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(54) **GOLF TEE WITH A HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT DEVICE**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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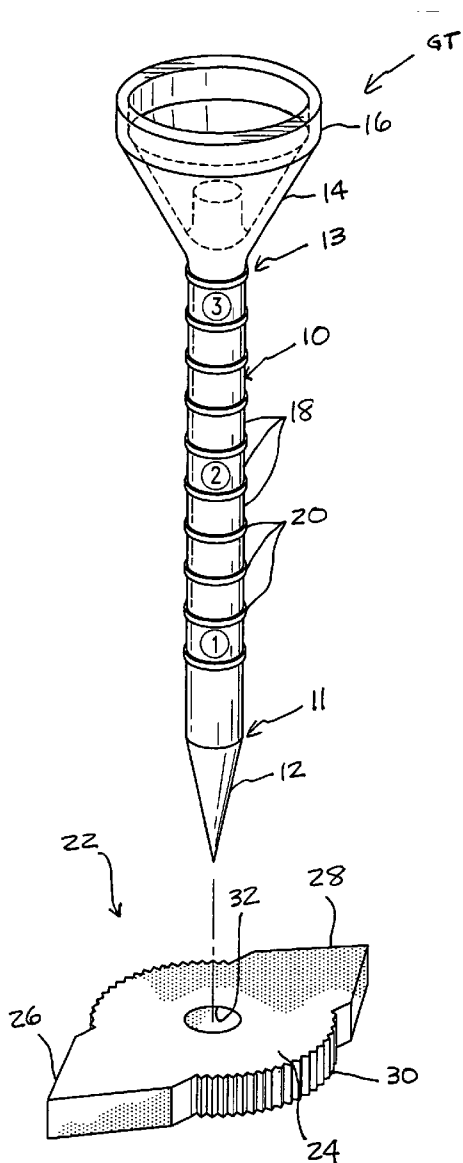
A golf tee includes a shaft portion with upper and lower end portions. A generally hollow funnel-shaped first end portion is provided for supporting a golf ball thereon and extends from the upper end of the shaft portion. A generally tapered second end portion is provided for anchoring the tee into the ground and extends from the lower end of the shaft portion. A height adjustment member is slidably positioned on the shaft portion for setting a height of the tee relative to the ground. The shaft portion includes a plurality of vertically spaced slots separated by at least one ring for selectively holding the height adjustment member in one of the slots. The height adjustment member includes first and second directional arrows that preferably extend in generally opposite directions.

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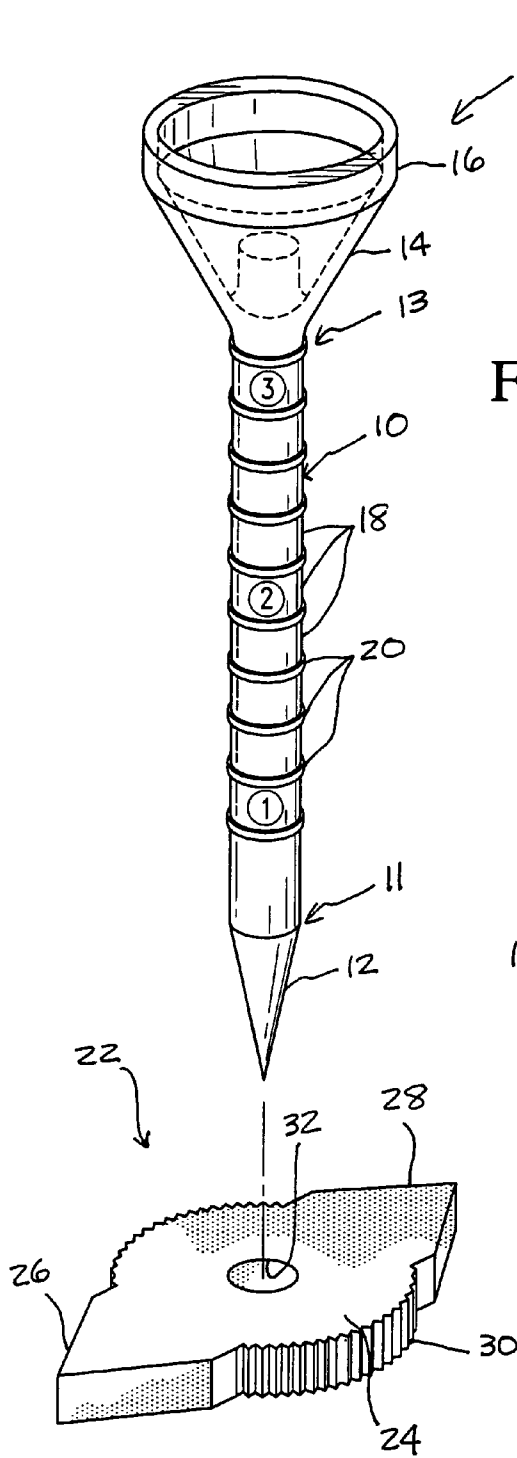


