May 30, 1933. L. E. SNODGRASS 1,911,651

BASEBALL GAME APPARATUS

Filed April 20, 1931 3 Sheets-Sheet 1

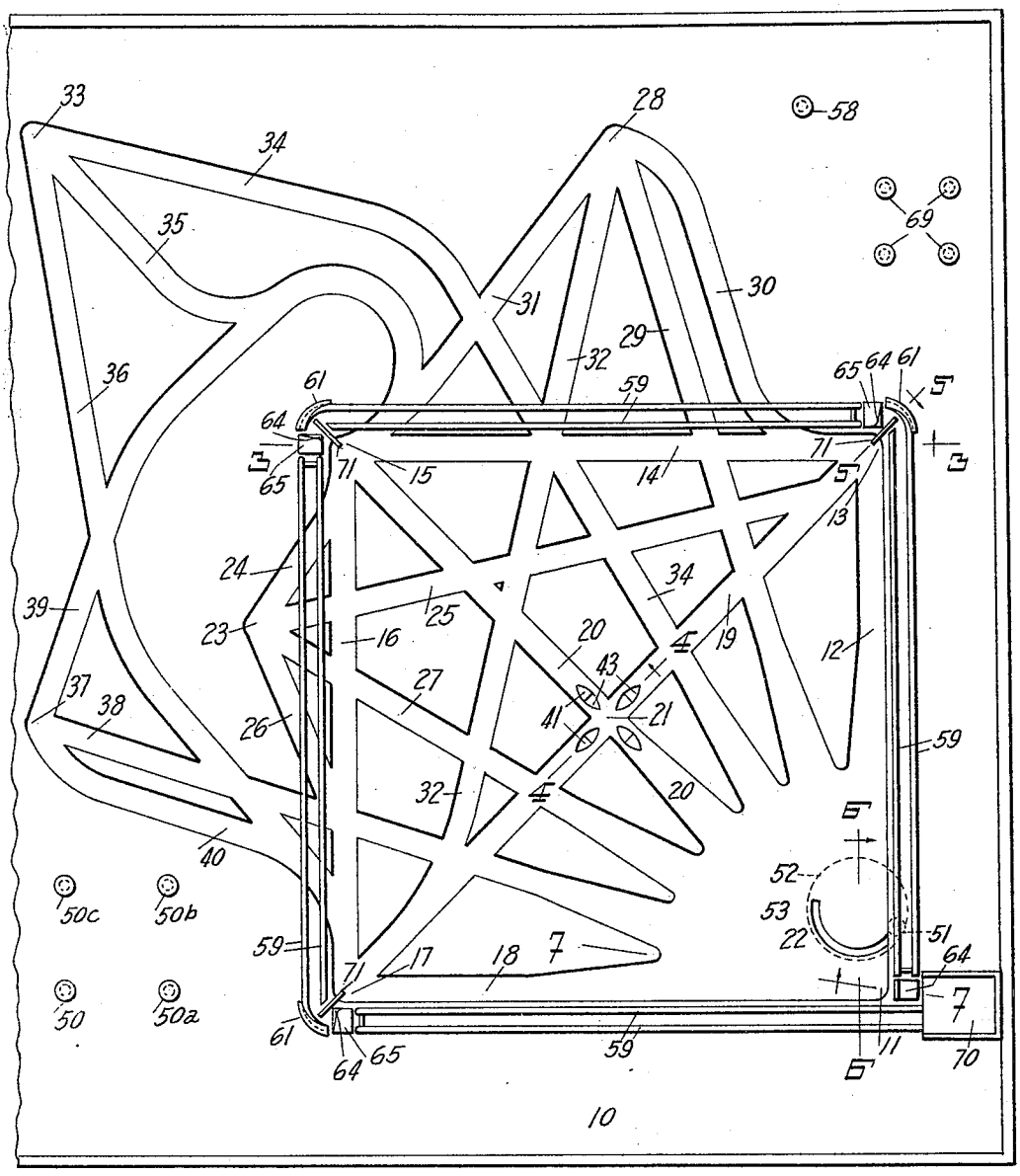


Fig. 1.

