Feb. 19, 1952 H. G. ATWELL 2,585,989

BALL PITCHING AND CATCHING DEVICE

Filed Nov. 25, 1946 2 SHEETS—SHEET 1

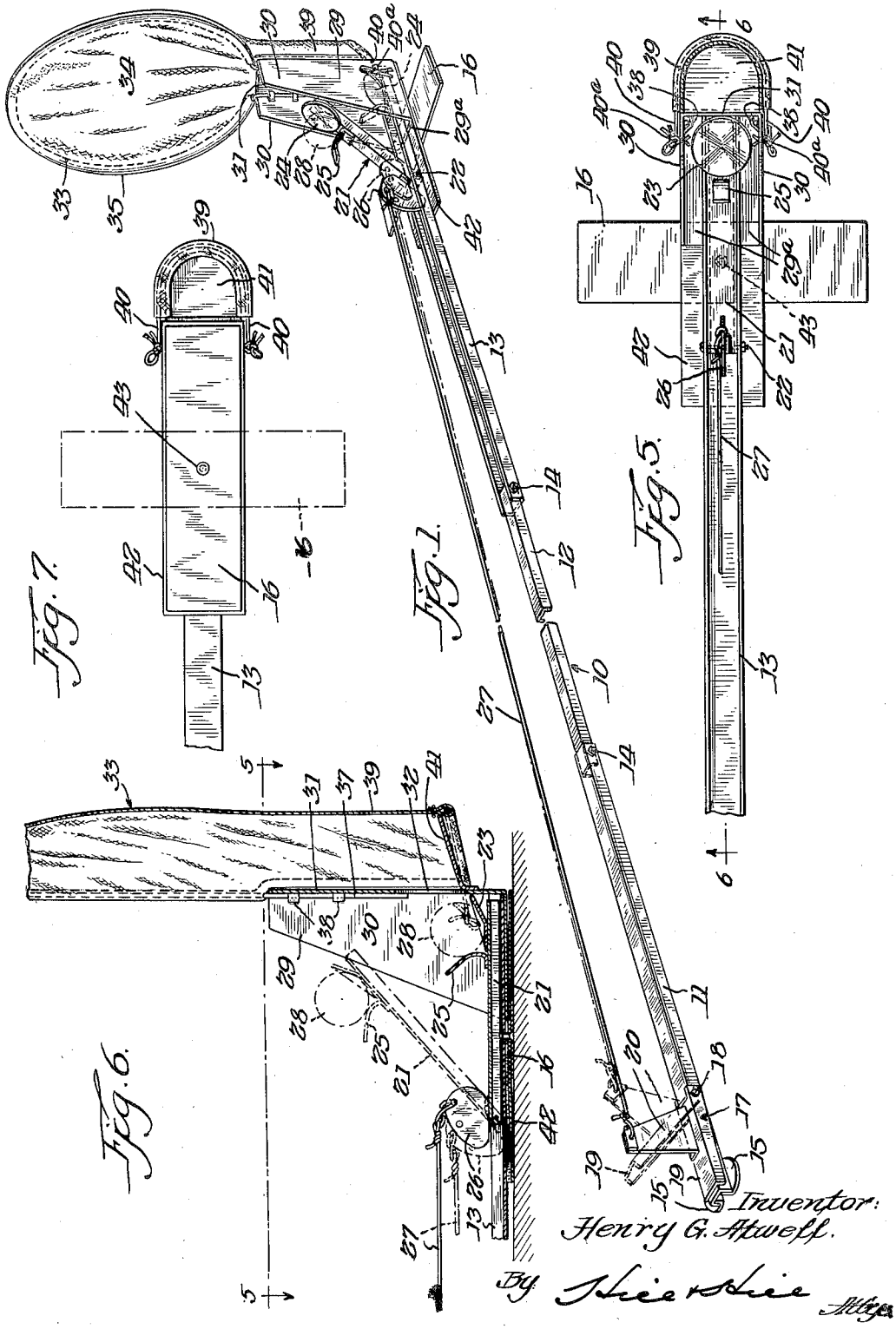


Fig. 1.

Fig. 5.

Fig. 7.

Fig. 6.

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Fig. 3.

