

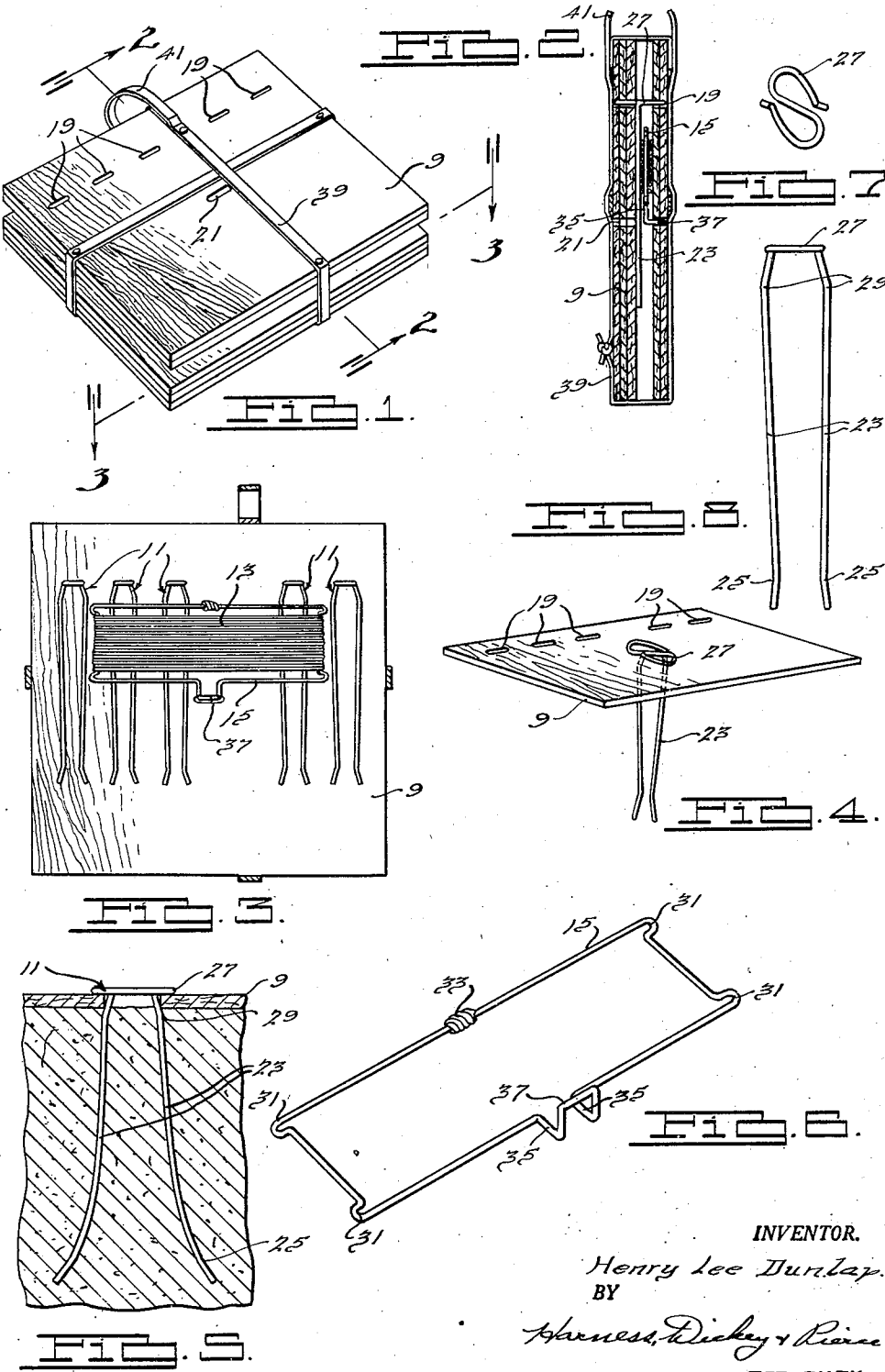
Dec. 28, 1948.

H. L. DUNLAP

2,457,454

SOFT BALL KIT

Filed June 7, 1946



INVENTOR.

Henry Lee Dunlap.

BY

Harness, Dickey & Pierce.

ATTORNEYS.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,457,454

SOFTBALL KIT

Henry Lee Dunlap, Dearborn, Mich.

Application June 7, 1946, Serial No. 675,205

2 Claims. (Cl. 273—25)

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This invention relates to a kit of equipment for properly laying out and providing the bases employed for a soft or other ball game.