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BASEBALL GAME APPARATUS

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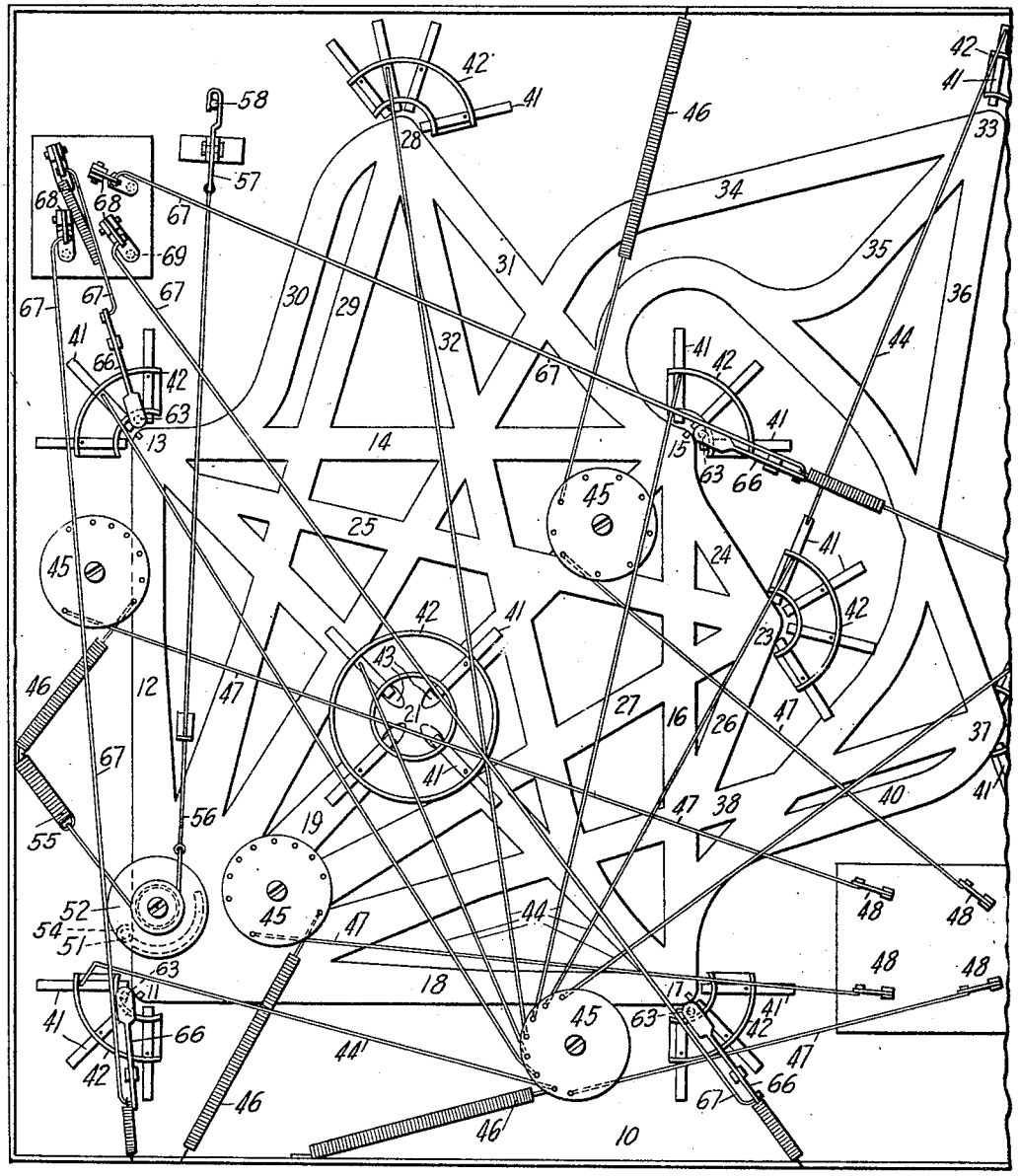


