers primary purpose while converting it into an effective visual tennis court target.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention is using a ball hopper as a tennis court target that is highly visible. To accomplish this the present invention implements a brightly colored accessory for a ball hopper accompanied with fasteners for attaching the brightly colored target accessory to a ball hopper without being obtrusive or obstructing the hoppers primary purpose to convert it into an effective visual tennis court target. The fasteners can be implemented as separate elements or they can be integrated into or attached to the brightly colored accessory. There is a vast choice of fasteners that are appropriate for this invention, some of which are eye and hook pairs, Velcro tape, various types of laces, ribbons, self-latching plastic fasteners and alike. The listed fasteners may be permanently attached to non-elastic or elastic ribbons that are separate elements or permanently attached to the targeting accessory or are integral part of it.

In one embodiment of the present invention the target accessory is built as a sleeve that is pulled over the handle of a ball hopper in order to place it in the desired position without fasteners.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention will now be described solely by way of example and with reference to the accompanying drawings.

FIG. 1 illustrates a ball hopper with a target accessory suspended between the uprights of the ball hopper's handle.

FIG. 2 shows a close-up of the fasteners of the target accessory to the ball hopper's handle uprights.

FIG. 3 shows an alternative embodiment in which the target accessory, a brightly colored fabric sleeve, is fitted over the handle part of the ball hopper exposing the top end of the handle in order not to hinder the ergonomics of the upper part of the handle.

FIG. 4 shows yet another alternative embodiment in which the target accessory, a brightly colored fabric sheet and its fasteners implemented as ribbons are made of the same sheet of a material and in which the fasteners are equipped with a piece of the Velcro type on their ends and the corresponding latching Velcro type piece attached to the target accessory.

FIG. 5 shows yet another alternative embodiment in which the target accessory, a brightly colored fabric sheet with its fasteners implemented as elastic ribbons are permanently attached to the target accessory and in which the fasteners are equipped with a hook on their ends and the corresponding latching eye attached to the target accessory.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

In FIG. 1 a target accessory for a ball hopper includes; a main body of brightly colored, durable sheet material 3, which is suspended between the ball hopper's handle uprights 2, holes 5 for connecting the target's body 3 to the ball hopper's handle 2 via self latching plastic ties 4.

FIG. 2 shows a close-up of one of the attachment points. The target accessory's main body 3 is securely attached to the ball hopper 1 by securely fastening the said target to the hopper's handle 2 via self latching plastic ties 4 that are fed through holes 5 in the target 3 and looped around the handle 2 before being tied. Besides self latching plastic ties as fasteners in this embodiment laces and ribbons and alike can be used.

FIG. 3 shows an alternative embodiment in which the target accessory main body 3 implemented as brightly colored fabric sleeve, is fitted over the handle part 2 of the ball hopper 1 exposing the gripping end of the handle 2 in order not to hinder the ergonomics of the useful part of the handle.

FIG. 4 shows yet another alternative embodiment in which the target accessory main body 3, a brightly colored fabric sheet and its fasteners 4 implemented as ribbons are made of the same sheet of a material and in which the fasteners are equipped with a piece of the Velcro type 6, being the first element of a latching pair, on their ends and the corresponding latching Velcro type piece 7, being the second element of the latching pair attached to the target accessory main body.

FIG. 5 shows yet another alternative embodiment in which the target accessory main body 3, a brightly colored fabric sheet with its fasteners 4 implemented as elastic ribbons are permanently attached to the target accessory main body 3 and in which the fasteners 4 are equipped with
a hook 8, being the first element of a latching pair, on their ends and the matching latching eye 9, being the second element of the latching pair, attached to the target accessory. Additionally as fasteners in this embodiment laces and ribbons and alike can be used.

[0018] The foregoing exemplary description and the illustrative preferred embodiments of the present invention have been explained in the drawings and described in detail, with varying modifications being taught. While the invention has been so shown, described and illustrated, it should be understood by those skilled in the art that equivalent changes in form and detail may be made therein without departing from the true spirit and scope of the invention, and that the scope of the present invention is to be limited only to the claims, except as precluded by the prior art. Moreover, the invention as disclosed herein may be suitably practiced in the absence of the specific elements which are disclosed herein.

We claim:

1. A tennis court target comprising:

   a tennis ball hopper and

   a target accessory;

   wherein said tennis ball hopper comprises a ball basket which ensures that said tennis ball hopper will remain in the upright position when said tennis ball hopper is left unattended on a tennis court and a handle that has two upright members joined by a mostly horizontal gripping member;

   and wherein said target accessory comprises a target accessory main body and fasteners used to fasten said target accessory main body to said tennis ball hopper by means of said fasteners to secure it in the desired position; and wherein said target accessory is colored in bright vivid colors making it highly visible against its background.

2. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 1; wherein said main body has holes in it through which said fasteners are threaded before being looped around said tennis ball hopper handle after which they are tied together securing said target accessory in the working position.

3. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 1; wherein said main body and said fasteners are made of the same piece of material and wherein at the ends of the said fasteners the first element of a latching pair is attached and wherein the second element of said latching pair is attached to said target accessory main body allowing both ends of said fasteners to be latched together once when said fasteners are looped around said tennis hopper handle securing said target accessory in the working position.

4. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 1; wherein said fasteners are attached to said target accessory main body and wherein at the ends of the said fasteners the first element of a latching pair is attached and wherein the second element of said latching pair is attached to said target accessory main body allowing both ends of said fasteners to be latched together once when said fasteners are looped around said tennis hopper handle securing said target accessory in the working position.

5. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 4; wherein said fasteners are made on non elastic material;

6. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 4; wherein said fasteners are made of elastic material;

7. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 4; wherein said fasteners are made of laces, ribbons and alike that are tied together once they are passed around said tennis hopper handle to secure said main body of said target accessory to said tennis hopper handle.

8. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 1; wherein said fasteners are attached to said target accessory main body and wherein said fasteners are laces or ribbons allowing both ends of said fasteners to be tied together once when said fasteners are looped around said tennis hopper handle securing said target accessory in the working position.

9. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 1; wherein said target accessory and fasteners are made of the weather resistant materials.

10. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 1; wherein said target accessory is used to additionally display advertisements.

11. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 1; wherein said target accessory additionally displays graphic symbols.

12. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 1; wherein said target accessory additionally displays trade marks.

13. A tennis court target comprising:

   a tennis ball hopper and

   a target accessory;

   wherein said tennis ball hopper comprises a ball basket which ensures that said tennis ball hopper will remain in the upright position when said tennis ball hopper is left unattended on a tennis court and a handle that has two upright members joined by a mostly horizontal gripping member;

   and wherein said target accessory is built as a sleeve that is pulled over said tennis ball hopper handle in order to secure it in the working position.

14. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 13; wherein said target accessory is made of the weather resistant materials.

15. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 13; wherein said target accessory is used to additionally display advertisements.

16. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 13; wherein said target accessory additionally displays graphic symbols.

17. A tennis court target as claimed in claim 12; wherein said target accessory additionally displays trade marks.

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