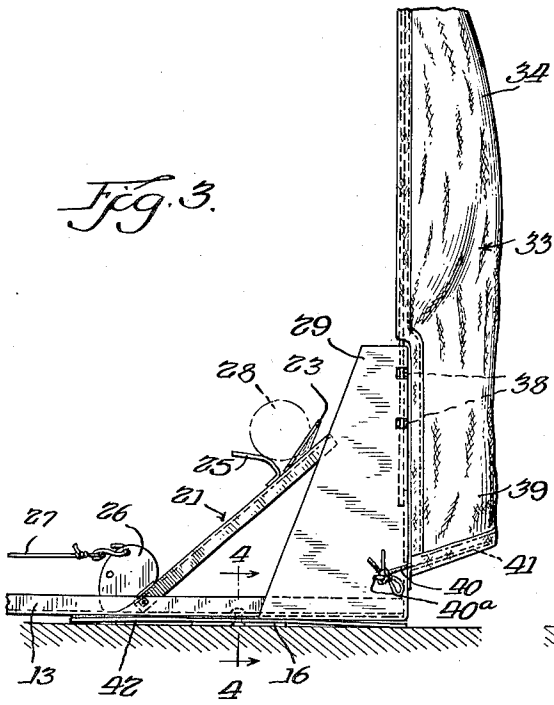


Fig. 4.

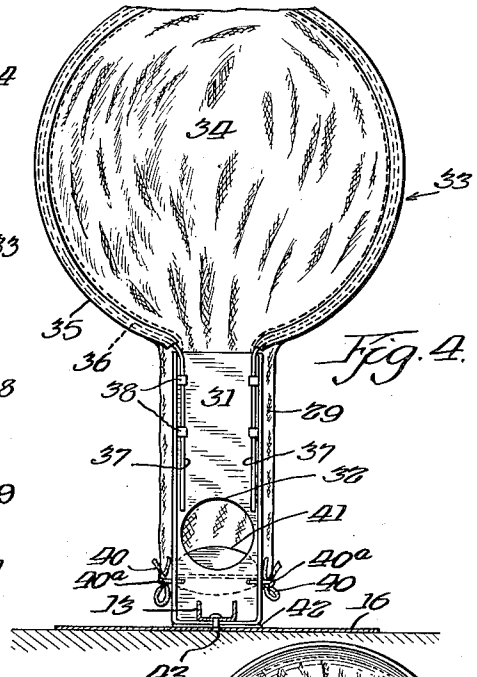
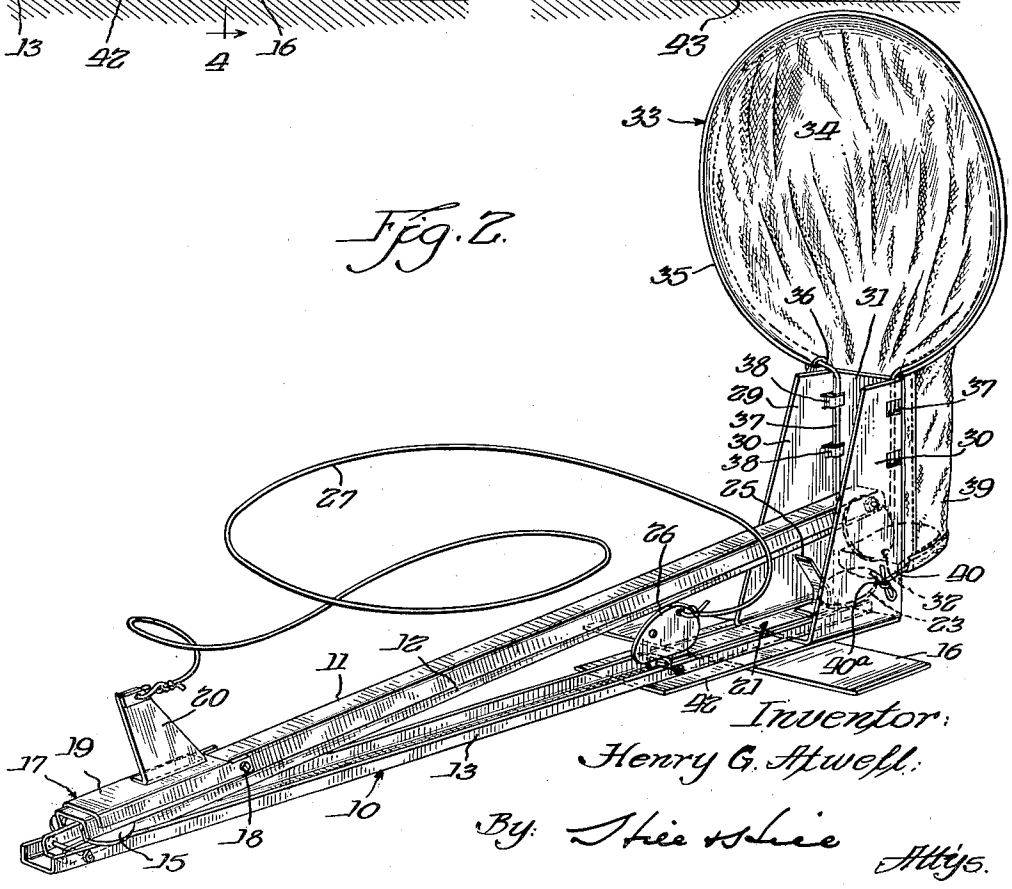