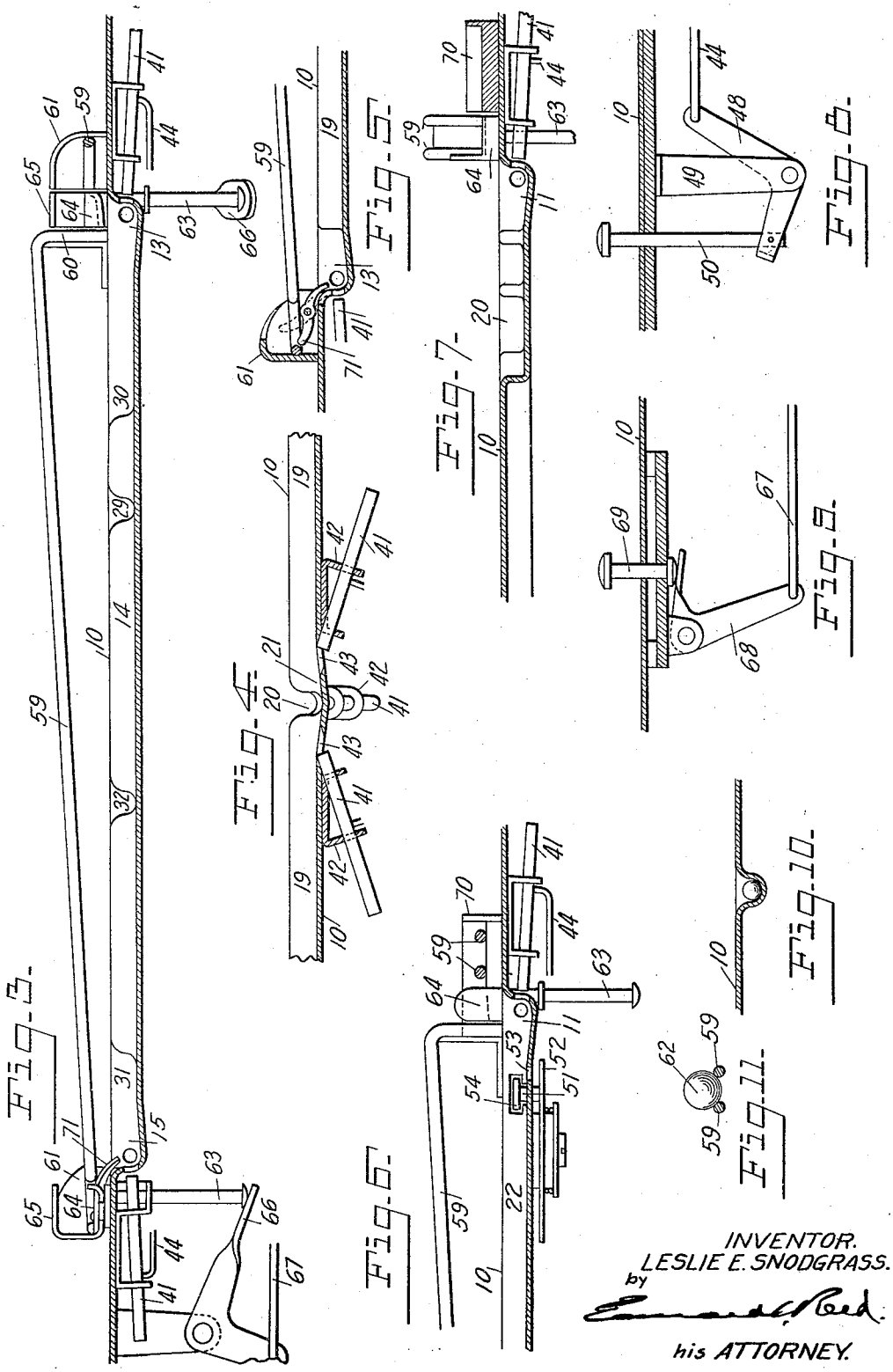
Fig. 2.