FIG. 1

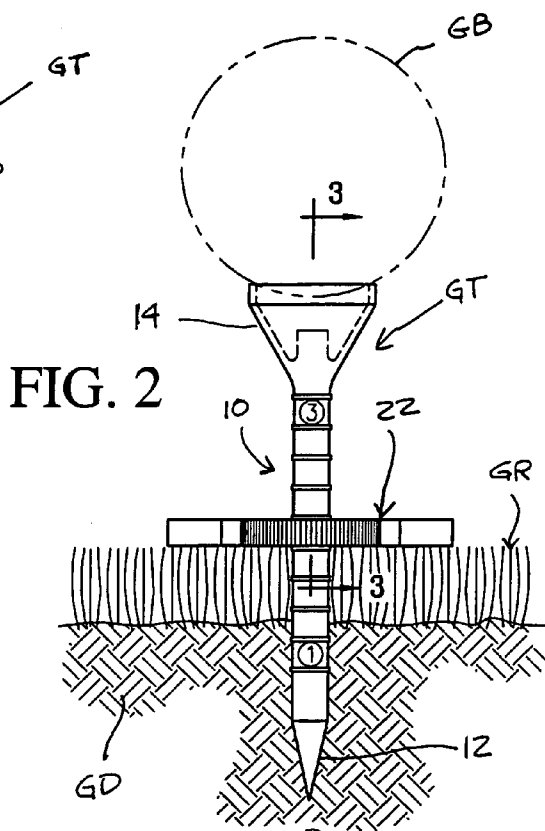


FIG. 2

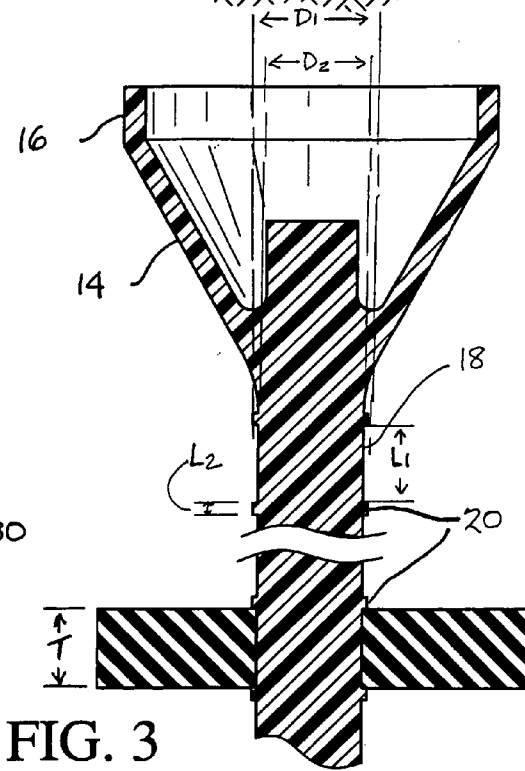
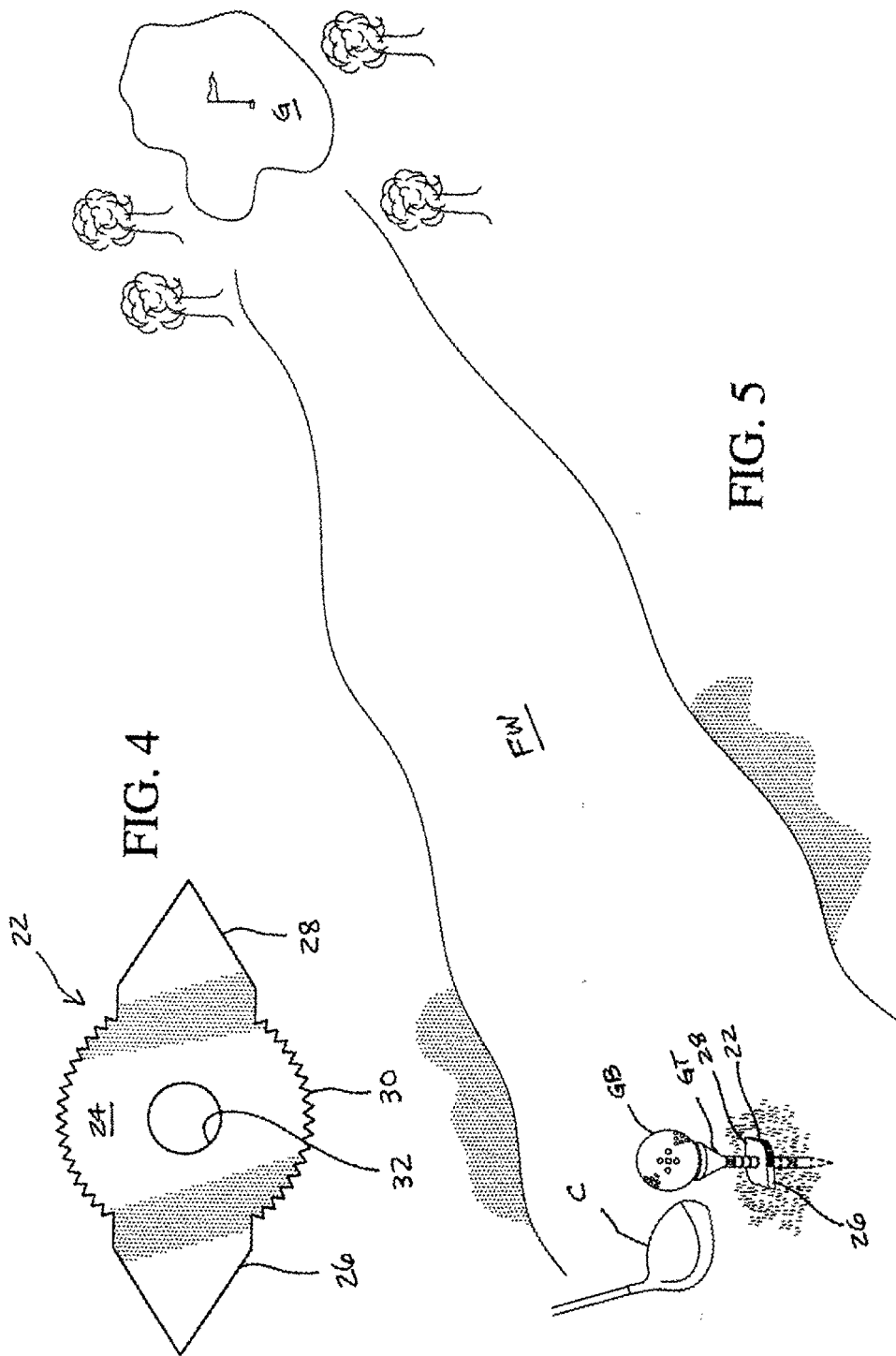


FIG. 3



GOLF TEE WITH A HEIGHT ADJUSTMENT DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention is generally directed to golf tees, and more particularly to a golf tee with a height adjustment device or mechanism.

[0002] A golfer can use a very long tee, standard size tee, an extra short tee, or a tee with a fixed flat stopping point. The extra long tee is anchored into the ground and is manually raised or lowered to an approximate height. However, rarely do they lift or lower the tee to the exact height all the time. This results in skying or topping of the ball. Alignment is often off as well due to the fact that a golfer's feet and body posture are not square with the ball.

[0003] Further, while aiming at an intended direction in either archery or tennis, the participant's body typically faces the target before the swing or release of the arrow. On the other hand, in golf, a player's body, shoulders, legs and hips are at an angle to the intended target, making the alignment far more difficult.

[0004] In order to align to the target in golf, however, some golfers align the golf ball with the printing on the ball. For example, the name Titleist®, straight towards the preferred target, or a line drawn around the center of the ball.

