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3,101,108

TUBE RETAINER

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FIG. 1

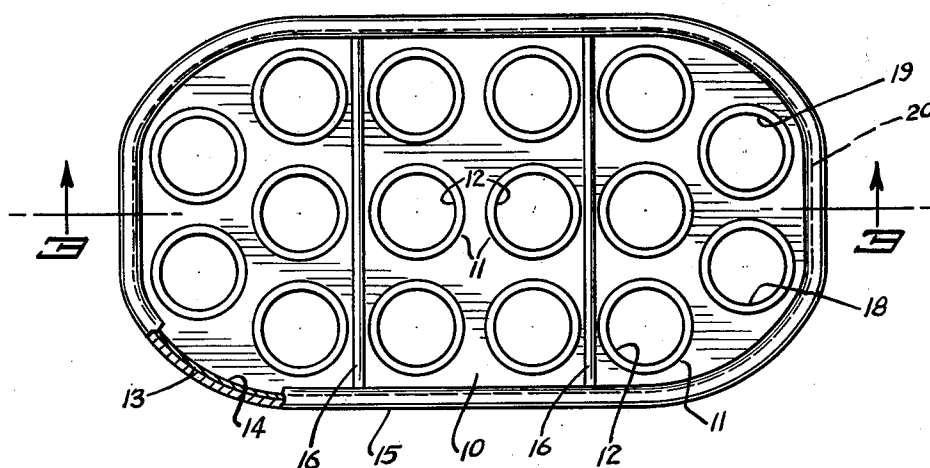


FIG. 2

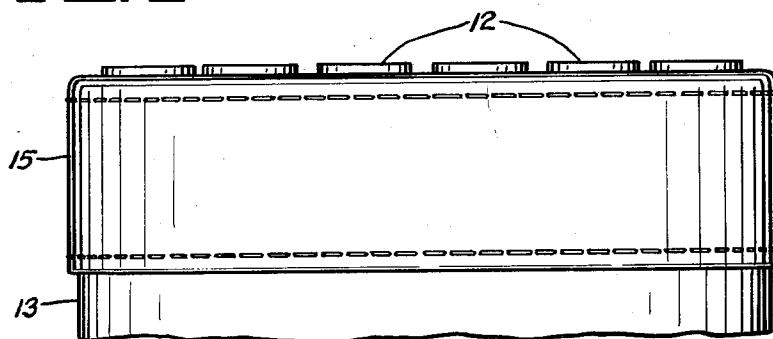
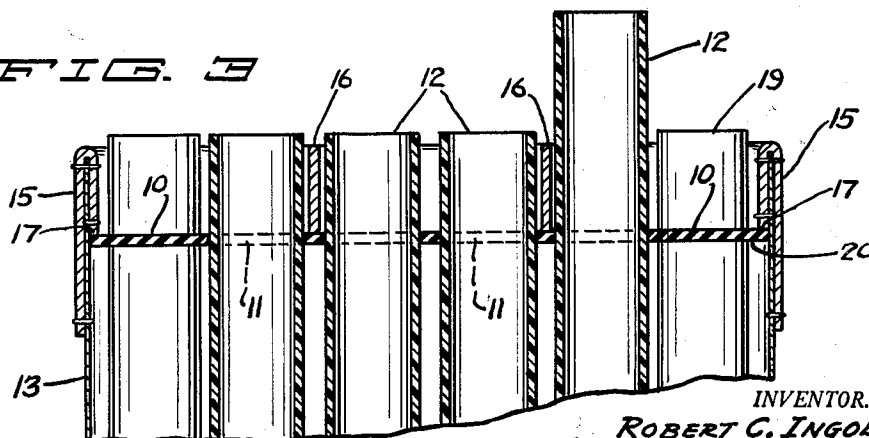


FIG. 3



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TUBE RETAINER

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This invention is a tube retainer to hold individual golf club shaft protecting tubes in a golf bag against accidental withdrawal with the club and also to space the tubes from each other and hold them in fixed position within the mouth of the bag.