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BASEBALL GAME APPARATUS

Filed April 20, 1931 3 Sheets-Sheet 3



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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

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BASEBALL GAME APPARATUS

Application filed April 20, 1931. Serial No. 531,489.

This invention relates to a baseball game apparatus and one object of the invention is to provide an apparatus with which the game of baseball may be played according to the established rules of baseball and on which may be made substantially all the plays that may be made in the regular baseball game.

A further object of the invention is to provide a game board having means for guiding a ball from any one of several player's stations to a selected one of a plurality of other stations.

A further object of the invention is to provide such a game board having tracks for guiding from one base to another base balls representing base runners.

A further object of the invention is to provide such an apparatus having means controlled by the ball for preventing the base runner from entering a base when the ball arrives first at the base.

A further object of the invention is to provide such an apparatus having simple and effective means for projecting the ball from any station where it may be located to a selected station.

A further object of the invention is to provide such an apparatus in which the ball projecting means will comprise a small number of parts to be selectively operated, thus enabling the selection to be made and the ball projected very quickly.

A further object of the invention is to provide selective means for projecting the base runner from one base to another.

Other objects of the invention will appear as the apparatus is described in detail.

In the accompanying drawings Fig. 1 is a top plan view of a game apparatus embodying my invention, partly broken away; Fig. 2 is a bottom plan view of the same, partly broken away, and omitting a number of the connecting rods; Fig. 3 is a section taken on the line 3—3 of Fig. 1; Fig. 4 is a section taken on the line 4—4 of Fig. 1; Fig. 5 is a section taken on the line 5—5 of Fig. 1; Fig. 6 is a section taken on the line 6—6 of Fig. 1; Fig. 7 is a section taken on the line 7—7 of Fig. 1; Fig. 8 is a detail view of one of the actuating devices for actuating the ball projecting device; Fig. 9 is a detail view of one of the actuating devices for controlling the base runner; Fig. 10 is a sectional view taken through one of the grooves showing the ball in position therein; and Fig. 11 is a section taken through one of the tracks showing the spherical base runner in position thereon.

As illustrated in these drawings the apparatus comprises a supporting structure or game board 10 which is preferably rectangular in shape and may be of any suitable material, such as sheet metal. This board is provided in its upper or playing surface with a plurality of depressions or recesses constituting player's stations and which are arranged in the positions usually occupied by the several players of the baseball team. Each of these player's stations is connected with one or more of the other stations by suitable means, such as grooves, for guiding the ball from that station to a selected one of the other stations. Four of these player's stations are, of course, arranged at the respective corners of the ball diamond and constitute bases. The home base 11 is connected by a groove 12 with first base 13. A groove 14 leads from first base to second base, 15; a groove 16 leads from second base to third base, 17; and a groove 18 leads from third base to home base, these several grooves being arranged along the respective margins of the diamond. Third base is connected with first base by a diagonal groove 19 and second base is connected with home base by a diagonal groove 20. The pitcher's station 21 is arranged at the intersection of grooves 19 and 20 and a portion of the groove 20 constitutes the pitching groove, through which the ball is guided from the pitcher's station to the batter's station, which is shown at 22, immediately in front of the home base. The home base also constitutes the catcher's station and inasmuch as it is located in the corner of the board it is not practical to place the batter's station directly at the base. The batter's station comprises a part of a flat surface arranged in front of the home base station and com-

municating with the grooves 12, 18 and 20. A short stop player's station is shown at 23 as connected by a groove 24 with second base, by a groove 25 with first base, by a groove 26 with third base, and by a groove 27 with home base. It will be noted that the arrangement of the grooves is such that a ball can be thrown from any one of the four base stations to any of the other base stations, at the will of the operator, and that the ball may be thrown from the short stop station to any one of the four base stations. The recesses constituting the pitcher's station are comparatively shallow so that a ball propelled with any considerable force will move across the recess and continue its movement within the groove.

