May 29, 1956 Y. CARROAD 2,747,873

TETHERED BALL GAME APPARATUS

Filed Oct. 15, 1952

Fig. 1.

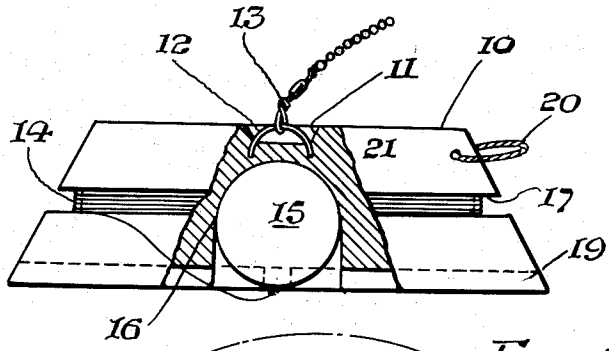


Fig. 8.

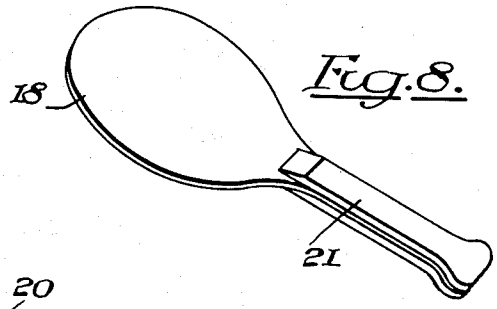


Fig. 5.

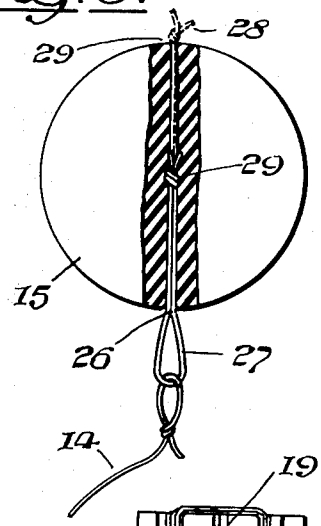


Fig. 2.

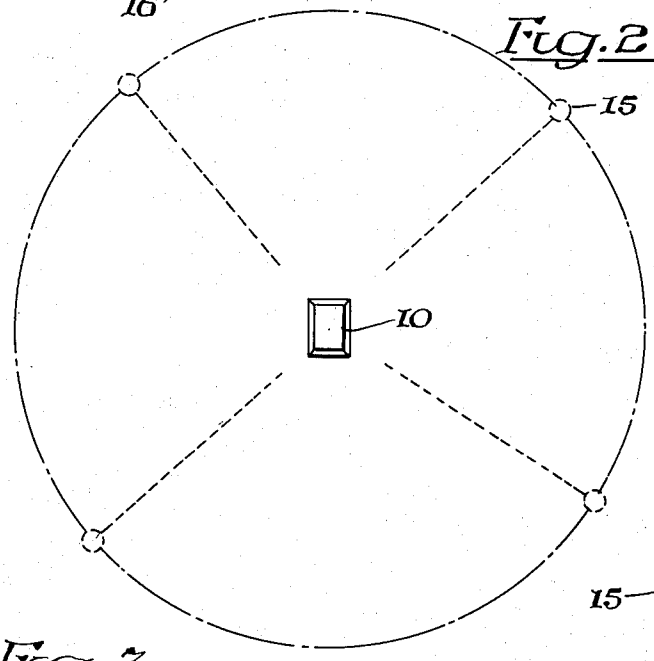


Fig. 6.

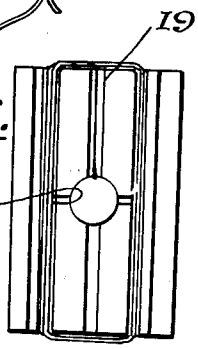


Fig. 3.

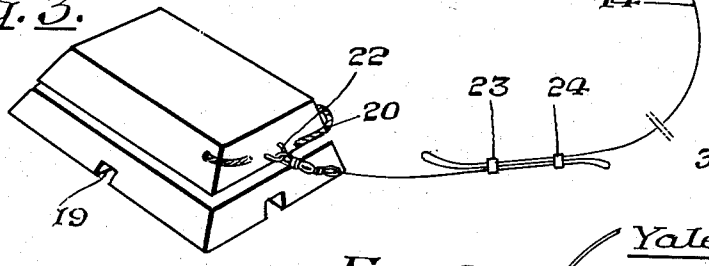


Fig. 7.