Fig. 2.



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

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BALL PITCHING AND CATCHING DEVICE

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10 Claims. (Cl. 273—26)

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This invention relates to a ball pitching and catching device, and is in the nature of an improvement upon my Patent No. 2,082,818 dated June 8, 1937, for an improvement in a Ball Catching and Pitching Machine.

One of the objects of the present invention is to provide an extensible base which can be folded together to reduce the space occupied by the device during shipment, or while stored away.

Another object is to provide improved means for attaching a ball catching means to the base.

Another object is to provide a simple and highly entertaining device for pitching and catching balls.

Other objects and advantages will occur in the course of this specification, and with all of said objects and advantages in view, this invention consists in the several novel features of construction, arrangement and combination of parts hereinafter fully set forth, and more particularly defined in the appended claims.

The invention is clearly illustrated in the drawings accompanying this specification; in which

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a ball pitching and catching device, with the base partly broken away and illustrating a simple embodiment of the present invention with the treadle depressed;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of the device, with the several members of the base folded together;

Fig. 3 is a fragmental side elevation of the ball pitching and catching end of the device;

Fig. 4 is an end elevation of the ball catching device, with the base shown in cross-section, taken on the line 4—4 of Fig. 3;

Fig. 5 is a plan of the end of the device containing the ball pitching and catching means, with the latter shown in horizontal section, taken on the line 5—5 of Fig. 6;

Fig. 6 is a vertical, longitudinal section taken on the line 6—6 of Fig. 5; and

Fig. 7 is an under plan of the ball pitching and catching end of the device, with a certain steadying member folded lengthwise of the device.

Referring to said drawing, which is merely illustrative of one embodiment of the invention, the reference character 10 designates the base of the device, here shown as composed of several channel shaped base members 11, 12, 13, pivotally connected as by bolts and nuts 14 or their equivalents, at the meeting ends of the base members. The bolts extend through the upright flanges of the base members whereby the base members may be folded together, as shown in Fig. 2, thereby reducing the length of the device approximately two-thirds of its length when extended.

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Laterally extending feet 15, welded to the base member 11, are provided for steadying the base member, and a steadying member 16 is swiveled upon the base member 13 adjacent its free end, whereby the steadying member may be extended, as shown in Fig. 5 and in dotted lines in Fig. 7, to steady the device, to a position underlying the base member 13. The steadying member may be swung into its inactive position when the device is stored away or during packaging and shipping.

Adjacent the free end of the base member 11, a treadle 17 is pivotally mounted thereon as by a bolt or rivet 18, extending horizontally through the vertical webs of the base member 11, and said treadle may comprise a channel shaped member 19, from which rises an arm 20 to which a flexible connection, such as a length of wire 27, is secured, and said wire runs to a ball-throwing lever, indicated generally by the reference character 21. The ball-throwing lever 21 may also be of channel shaped formation, and it is pivotally connected to the frame member 13, as by a bolt or rivet 22. The ball-throwing lever is provided with a dished ball retaining disc 23, preferably welded thereto, and with a finger 25, which forms a stop and assists the dished disc in retaining the ball on the ball-throwing lever until it is projected therefrom. The ball-throwing lever has an arm 26 secured thereto adjacent its fulcrum point to which the wire 27 is connected. Normally the ball-throwing lever lies upon the base member 13, as shown in Fig. 6, but when the free end of the treadle is stepped upon, it swings the ball-throwing lever upward through the medium of the wire 27 and projects a ball 28 toward the person using the game.