A right field station 28 is connected by a groove 29 with the home base station and with the batter's station, this groove serving both to guide a batted ball to the outfield station and to guide a thrown ball from the outfield station to the home base. This right field station is also connected by a groove 30 with first base, by a groove 31 with second base and by a groove 33 with third base. The center field station 33 is connected with home base station and the batter's station by a groove 34 and is connected by a groove 35 with second base and by a groove 36 with third base. The left field station 37 is connected by a groove 38 with home base and the batter's station, by a groove 39 with second base and by a groove 40 with third base. The center and left field stations are not connected with first base because the distance the ball must travel from the batter's station to either of these outfield stations and then to first base is so great that it may be assumed that the batter would outrun the ball.

Each of the players' stations, is provided with means for projecting the ball from that station along any groove leading from that station, at the will of the operator, and preferably means are provided for simultaneously actuating the ball projecting devices at a plurality of stations in a direction to project the ball toward a single selected station. In this way the number of actuating devices which must be controlled by the operator is reduced to a minimum and the selection and operation is made easy and capable of rapid accomplishment. For example, if the ball is at third base station and it is desired to throw it to first base the operator would actuate a device which will impart movement to the actuating device at each of the several players' stations which are connected with first base in a direction to propel the ball toward first base, but inasmuch as there would be a ball only at third base station the movement of that actuating device only would be effective and the movements of the other actuating devices would be idle. In the present apparatus the ball projecting means associated with each player's station comprises a plurality of separately operable projecting devices. These devices are preferably in the form of plungers, as shown at 41 in Fig. 4. These plungers being slidably mounted in suitable guides 42, beneath and rigidly secured to the board. The walls of the recess constituting the station are provided with openings 43 through which the plungers may be projected and caused to engage a ball seated in the recess or station. There is a plunger for each groove leading from that player's station and each plunger is arranged to move longitudinally of one of these grooves, thus by selecting the plunger which is to be operated the operator may cause the ball to be projected through any one of the grooves. The pitcher's station, as shown in Figs. 1 and 4, has four grooves leading therefrom and is therefore provided with four plungers. Each of the other players' stations is provided with a number of plungers corresponding to the number of grooves leading from that station and the plungers are arranged to project the ball along the respective grooves. The plungers may be actuated in any suitable manner but, in the present arrangement, I have connected with each plunger an actuating rod 44 which is pivotally connected at its opposite end with a disk 45 rotatably mounted beneath the board and which is acted upon by a spring 46 which holds the same normally in a position to retract the plunger. Connected with the disk 45 is a second actuating rod 47 which is connected at its other end with one arm 48 of a bell crank lever, (see Figs. 2 and 8), which is pivotally mounted on a bracket 49 depending from the board. The other arm of this bell crank lever is connected with the lower end of a push rod 50 which extends above the board. The depression of this push rod by the operator will impart rotatory movement to the disk 45 in a direction to cause the plunger to enter the recess or station and project the ball therefrom. The actuating disk 45 is connected by a rod 44 with each of the several player's stations which are connected by grooves with the same base station, so that operative movement imparted to the actuating disk 45 will cause a plunger at each of those stations to enter the recess and, if there is a ball in that recess, to project that ball toward the base with which that actuating device is associated. There are four actuating disks 45, one for each base, and a separate push rod provided for imparting movement to each actuating disk. In Fig. 2 of the drawings, I have shown only one of the actuating disks 45 as connected with its several plungers, this particular actuating disk being connected with

those plungers which are arranged to project the ball toward third base. The several push rods for operating these actuating disks are grouped at that side of the board adjacent to the operator who represents the fielding team. As has been stated, the push rod 50 controls the actuating device for projecting the ball toward third base. The other push rods 50*a*, 50*b*, and 50*c* are connected, respectively, with the plungers which project the ball toward home base, first base and second base. The plunger at the pitcher's station which serves to project the ball toward home base is also utilized for pitching the ball to the batter.