[0005] Another tee that is commonly used for height control is a tee that only reaches into the ground at a precise height. This tee is helpful to the golfer if that height is perfect for his or her swing. Should they prefer the ball lower or higher on that tee, however, they cannot use the set height tee.

[0006] There are many existing tees that can be used to insure height control. Some are various sizes of rubber tees used on a mat found on driving ranges. Others are practice tees which require anchors, etc. Some golfers mark their balls by drawing horizontal lines across the tee stem. However, all of these are difficult to anchor the tee stem at an exact depth that will place the ball at an exact height required or desired by the golfer. In order to obtain that exact height of the ball at all times, it would require a golfer to measure from the ground to the top of the head of the tee, with a separate ruler. This would obviously be cumbersome, not to mention additional time required prior to tee-off.

[0007] Examples of various golf tees and other accessories are disclosed in U.S. Pat. Nos. 1,553,561; 1,625,911; 1,638,448; 2,700,788; 3,079,158; 3,114,557; 3,203,700; 3,408,079; 3,883,144; 5,052,689; 5,240,254; 5,356,146; 5,569,102; 5,672,122; 5,720,677; 5,890,976; 6,475,107 B1; U.S. Des. Pat. No. 293,261; U.S. Des. Pat. No. 360,006; U.S. Des. Pat. No. 411,276; and U.S. Des. Pat. No. 428,954.

[0008] In view of the drawbacks associated with conventional tees, there is a need in the industry for a golf tee which includes a better height adjustment mechanism to allow a golfer to consistently and repeatedly set the ball at the same or different height relative to the ground, as preferred by the golfer.

OBJECTS AND BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] The principal object of the present invention is to provide a golf tee which overcomes the drawbacks associated with conventional golf tees.

[0010] An object of the present invention is to provide a golf tee which includes a height adjustment mechanism for allowing a golfer to consistently and repeatedly set the ball at the same or different height relative to the ground, as preferred.

[0011] Another object of the present invention is to provide a golf tee with a height adjustment mechanism which eliminates the need for a golfer to carry multiple or an assortment of various length tees. In other words, a golfer need to carry only one golf tee of the present invention that allows the player to set different heights of the ball relative to the ground.

[0012] Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a golf tee which includes directional arrows to assist a golfer in locating or selecting a line of flight for driving or hitting the ball, as well as aligning the feet, hips and shoulders for proper or optimum stance of the player.

[0013] An additional object of the present invention is to provide a golf tee with a height adjustment mechanism and directional arrows which allows a golfer to maintain an exact height of the center of the ball relative to the ground, regardless of variable lofts or degrees on the golf clubs, with the arrows aligned for proper stance of the feet, hips and shoulders, as well as the direction required for straight, fade, or draw, as desired.

[0014] Yet an additional object of the present invention is to provide a golf tee which includes a height adjustment member with an arrow to point in the direction required for the ball to travel in alignment therewith.

[0015] In summary, the main object of the present invention is to provide a golf tee with a height adjustment mechanism and directional arrows which allows a golfer to control or adjust the height and direction the golfer prefers when striking a ball with any club or driver that is selected based on the face angle thereof. The directional arrows further help a golfer to align his or her feet, hips and shoulders with the ball for a preferred or optimum flight or direction.

[0016] At least one of the above objects is met, in part, by the present invention, which in one aspect includes a golf tee with a shaft portion. A first end portion is provided for supporting a golf ball thereon and extends from a first end of the shaft portion. A second end portion is provided for anchoring the tee into the ground and extends from a second end of the shaft portion. A height adjustment member is slidably positioned on the shaft portion for setting a height of the tee relative to the ground. The shaft portion includes a plurality of vertically spaced slots separated by at least one ring for selectively holding the height adjustment member in one of the slots. The height adjustment member includes first and second directional arrows that extend in generally opposite directions.