The arm 26 of the ball-throwing lever is shaped to engage the base member 13 before the ball-throwing lever can reach an upright position, thereby enabling the ball-throwing lever to fall into inactive position as soon as the treadle is released.

Secured to, and extending up from the free end of the base member 13, is a stand 29, having two side walls 30, 30, and an end wall 31. The stand may be formed with horizontal flanges 29a at its lower end, welded to the base member 13. At a point slightly above the dished disc 23 (when it occupies its inactive position) the end wall 31 is formed with an opening 32, through which the ball may pass from the hereinafter described ball catching device to said dished disc and lodge thereupon.

Secured to said stand is a ball-catching device, indicated generally by the reference character 33.

The ball-catching device is preferably composed of a flexible ball-catching member **34**, and preferably composed of woven fabric, and of generally circular form bulged backwardly. It is provided with a hem **35** along its circular edge, in which is inserted an open loop **36**, which terminates in two downwardly projecting legs **37** which extend down into the stand at its rear corners. The metal of the side walls of the stand is struck up inwardly to form closed loops **38**, and the legs **37** are inserted into said loops whereby the ball-catching device is held fairly rigid in a vertical position.

The fabric member **34** of the ball-catching device extends downward in the form of a trough **39** behind the end wall **31** of the stand, and is provided with means at its lower end for fastening it to the stand. As shown, a draw string **40** is passed through a hem at the lower end of the trough **39**, and may be tied to staples **40a** secured in the side walls of the stand **29**. A bottom wall **41** is secured to the rear face of the end wall **31** directly below the opening **32** and inclines upwards slightly, as seen in Fig. 6. The trough **39** extends to the bottom wall **41** and may be tied around its rear edge.

Desirably a reinforcing plate **42**, of approximately the same width as the stand, is rigidly secured to the under side of the base member **13**, and the steadying member **16** is swiveled upon said base member **13** and plate **42**, as by a rivet **43**.

The game is played by a person standing at the treadle end of the base and throwing a ball into the catching device **33**, through which it falls to the bottom wall **41** and rolls through the hole **32** in the end wall **31** of the stand, and lodges upon the ball-retaining means. The player then steps smartly upon the treadle **17**, moving it from the dotted line position in Fig. 1 to the full line position shown in said figure, thereby swinging the ball-throwing lever forward from the dotted line position (Fig. 1) to the full line position shown in said figure, and projecting the ball toward the player. By using more or less force, the player can project the ball to a greater or lesser distance from the ball-throwing lever. When the player catches the ball, or retrieves it if he does not catch it, he throws it back into the ball-catching device, where it immediately lodges upon the ball-retaining means.

From the above it is apparent that I have produced a ball pitching and catching device, of which the base member may be extended into playing condition, and may be folded into compact space for storage and shipping; furthermore, that I have provided a ball catching device with novel means for attaching it to the base.

Having thus described my invention, it is obvious that various immaterial modifications may be made in the same without departing from the spirit of my invention; hence, I do not wish to be understood as limiting myself to the exact form, construction, arrangement and combination of parts shown and described, or uses mentioned.

What I claim as new and desire to secure by letters patent is:

1. In a ball pitching and catching device, a base, a treadle pivotally mounted adjacent one end of the base, a ball-throwing lever pivotally mounted adjacent the other end of the base and operatively connected to the treadle, a ball retaining member on one end of said lever, a ball catching device provided with downwardly extending legs, a stand for detachably mounting said ball catching device secured to and extending up from the base, said stand having side walls and end wall, said side walls having struck-out portions, and there being an opening in said end wall for delivering a ball from said ball catching device through said opening to the ball retaining member, and said downwardly extending legs of said ball catching device detachably secured to said struck-out portions.