Mounted adjacent to the batter's station is a movable element constituting a bat and, in the present construction, this element comprises a stud 51 carried by a disk 52 rotatably mounted beneath the board and this stud projects upwardly through an arcuate slot 53 and is provided above the board with a head 54, to provide the same with a relatively large striking surface. The disk 52 is acted upon by a spring 55 which holds the bat normally in its retracted position. When the disk is actuated to move the bat outwardly along the arcuate slot the bat will be interposed in the path of a ball delivered from the pitcher's station through the groove 20 and if this movement is properly timed with relation to the movement to the ball the bat will strike the ball and knock the same through one of the grooves which communicates with the batter's station, the particular groove which the ball enters and the distance which it travels being controlled by the timing of the bat with relation to the ball and the force with which the bat is moved. The disk 52 which carries the bat is connected by a rod 56 with one arm of a bell crank lever 57, similar to the lever shown in Fig. 8, and a push rod 58 is connected with the other arm of that bell crank lever and extends upwardly through the board, see Figs. 1 and 2. This bat operating push rod is preferably arranged on that side of the board adjacent to the operator representing the batting team.

Arranged along each side of the diamond is a guide or track for guiding the base runners from base station to base station. In the device here illustrated each of these tracks comprises a pair of parallel rods 59, mounted on the upper surface of the board, spaced some distance above the same and inclined from each base toward the succeeding base, in the direction in which the base runner travels. As here shown, the rods have their rear ends turned downwardly, as shown at 60, and are rigidly secured at both ends to the board 10. At the corners of the board adjacent to the first, second and third bases, are arranged curved guides 61 to control the turning movement of the base runner. Adjacent to the higher or receiving end of each track and adjacent to the corresponding base is a device adapted to receive a base runner entering that base station and to deliver the runner onto the track leading from that station. Preferably the base runners are in the form of balls, as shown at 62 in Fig. 11. Each device for delivering the base runner to the succeeding track is preferably in the form of a plunger 63 mounted for vertical movement in the board and having at its upper end a recessed head 64 to receive the base runner. This head lies close to the downturned ends of the track rods and its recessed surface is sloped slightly toward those rods so that the spherical base runner resting on the head will bear against the downturned ends of the track rods and when the plunger is actuated to lift the base runner above the level of the track it will roll off the head 64 and onto the track and will move along the latter by gravity. If desired, these plungers may be provided with guards 65 which overhang the heads to retain the base runners thereon. These plungers may be actuated by any suitable mechanism and, as here shown, the lower end of each plunger rests upon one arm 66 of a bell crank lever, the other arm of which is connected by a rod 67 with one arm of a second bell crank lever 68, the other arm of which is engaged by a push rod 69 slidably mounted in the board, the arrangement being such that a downward thrust on the push rod will impart upward movement to the plunger. The plungers are separately controlled and there is therefore a separate push rod 69 for each plunger. These push rods are grouped in a convenient arrangement adjacent to the bat actuating push rod 58. It will be apparent therefore that the operator representing the batting team has complete control over the batter and over the base runners. In the present construction the track 59 which leads to the home base does not deliver the base runner directly to the head of the plunger 63 but delivers the same to a shallow receptacle 70 which is adapted to contain a plurality of the base runner balls. This receptacle is so shaped that the balls will roll toward the head 64 of the adjacent plunger and when this plunger is in its lower position there will always be a ball in position upon the same.

I have also provided means to automatically determine whether a runner is "safe" or is "out" at a base and I do this by providing a stop device which will prevent the base runner from entering the station, that is, moving to a position on the plunger, when a ball arrives first at that base station. As here shown, this stop device is in the form of a lever 71 pivotally mounted be-

tween its ends and having its upper end movable into and out of a position in the path of the ball as the latter moves along the track rods 59. Normally this end of the lever will be depressed, by its own weight, so that it will be out of the path of the ball. The other end of the lever projects into the adjacent recess or player's station and a ball entering that station will engage this end of the lever and cause the upper end of the lever to move into the path of the base runner. If the base runner passes the lever and enters the station the runner is safe, but if the base runner is stopped or thrown from the track by the stop before he enters the station he is "out."