[0017] Another aspect of the present invention includes a golf tee with a device for setting a height of the tee relative to the ground, which includes a shaft portion. A generally hollow funnel-shaped first end portion is provided for supporting a golf ball thereon and extends from an upper end of the shaft portion. A generally tapered second end portion is provided for anchoring the tee into the ground and extends from a lower end of the shaft portion. A disc member is slidably positioned on the shaft portion for setting a height

of the tee relative to the ground. The shaft portion includes a plurality of vertically spaced slots separated by a plurality of generally continuous rings. The disc member includes integrally molded first and second directional arrows that extend in generally opposite directions.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0018] The above and other objects, novel features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description of the preferred embodiment(s) invention, as illustrated in the drawings, in which:

[0019] **FIG. 1** is an elevational view of a golf tee with a height adjustment member in accordance with the present invention;

[0020] **FIG. 2** is an elevational view showing the golf tee of the invention anchored in the ground;

[0021] **FIG. 3** is a partial enlarged sectional view taken along line 3-3 of **FIG. 2**;

[0022] **FIG. 4** is a top plan view of the height adjustment member shown in **FIG. 1**; and

[0023] **FIG. 5** is a perspective view of the golf tee of the present invention shown in use on a golf course.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT(S) OF THE INVENTION

[0024] As best shown in **FIG. 1**, the golf tee GT of the present invention includes a shaft portion **10** with a tapered lower end portion **12** for anchoring the tee into the ground, and a generally hollow funnel-shaped upper end portion **14** for supporting a golf ball GB thereon (**FIG. 2**). The end portions **12** and **14** extend from the lower and upper end portions **11** and **13** of the shaft **10**, respectively. The upper portion **14** includes an oversized annulus top rim **16** for stabilizing the golf ball GB under normal or windy conditions. The golf tee GT is preferably molded from a plastic, metal, wood, foam, or the like suitable material.

[0025] As best shown in **FIGS. 1 and 3**, the shaft portion **10** includes a plurality of vertically spaced axial slots **18** separated by generally continuous rings **20**. Preferably, nine slots **18** are provided. Each slot **18** has an axial length L_1 that is larger than an axial length L_2 of each ring **20**. It is preferred that all slots **18** have the same axial length L_1 and all rings **20** have the same axial length L_2 , where L_1 is larger than L_2 . Further, the diameter D_1 of preferably each ring **20** is larger than the diameter D_2 of the shaft **10**. Preferably, the slots **18** and the rings **20** are integrally molded with the golf tee GT. The axial length L_1 of each slot **18** is preferably about 0.165". (It is noted herewith that the number of slots and their axial lengths may be varied. For example, slots of varying lengths may be provided. Likewise, the rings **20** of varying diameters and lengths may also be provided.)

[0026] As best shown in **FIGS. 1 and 4**, a height adjustment or height setting sleeve **22** has the configuration of a generally round disc **24** with two directional arrows **26** and **28** that preferably extend in generally opposite directions. It is noted herewith that it is within the scope of this invention to provide other embodiments of the disc **24** wherein the arrows **26** and **28** extend at any angle to each other. For

example, the two arrows **26** and **28** may extend at right angle to each other, or at 120° relative to each other, etc.

[0027] Preferably, the disc **24** and the arrows **26** and **28** are integrally molded from a rubber, plastic, metal, wood, foam, or the like suitable material. The outer perimeter **30** of the disc **24** is knurled for the ease of manipulation and use.

[0028] The disc **24** includes a generally round hole **32** for receiving the shaft portion **10**. Preferably, the diameter of the hole **32** is slightly less than the diameter of the shaft portion **10** for allowing a tight frictional engagement therebetween. For example, the diameter of the hole **32** is 0.200", while the diameter of the shaft portion **10** is 0.218".

[0029] In order to stabilize the height adjustment sleeve **22** on the shaft portion **10**, the thickness T of the disc **24** is provided to be in general correspondence with the axial length L_1 of each slot **18** (**FIG. 3**).

[0030] As best shown in **FIG. 2**, the height adjustment sleeve **22** is slipped over the shaft portion **10** through the hole **32** thereof to set the disc **24** in a desired slot **18**. Upon anchoring the golf tee GT into the ground GD, the height adjustment sleeve **22** would come to rest on the grass GR to provide a desired height of the golf ball GB relative to the ground GD. By sliding the height adjustment sleeve **22** up or down on the shaft portion **10**, the height for the golf ball GB can be lowered or made higher, respectively. For instance, positioning the height adjustment sleeve **22** in the slot numbered "1", would yield the highest position for the golf ball GB to rest above the ground GD. On the other hand, positioning the height adjustment sleeve **22** in the slot numbered "3", would yield the lowest position for the golf ball GB relative to the ground GD.