2. In a ball pitching and catching device, a base, a ball-throwing lever pivotally mounted on one end of the base, said lever having ball retaining members thereon, a stand mounted on said base and projecting up therefrom, said stand having side walls and an end wall formed with an opening therein, and a ball catching device provided with an open loop and downwardly projecting legs, and having a downwardly projecting flexible trough portion cooperating with said end wall to form a channel adapted to deliver a ball through said opening in the end wall to the ball retaining members on the lever, said side walls formed with means complemental to the downwardly projecting legs adapted for detachably mounting the ball catching device.

3. In a ball pitching and catching device, a base and a stand mounted on one end thereof, and comprising two side walls and an end wall, the end wall being formed with an opening therein, a ball catching device comprising a rearwardly bowed flexible member terminating in a downwardly projecting portion leading to said opening, and an open loop secured on the marginal edge of the rearwardly bowed part of said flexible member, and having two legs projecting down along the inner corners of the stand, and removably secured thereto by loops struck-up from the side walls of the stand, and means to tie the lower end of the downwardly projecting portion of the ball catching device to the stand.

4. A ball pitching and catching device, comprising a foldable base, a ball throwing member pivotally mounted on one end of the base, a stand having two side walls and an end wall and provided with flanges at the lower ends of the side walls secured to the base, and a ball catching device, comprising a rearwardly bowed flexible member carried by an open loop supported by said stand, said rearwardly bowed member having a downwardly projecting trough portion for delivering a ball to said ball-throwing member, a bottom wall, said bottom wall affixed to the end wall, and said downwardly projecting trough portion affixed about said bottom wall and to said side walls.

5. In a ball pitching and catching device, the combination of a base composed of several channel shaped pivoted together base members, ball throwing means mounted on one end of said base, a base steadying member swiveled to the base and adapted to be moved crosswise thereof to steady the base and to be moved parallel therewith for the purpose of storage, and feet secured to the other end of the base for steadying that end of the base.

6. A ball pitching and catching device adapted in one position for play, and in a collapsed position for storage and transport, comprising, in combination, an extensible and foldable base, including several base sections pivoted together, a treadle pivotally mounted on one end section adjacent its free end, a ball throwing lever pivotally mounted on the other end section adjacent its free end, a flexible connection between the treadle and ball throwing lever, a stand secured to and extending up from said other end sec-

tion, said stand having side walls and an end wall, a ball catching device supported by said stand, an intermediate section pivotally connected to the aforesaid end sections whereby, in the extended position of said extensible and foldable base, the device is adapted for play, and with the section including the treadle pivoted thereupon overlying the intermediate section, with the pivoted connection therebetween positioned between the side walls to prevent lateral displacement thereof and said intermediate section overlying the other end section, the device is adapted for transport and storage.

7. A ball pitching and catching device, as set forth in claim 6, in which the ball catching device, including downwardly projecting legs and trough portion, is detachably supported upon and affixed to the side walls of said stand.

8. A ball pitching and catching device, as set forth in claim 6, including an elongated steadying member swiveled to one end section of the base and adapted to be moved crosswise thereof to steady the base in playing position, and to be moved parallel therewith in transport and storage position.

9. A ball pitching and catching device, as set forth in claim 6, including an elongated steadying member swiveled to one section of the base and adapted to be moved crosswise thereof to steady the base in playing position, and to be moved parallel therewith in transport and storage position, and laterally extending feet affixed to the other end section to steady the base in playing position, said feet adapted in transport and storage position to be positioned contiguous to the other pivoted connection between the intermediate section and the other end section.

10. In a ball pitching and catching device adapted to be folded during storage and extended in playing position, a base comprising several channel shaped base members pivoted together, ball throwing means including a treadle and a

ball throwing lever mounted on the free ends of two of said base members of said base, a flexible member connecting the treadle and ball throwing lever, an elongated base steadying member swiveled to the aforementioned base member of said base on which the ball throwing lever is mounted and adapted to be moved crosswise thereof to steady the base in playing position and to be moved parallel therewith for the purpose of storage, a channel shaped stand mounted on the aforesaid base member, a ball catching device adapted to be attached to the stand in playing position and detached in storage position, said ball catching device including a flexible rearwardly bowed portion into which a ball may be thrown, and provided with a downwardly projecting portion leading to the ball throwing lever of the ball-throwing means, and said channel shaped members adapted to be folded upon one another in storage position with certain of the folded ends received in said channel shaped stand and said channel shaped members also adapted to be unfolded in playing position.

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