In playing the game two operators occupy opposite sides of the board. The operator representing the fielding team manipulates his ball projecting device to pitch a ball toward home base and past the batter's station. The operator representing the batting team manipulates the bat in an effort to strike the ball. If he succeeds in striking the ball he immediately operates that push rod 69 which controls the base runner lifting plunger at home base to cause a base runner to be delivered to the track and started on his way to first base. As soon as the ball enters one of the player's stations the fielding operator manipulates the proper push rod to cause the ball to be projected to first base. If he succeeds in getting the ball to first base before the base runner, of course the latter is "out." Otherwise he is "safe." As soon as one play has been completed another batter takes his place and the ball is again pitched. If the runner is safe on first and attempts to steal second the fielding player may operate the ball projecting device at home base to throw the ball to second. If the second batter hits the ball while the first base runner is on first base the fielding operator must then determine whether he will attempt to catch the first base runner at second or the batter at first, and manipulate his push rods accordingly. The arrangement of mechanism and the character of the controlling devices is such that the game can be played very rapidly and a very great deal of skill developed in the playing of the same.

While the use of the devices for projecting the ball and controlling the base runners is desirable, as they enable a higher skill to be developed and a more rapid game to be played, they are not necessary to the use of the game board. The ball game may be played on the grooved board without any actuating mechanism other than the bat, the balls and the base runners being manipulated by the fingers of the respective operators, who roll the balls along the grooves and the base runners along the tracks. In this way the game may be played in a very satisfactory manner and considerable skill developed.

While I have shown and described one embodiment of my invention I wish it to be understood that I do not desire to be limited to the details thereof as various modifications may occur to a person skilled in the art.

Having now fully described my invention, what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is:

1. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses representing the four bases of a baseball field, and grooves connecting each of said bases directly with all the other bases, whereby the ball in play may be projected from any one of said bases to a selected one of the other bases.

2. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses representing the four bases of a baseball field, and grooves connecting each of said bases directly with all the other bases, whereby the ball in play may be projected from any one of said bases to a selected one of the other bases, said board also having another recess representing the short stop station, and grooves connecting said short stop station with all of said bases.

3. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses representing bases at the respective corners of a baseball diamond, grooves extending along the margins of said diamond and connecting each base with a succeeding base, and other grooves extending diagonally of said diamond to connect each base with the base at the opposite corner of said diamond.

4. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses constituting players' stations, a batter's station, a flat surface in front of said batter's station, grooves leading from said flat surface to the respective players' stations, and other grooves connecting each of said players' stations with certain other players' stations.

5. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses representing players' stations at the four bases of a baseball diamond, other recesses representing the short stop and outfield players' stations, a batter's station, grooves leading from said batter's station to the respective players' stations, and grooves connecting each player's station with one or more of said base stations.

6. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses representing players' stations at the four bases of a baseball diamond, other recesses representing the short stop and outfield players' stations, a batter's station, grooves leading from said batter's station to the respective players' stations, grooves connecting each player's station with one or more of said base sta-

tions, and tracks to guide a base runner from each base station to the succeeding base station.

7. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses representing the stations of the several players of a baseball team, a batter's station, a groove leading from the pitcher's station to said batter's station, a bat mounted for movement into the path of the ball delivered along said groove, other grooves leading from said batter's station to the respective player's station, grooves connecting each player's station with one or more other players' stations, and an actuating device for said bat mounted on said board.

8. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses representing players' stations, grooves leading from certain of said recesses to a plurality of other recesses along which the ball in play may be rolled from one player's station to another player's station, ball projecting means associated with each player's station, and means for selectively actuating said projecting means to project a ball along any one of the grooves leading from that player's station.

9. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses representing players' stations at the four bases of a baseball diamond, other recesses representing the short stop and outfield players' stations, a batter's station, grooves leading from said batter's station to the respective players' stations, grooves connecting each player's station with one or more of said base stations, ball projecting means associated with each of said players' stations and operable to project a ball along any of the grooves leading from that station, and means for simultaneously operating the projecting means at a plurality of said stations in a direction to propel a ball toward a single other station.

10. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of players' stations, ball projecting means associated with each player's station and operable to project the ball toward a selected one of a plurality of other stations, and means for simultaneously operating the projecting means at each of said stations in a direction to propel a ball toward the same selected station.

11. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of players' stations, a plurality of separately operable projecting devices associated with each of said stations, the projecting devices of each station being arranged to project the ball toward different other stations, and means for selectively operating said projecting devices.

12. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of players' stations, a plurality of separately operable projecting devices associated with each of said stations, the projecting devices of each station being arranged to project the ball toward different other stations, and a single actuating device connected with the corresponding projecting devices at the respective stations.

13. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses representing players' stations, grooves connecting each of said stations with a plurality of other stations, a plurality of plungers mounted for movement into and out of each of said recesses, the plungers of each recess being arranged to project a ball along different grooves leading from that recess, and means for selectively operating said plungers.

14. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses representing players' stations, grooves connecting each of said stations with a plurality of other stations, a plurality of plungers mounted for movement into and out of each of said recesses, the plungers of each recess being arranged to project a ball along different grooves leading from that recess, and an actuating device connected with one of the plungers at each recess.

15. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a station representing a base of a baseball diamond, means for directing a ball to said station, means to guide a base runner to said station, a device movably mounted adjacent to said station and having a part movable into the path of a base runner approaching said station and having another part arranged to be actuated by a ball entering said station to move the first mentioned part into the path of said base runner.

16. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses representing players' stations at the four bases of a baseball diamond, other recesses representing the short stop and outfield player's stations, a batter's station, grooves leading from said batter's station to the respective players' stations, grooves connecting each player's station with one or more of said base stations, tracks to guide a base runner from base station to base station, an operable device at each base station to receive a base runner and deliver the same to the track leading from that base station, a ball projecting device at each player's station to project a ball along a selected groove leading from that station, actuating devices for selectively operating said ball projecting devices, and other actuating devices for selectively operating the devices for delivering the base runners from the base stations to the tracks leading from the respective base stations.

17. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having player's stations corresponding to the bases of a baseball diamond, inclined tracks to guide a base runner from the respective bases to the succeeding bases, a ver-

tically movable plunger mounted at each base and having a head to receive a spherical base runner entering that station, a guard carried by said plunger, overhanging said head and arranged to provide an inlet which is in line with the lower end of one track when said plunger is in its lower position, and an outlet adjacent to the elevated end of the other track, the end portion of the last mentioned track serving to retain said spherical base runner on said head until said plunger has been fully elevated, and separate means for actuating the respective plungers.

18. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses constituting players' stations, a batter's station, a flat surface in front of said batter's station, and grooves leading from said flat surface to and terminating at the respective players' stations, and ball projecting devices at each of said player's stations.

19. In a baseball game apparatus, a board having a plurality of recesses constituting players' stations, a batter's station, a flat surface in front of said batter's station, grooves leading from said flat surface to the respective players' stations, and other grooves connecting each of said players' stations with certain other players' stations, and ball projecting devices at each of said player's stations.

20. In a baseball game, a board having a batter's station and a plurality of recesses representing field players' stations, grooves leading from said batter's station to the respective recesses, and other grooves connecting certain of said recesses directly one with the other, whereby a ball may be rolled from the batter's station to one of said recesses and from that recess to another recess.

In testimony whereof, I affix my signature hereto.

LESLIE E. SNODGRASS.