The evolution of golf bags has been steadily in the direction of providing divided compartments for different clubs so that easy selection of an appropriate club for a particular shot is facilitated. One of the most common forms of golf bags in present use is oval shaped in section and has extending across the top thereof dividing straps which roughly separate the club heads into two or three groups, depending on the capacity of the bag. The usual division is between woods, the intermediate iron and the short irons. Even in a bag thus divided, however, club heads and club shafts bang and scrape against each other during transport, withdrawal and replacement causing scratching and other marring to the club shafts and in the case of the woods, the heads as well.

There has been a recent development in this art toward inserting, loosely in the bag, tubes which receive and protect the shafts of golf clubs. There has also been some tendency toward completely compartmented bags having tubes secured inside the bag in which the club shafts are individually placed.

While having tubes loosely within the bag protects the club shaft, it does little in the way of positioning the clubs for immediate identification and furthermore does not protect the heads of the clubs at all. Furthermore, when individual club shaft tubes are loose in an ordinary golf bag, the tube often times tends to stick on the club handle and to come out of the bag with the club, as the latter is withdrawn.

Accordingly it is the principal object of this invention to provide a novel golf club tube holder.

It is a further object of this invention to provide a tube holder that secures tubes in golf bags against accidental withdrawal therefrom.

Still a further object of this invention is to provide a golf club tube holder that separates and holds in a fixed position upper ends of tubes for clubs.

It is a still further object of this invention to provide a golf tube holder which can be installed readily in an ordinary bag without alteration thereof.

Yet another object of this invention is to provide a golf tube holder that is as easily removed as installed and without injury to the bag.

It is a still further object of this invention to provide a golf tube holder that individually grips the tubes thereby permitting individual replacement of damaged tubes.

Other objects are inherent in the specific structures disclosed and described herein.

To the accomplishment of the foregoing and related ends, this invention then comprises the features hereinafter fully described and particularly pointed out in the claims, the following description setting forth in detail certain illustrative embodiments of the invention, these being indicative, however, of but a few of the various ways in which the principles of the invention may be employed.

The invention is illustrated by the accompanying drawings in which the same numerals refer to corresponding parts and in which:

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FIGURE 1 is a plan view of the golf tube retainer installed in a golf bag with a portion of the latter broken away to show how they engage each other nicely; broken lines illustrate hidden parts;

FIGURE 2 is a side elevation of a fragment of the golf bag with the retainer and tubes in place; and

FIGURE 3 is a vertical section taken on the line 3—3 of FIGURE 1 with broken lines showing hidden parts.

As illustrated in FIGURE 1 the invention comprises a piece of elastic material in the form of a plate 10 which is provided with a plurality of openings 11 through which the golf club shaft protecting tubes 12 are inserted. Plate 10 closely fits the interior of golf bag 13 as shown at 14 and is also inserted beneath the usual top binding 15 and club dividing straps 16 of the bag. This perhaps best seen in FIGURE 3.

As shown in FIGURE 3 both the internal edges 17 of binding 15 and the bottom of straps 16 engage the top of plate 10 in order to hold it within the golf bag. The plate of course is inserted before any tubes are engaged with it so that it may be flexed and, therefore, inserted under the straps 16. Straps 16 are usual golf club dividing straps that are an integral part of most golf bags today. Tubes 12, which are most commonly these days made of an extruded plastic material although they have been made of a fiber and other materials, closely fit the openings in plate 10. In fact holes 11 of plate 10 when the plate is in a relaxed state are slightly smaller in diameter than the tubes 12. Thus the plate grips the tubes and the plate is secured inside the golf bag under the dividing straps hence, holding the tubes therein as well.