It is an object of this invention to provide a light easily carried kit containing the necessary equipment for properly laying out and providing the necessary bases and pitcher's box employed for playing a softball game.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a kit including the bases for use in playing a softball game, holddown stakes for each of said bases, and a layout string, for use in laying out the relative position of each of the bases with respect to the pitcher's mound, mounted on a layout string winder.

It is a further object of this invention to provide plates for use as bases on a softball playing field which have a plurality of slots therein adapted to receive holddown stakes and a layout string winder so that these elements may be placed between said plates and held there without making the kit bulky when all of said plates are secured together in one convenient kit.

These and other objects of my invention will become apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the kit as assembled;

Figure 2 is a transverse sectional view taken on the line 2—2 of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is a plan view taken on the line 3—3 of Figure 1 that is in a plane immediately below the two upper plates shown in Figure 1, so as to show the arrangement of stakes and string winder therebelow;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of one of the plates with the holddown stake inserted through a slot therein;

Figure 5 is a cross sectional view taken centrally through a plate and a cooperating stake showing the stake securing the plate to the ground;

Figure 6 is a perspective view of the layout string winder;

Figure 7 is a plan view of one of the holddown stakes; and,

Figure 8 is a side view of one of the holddown stakes.

The softball kit comprises three main parts, namely, a plurality of plates 9, a plurality of holddown stakes 11 and a layout string 13 wound on a layout string winder 15.

The kit contains at least four and preferably five flat square plates 9 made of wood, rubber,

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plastic, metal or any other suitable material, but in the embodiment shown in the drawings the plates are made of plywood. In other words, it contains one plate each for home plate, first base, second base and third base, and preferably one to serve as the pitcher's box or mound. Each plate is provided with five elongated slots 19 parallel to and adjacent one edge of the plate. These slots are identically located in all plates. A sixth slot 21 is centrally located on the plate 9 and preferably has its axis perpendicular to the direction of the grain of the upper layer of the plywood, as brought out in Figs. 1 and 4, so as to reduce any tendency to enlarge or tear if pressure is applied outwardly on it. For machining purposes slots 19 as well as slots 21 are elongated in the same direction. However, the relative direction of the slot 21 with relation to slots 19 is unimportant except from the standpoint of economy in manufacture. The slots 19 may be, but are not necessarily, spaced equally across the surface of the plate 9. Preferably, as shown in Figure 1, three slots are located on one side of the center line of the plate 9 and two slots on the opposite side. This is to allow clearance directly above the slot 21 so that the piece which fits into slot 21 will not come in contact with the parts fitting into the slots 19.

The second part of the kit comprises five holddown stakes 11. In the broader aspects of the invention these stakes may be of any suitable design and construction, but in the particular embodiment shown in the drawings, and which comprises a more limited phase of the present invention, they are made from spring metal, and preferably from spring wire steel, and each stake is made from one piece of wire. The stake shown comprises a pair of downwardly extending legs 23, the lower ends of which are bent outwardly as at 25 so that when the stake is pushed into the ground, as brought out in Figure 5, the outwardly extending portions 25 will cause the legs 23 to spread apart and thus hold the stake more firmly into the ground. An S-shaped head portion 27 has its opposite ends extending laterally from the upper portion of the legs 23. Just below head portion 27 the legs 23 are bent outwardly as at 29 to provide a shoulder portion. Stakes 11 are adapted to be pushed vertically through the slot 21 in the plate 9. The length of the slots 21 is so related to the spacing of the legs 23 immediately below the head 27, that when a stake is pushed through the slot 21 the inwardly inclined upper portions 29 of the legs 23 snap into the slot 21 in the plate 9 tightly

enough so that the stake will not work its way up above the surface of the base. The lower portion of the head 27 rests upon the top of the plate when completely assembled therewith as brought out in Figures 4 and 5. The head portion 27 is made in this generally S-shape to add to the resiliency between the upper ends of the legs 23 thereby to give a better spring action between the upper ends of the legs as well as to provide a head that cannot be drawn through the slots 21.

The head portion 27 of each stake 11 is shaped so as to adapt it to fit into the slots 19 in adjacent and superposed plates when the stakes 11 are laid flat on one of the plates in the manner shown in Figure 3. When the plates are assembled one on top of the other the head portion 27 will extend through the plate on which it is lying and into the adjacent plates above and below the plate upon which the stakes are lying, as brought out in Fig. 2.