[0031] From the above, one can observe that by positioning the height adjustment sleeve **22** in the same selected slot **18**, a golfer may achieve the same height for the golf ball GB relative to the ground GD in each instance of anchoring the golf tee GT into the ground. Alternatively, by inserting the golf tee GT into the height adjustment sleeve **22** at different/other slots **18**, a golfer can achieve a different height preferred for any club C chosen.

[0032] In addition, a golfer may use the directional arrows **26** and **28** to properly align his/her feet, hips and shoulders to the intended flight of the ball when hitting off the tee GT. In this regard, a golfer may rotate the height adjustment sleeve **22** in the slot **18** to point either of the arrows **26** and **28** in a preferred direction for visual reinforcement for hitting the ball along an intended flight or direction on the fairway FW, the green G, etc.

[0033] While this invention has been described as having preferred sequences, ranges, steps, materials, structures, features, or designs, it is understood that it is capable of further modifications, uses and/or adaptations of the invention following in general the principle of the invention, and including such departures from the present disclosure as those come within the known or customary practice in the art to which the invention pertains, and as may be applied to the central features hereinbefore set forth, and fall within the scope of the invention and of the limits of the appended claims.

1. A golf tee, comprising:
 - a) a shaft portion;

- b) a generally round first end portion for supporting a golf ball thereon extending from a first end of said shaft portion;
 - c) a second end portion for anchoring the tee into the ground extending from a second end of said shaft portion;
 - d) a generally round height adjustment member slidably positioned on said shaft portion for setting a height of the tee relative to the ground;
 - e) said shaft portion including nine vertically spaced slots separated by at least one ring for selectively holding said height adjustment member in one of said slots.
2. The golf tee of claim 1, wherein:
- a) said height adjustment member comprises a generally round disc and includes first and second directional arrows extending in generally opposite directions.
3. The golf tee of claim 2, wherein:
- a) said directional arrows extend outwardly beyond the perimeter of said disc.
4. The golf tee of claim 2, wherein:
- a) said disc and said directional arrows comprise an integral member.
5. The golf tee of claim 4, wherein:
- a) said integral member is molded from a rubber, plastic, metal, wood, or foam material.
6. The golf tee of claim 4, wherein:
- a) said disc and said directional arrows comprise a generally coplanar upper surface.
7. The golf tee of claim 2, wherein:
- a) the perimeter of said disc is knurled.
8. The golf tee of claim 2, wherein:
- a) said disc includes a generally central hole for receiving said shaft portion.
9. The golf tee of claim 8, wherein:
- a) the diameter of said hole is smaller than the diameter of said shaft portion.
10. The golf tee of claim 1, wherein:
- a) the diameter of said ring is larger than the diameter of said shaft portion.
11. The golf tee of claim 1, wherein:
- a) the axial length of one of said slots is more than the axial length of said ring.

12. (cancelled)
13. A golf tee with a device for setting a height of the tee relative to the ground, comprising:
- a) a shaft portion;
 - b) a generally hollow funnel-shaped first end portion for supporting a golf ball thereon extending from an upper end of said shaft portion;
 - c) a generally tapered second end portion for anchoring the tee into the ground extending from a lower end of said shaft portion;
 - d) a round disc member slidably positioned on said shaft portion for setting a height of the tee relative to the ground;
 - e) said shaft portion including nine vertically spaced slots separated by a plurality of generally continuous rings.
14. (currently amended): The golf tee of claim 13, wherein:
- a) said disc member includes integrally molded first and second directional arrows extending in generally opposite directions; and
 - b) said disc member and said directional arrows comprise a generally coplanar upper surface.
15. The golf tee of claim 14, wherein:
- a) said directional arrows extend outwardly beyond the perimeter of said disc member.
16. The golf tee of claim 15, wherein:
- a) said disc member is made of a rubber, plastic, metal, wood, or foam material.
17. The golf tee of claim 13, wherein:
- a) the diameter of one of said rings is larger than the diameter of said shaft portion.
18. The golf tee of claim 13, wherein:
- a) the axial length of one of said slots is more than the axial length of one of said rings.
19. The golf tee of claim 13, wherein:
- a) said disc portion includes a generally central hole for receiving said shaft portion; and
 - b) the diameter of said hole is smaller than the diameter of said shaft portion.
20. (cancelled)

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