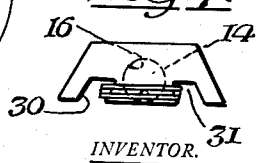
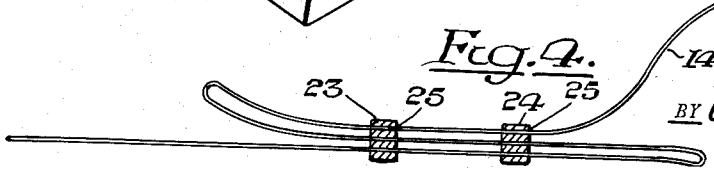


Fig. 4.



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TETHERED BALL GAME APPARATUS

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2 Claims. (Cl. 273—95)

This invention relates to a game, and specifically one which incorporates the advantages and skill of ping pong, tennis and handball.

Presently known tethered ball games employ stakes for securing the tether in place, and are further limited in their use, in that they require rather large areas for playing.

In addition, presently known devices are so constructed that the action of the ball on the tether is so unreliable as to render the game entirely unsatisfactory for purposes other than as a toy.

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a tethered ball game which will meet the specifications and present a challenge to the skill of the player, equivalent to that of a sport.

Another object of this invention is to provide a game, the components of which will withstand extremely rough treatment.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a tethered ball game which may be used indoors as well as outdoors.

Another object of this invention is to provide a game which is capable of a wide variation of playing rules, without change in equipment.

A feature of the present invention is its unitary base or anchor structure, which will secure the tether on all surfaces.

Another feature of this invention is its compact storing structure, whereby the entire game may be put away in a minimum amount of space.

A further feature of this invention is its novel ball securing device, which provides a maximum amount of safety, with the utmost in ball freedom of motion.

Another feature of this invention is its take-up or shortening device for converting the elastic to indoor or outdoor size, as desired.

The invention consists of the combination, construction and arrangement of parts, as herein illustrated, described and claimed.

In the accompanying drawings, forming a part hereof, are illustrated two forms of embodiment of the invention, in which drawings similar reference characters designate corresponding parts, and in which:

Figure 1 is a view in side elevation of an anchor block made in accordance with the present invention, partially cut away to show the internal structure thereof.

Figure 2 is a somewhat diagrammatic view showing the manner in which the game can be played to simulate four-wall handball.

Figure 3 is a view in perspective, showing the anchor block, the tether shortening device and an alternate form of tether anchoring means, in accordance with the present invention.

Figure 4 is a somewhat enlarged fragmentary view, showing the tether and the shortening device.

Figure 5 is an enlarged view in side elevation, partially cut away to show the manner in which the ball is secured to the tether.

Figure 6 is a bottom plan view of a second embodiment of the anchor block, made in accordance with the present invention.

Figure 7 is an end view of the anchor block, shown in Figure 6.

Figure 8 is a view in perspective, showing a paddle such as may be used in conjunction with the present invention.

Referring to the drawings, and particularly Figure 1, **10** indicates a block member of wood, composition board, plastic, or any suitable rigid material, having the form of a somewhat truncated pyramid. The top of the block **10** is provided with a recess **11** into which there may be inserted a ring **12** to which is slidably secured a swivel **13**. The swivel **13** may be similar to the type that is used in fishing, or on key chains, and is calculated to relieve any torque which may be imparted to the tether **14** as a result of striking the ball **15**.

It is to be understood that the tether wil be made of rubber, elastic, or any resilient material. The tether **14** is secured to the swivel **13** by knotting, or any other suitable method. The bottom of the block **10** is provided with a well **16**. The well **16** is formed so as to conform to the shape of the ball **15**, while at the same time enabling the ball to be thrust therein, as shown in Figure 1.

The well **16** is made slightly smaller than the ball, so that it will secure the ball in place when the game is not being used.

A horizontal groove **17** is provided around the block **10** for the purpose of receiving therein the tether **14**, when the game is not in use. Alternately, the tether **14** may be wound around the horizontal slot **17** for the purpose of shortening it, should it be desired to use the game in a restricted area. However, with the tether shortened in this manner, the behavior of the ball at the end of the tether will not be uniform in all directions and the players can not employ the rules and technique illustrated in Figure 1. In Figure 2 there is shown the use of this device to simulate the challenge and rules of four-wall handball. Employing the device for this purpose, and alternately striking the ball with the paddles **18**, players are permitted to hit the ball in any direction.

It is apparent that the ball will fly out until the resistance of the tether overcomes the force of the blow, at which time the ball will be pulled back in the direction of block **10**. The ball will bounce once on the way back, and must then be hit by the player whose turn it is.