The third primary part of the kit comprises the layout string 13 and its winder 15. The layout string winder may be of any suitable material and construction if sufficiently flat, but is preferably made from steel wire, as shown best in Fig. 6, and is generally rectangular in shape. At each corner of the winder the wire is bent outwardly to form a small shoulder 31 which will keep the string 13, when wound about the ends of the winder, from slipping off laterally. The wire winder 15 is preferably made from one piece of wire as shown and the free ends of the wire are preferably secured together as, for instance, by twisting them around each other as indicated at 33. On one side of the wire winder, the wire is bent outwardly forming a shoulder portion 35 and it then is bent upwardly so as to be perpendicular to the plane of the winder 15. This provides an upwardly extending flange portion 37. This flange portion 37 is adapted to fit into slot 21 in one of the central plates 9 in the assembled kit, as brought out in Figs. 2 and 3. The winder is placed in a flat position transversely across the stakes which are already in place on the base.

When the string 13 is not being used, it is wound around the winder 15. It is 38.5 feet in length for laying out a standard softball playing field. In order to use this layout string to lay out a softball playing field, it is merely necessary to pick out some point in an empty field and consider that point as the pitching mound or pitcher's box. One end of the string is secured at that point and the string is then unwound from the winder. By swinging a circle around the pitcher's mound, where the string is pegged, with the extremity of the string, a circle will be made upon which all of the bases for use in a soft ball game will lie. Then it is merely necessary to take the bases and stakes provided in the kit, place the four bases in position on the circle described by the layout string and push the stakes down through the slots 21 in the bases on into the ground. One base can be used as the pitching mound and may be the first to be placed in position and the string swung from its center.

When it is desired to assemble the kit, it is merely necessary to take one of the plates 9 and lay the five base holddown stakes in place with the head portions extending into the slots 19. The winder 15 can be placed across the top of the stakes 11 with its vertical flange 37 preferably extending upwardly from the central plate 9 on which the winder 15 is lying. The winder 15 is placed with the flange 37 extending upwardly in-

stead of downwardly because the user might inadvertently wind the string around only a portion of the width of the winder 15 so as to cause a bulkiness which would prevent the winder from lying flat on the plate 9. This might prevent the flange 37 from extending into slot 21 of the central plate if it were facing down toward that plate. The other four plates 9 can be placed two above and two below the plate onto which are mounted stakes and winder and the vertical flange 37 of the winder fitted into the slots 21 of the plates 9 placed above the central plate 9.

Any suitable means of holding the plates together when the kit is assembled, such as a bag, straps, cord, etc., but in the particular embodiment shown in the drawings a harness 39, is secured to either the top or bottom plate as by means of tacks, screws, or the like, as illustrated in Fig. 1. The ends of the harness are wrapped around the ends of the kit and secured together on the opposite side of the kit, as by tying them together as shown. If the harness 39 is secured to one of said plates, it is preferable that it be tucked underneath the base when it is placed on the ground so that it will not stick up around the base. A carrying handle 41 is fitted over one edge of the kit and has its ends secured on opposite sides of the kit to one of the strap portions of harness 39.

It will thus be seen that I have provided a simple light kit of equipment for laying out and setting up a playing field for a softball game. I likewise have provided effective means for holding the plates in position and for laying out the ball diamond.

While I have described one particular embodiment of my invention, it is to be understood that I do not wish to be restricted thereto, and that I intend to cover all modifications thereof which would be apparent to one skilled in the art, and come within the spirit and scope of the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A kit of equipment for laying out and setting up a softball playing field comprising a plurality of flat plates for use as bases, each plate having a plurality of identically arranged slots therein, a plurality of stakes for holding down said bases, a laterally extending head portion at the upper end of each stake, a layout line and winder therefor, a laterally extending flange portion projecting from said winder fitted in one of said slots, said stakes and winder lying substantially flat on one of said plates with the lateral projections of said stakes fitted into certain of said slots in said one plate, the remainder of said plates placed above and below said plate containing the stakes and winder, and means for substantially holding said plates together in their assembled position.
2. A kit of equipment for laying out and setting up a ball playing field comprising a plurality of flat plates for use as bases, each of said plates having a plurality of identically arranged slots therein, one of said slots being in the center of said plates, the remainder of said slots being spaced outwardly from said single slot, a plurality of stakes for holding down said bases, a laterally extending head portion at the upper end of each of said stakes, a layout line and winder therefor, a laterally extending flange projecting from said winder fitted into said single slot in the center of one of said plates, said stake adapted to pass vertically through said slot to hold said base in place on the ground when said kit is disassembled for use, said stakes and winder lying substantially flat

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on one of said plates with the lateral projections of said stakes fitted into their respective slots in said plate, the remainder of said plates placed above and below said plate containing the stakes and winder, a harness permanently secured to one of said plates, for substantially holding said plates together for carrying purposes, and means secured to said harness for carrying said assembled kit.

HENRY LEE DUNLAP. 10

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