Referring again to Figures 1 and 3, attention is called to the slots **19** which are provided in the bottom of the block **10**. The slots **19** are used for the purpose of bringing the tether **14** under the block, so that the ball **15** may be inserted in the well **16** after the tether has been wound within the slot **17**. The slots **19** are cut vertically and horizontally across the block **10**, so that wherever the ball is at the time that the tether is almost wound within the slot **17**, it may be brought underneath the block **10** and the tether led through the slot **19**, most convenient for that purpose. The provision of the slots **19** will enable the game to be stored or shipped without damage to the tether, even though the block should be stepped upon or pressed down by a heavy weight during said storing period.

A cord **20** completes the assembly of the block **10**. The cord **20** is inserted through an opening **21** in the block **10**, and is used for the purpose of carrying the game from place to place, as desired. The cord **20** may be looped over the handle **21** of the paddle **18**, so that the entire assembly may be transported by merely grasping the said handle **21**. The swivel **13** and its central mounting **12**, best shown in Figure 1, is particularly well adapted

for the game illustrated in Figure 2. However, an alternate and suitable assembly for the swivel **13** is shown in Figure 3. In this form of the invention, the swivel **13** is secured to the block by means of a staple **22**, or the like. The staple **22** is hammered into the side of the block and serves to anchor the tether at that point.

The swivel mounting shown in Figure 3 is more suited to a game which is in the nature of the conventional handball game, or perhaps tennis, wherein the players are either disposed on opposite sides of the block, or both positioned on one side of the block with a prescribed area in front of them, within which the ball must land.

There is also shown in Figure 3 a tether shortening device, indicated at **23** and **24**. This device comprises two blocks having suitable bores **25** therein. The tether **14** is slipped through the bores **25** in the manner best shown in Figure 4, so that by pulling the tether through the bores **25**, and separating the blocks **23—24**, the length of the tether **14** may be substantially reduced. It is thus possible, by employing the shortened structure herein described, and shown, to convert the game from an outdoor to an indoor sport, without destroying the behavior characteristics of the ball in its relationship to the block, and its operation in connection with the swivel **13**.

Referring to Figure 5, there is shown a novel method of securing the ball **15** to the free end of the tether. Heretofore, tethered balls have been held by means of cords which were plunged through their diameter, the free ends of the cord then being tied beneath the ball, and the tether secured to the loop so formed. The present invention contemplates either the use of the structure shown in Figure 5, or the securing of the ball at substantially a single point indicated at **26**, so that the behavior of the ball is in many respects similar to that of a free ball.

In order to accomplish this object, a cord is thrust entirely through the diameter of the ball, in both directions so as to form a loop **27**, and two free ends **28**. The free ends are then knotted, as indicated at **29**, and the knot drawn down into the center of the ball, as shown in Figure 5.

In addition to the highly desirable playing properties of this structure, there is also provided a safety feature, in that should the knot **29** pull free of the ball **15** and snap back in the direction of the players, it would not harm them.

Referring to Figure 6, there is shown a second embodiment of the present invention, in which the horizontal groove **17** is replaced by two channels **30, 31**, which are cut in the bottom of the block. The channels **30, 31** are provided with inwardly slanting walls so as to retain therein the tether **14**. The ball well **16**, previously described, is employed in this embodiment, but the vertical and horizontal grooves **19** on the bottom are somewhat

modified, as shown in Figure 6. The block of the second embodiment, in that it is more unitary in structure, presents certain advantages of structural strength over that shown in Figure 1. However, Figure 1 has desirable features in that it may have more traction on a smooth surface than the bottom of the block of Figure 6.

From the foregoing, it will be seen that there has been provided a novel tether ball game assembly, which will withstand hard usage, provide an interesting and accurate game which embodies safety features and entertainment features for both indoor and outdoor recreation.

Having thus fully described the invention, what is claimed as new and desired to be secured by Letters Patent of the United States, is:

1. A tethered ball game apparatus for use in conjunction with paddles comprising, a unitary block member, a swivel secured to the block, an elastic tether tied at one end to the swivel, a ball secured to the free end of the tether, and an opening in the bottom of the block in the form of a hemi-spheric bottom well having a diameter slightly smaller than that of the ball, said opening being adapted to compressively receive the ball therein, said block being provided with longitudinal grooves cut into the bottom of the block, the sides of which grooves slope inwardly toward the center of the block to receive and hold the tether.

2. A tethered ball game apparatus for use in conjunction with paddles comprising, a unitary block member, a swivel secured to the block, an elastic tether tied at one end to the swivel, a ball secured to the free end of the tether, tether shortening means consisting of spaced blocks, said blocks having transverse bores therein to receive therethrough the said tether, and an opening in the bottom of the block in the form of a hemi-spheric bottom well having a diameter slightly smaller than that of the ball, said opening being adapted to compressively receive the ball therein, said block being provided with grooves to receive and hold the tether.

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