Once the plate is actually inside the bag and under the strap 16, the tubes may be thrust through it each succeeding tube being forced through the plate while it is supported by inserting the fingers through adjacent and yet empty tube holes. The last tube to be inserted into the bag may be lubricated as with glycerin so that it has a minimum of resistance and the gripping of plate 10 on all of the other tubes will support the plate adequately to allow the last tube to be installed. Alternatively the last two tubes, for example the ones designated 18 and 19 in FIGURE 1, could be installed by withdrawing the end 20 of the plate 10 from the bag, or keeping it withdrawn during installation, in order to allow the end 20 of plate 10 to be held while the last two tubes are forced through the plate. After the tubes have been inserted through the plate as far or farther than they will need to be in the final installed position, plate 10 can be worked down into bag 13. Because plate 10 is resilient, it can be tucked under the edge 17 of the binding 15 at end 20 after the last two tubes have been inserted. Obviously, if any single tube becomes shattered or otherwise damaged, it can be removed and replaced individually. Furthermore, it is clear that there is no alteration or modification of the bag necessary in order to install plate 10. Consequently the plate may be removed if a player finds it unappealing after trying it or wishes to move it to another bag and no injury to the golf bag with which the plate was previously associated results therefrom.

Since the tube retainer is made of rubber, it may be used in bags smaller than that encompassing its entire periphery by merely folding down the excess. Still another possibility is to trim the retainer so that it will fit precisely a smaller bag. It will be noticed from an examination of FIGURE 1 that the holes at the ends of the plate are not aligned with the rows formed by the other twelve holes in the plate. Any one of these end holes may be grouped with the six of the other holes in the two nearest horizontal rows to provide a grouping of 7 holes. For this reason, any one of these blocks of seven holes may be cut from the balance of the retainer to

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form a tube retainer for a golf bag that substantially fits a smaller size bag adapted for a beginner's set of seven clubs. Similarly, the device may be divided down the middle to form a pair of eight hole tube retainers and so on. The openings in retainer plate 10 were arranged in relation to each other with the central block of six tube holes and the two blocks of five at each end for this precise reason that it can adapt itself by cutting to several different sizes of golf bags. With the openings for tubes arranged as they are in plate 10, the plate 10 can be trimmed or folded to fit almost any shape of golf bag that is currently being widely used.

There are numerous materials from which plate 10 could be made and serve satisfactorily. I have found, however, that a $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick piece of rubber of 60 durometer elasticity will serve the purpose very well. What ever material is used, therefore, should be of such a thickness and elasticity to be the equivalent of $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick, 60 durometer rubber.

By the use of this plate it will be obvious not only that the tubes will be retained within the confines of the bag, but it will also be apparent that the tube mouths will be held in a fixed position within the golf bag. Familiarity with the location of the clubs as arranged in the bag make it very easy to select any desired club quickly. Thus any golf bag equipped with one of my plates and a plurality of shaft protecting tubes become nearly the equivalent of a fully compartment golf bag.

It will be noted in reference to FIGURE 1 that a block of holes for tubes is arranged centrally in the plate between the bars 16. This comprises approximately the central $\frac{1}{3}$ of the plate. The two club separating or dividing straps will be noticed to extend by either side of this central block of holes, and at each end of the central block of holes is a block of holes lesser in number than the central block. By this arrangement of holes, a bag that is divided either in the center or at two points spaced to divide the bag mouth into thirds will extend across the plate without engaging any of the tube receiving holes.

It is apparent that many modifications and variations of this invention as hereinbefore set forth may be made without departing from the spirit and scope thereof. The specific embodiments described are given by way of example only and the invention is limited only by the terms of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A tube retainer for use with golf club receiving tubes and a golf bag having golf club separating mem-

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bers extending across its mouth, said golf club tube retainer comprising a plate of elastic material substantially equivalent in elasticity with a $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thickness of 60 durometer rubber; said plate having holes therein of a diameter slightly less than the external diameter of golf club receiving tubes; the holes in said plate of elastic material being so positioned that the golf club separating members of the golf bag may extend in substantially straight lines between rows of holes therein, a block of said holes symmetrically arranged in the center of said plate and a reduced number of holes at each end thereof; the number of holes at one end being equal to the number of holes at the other end; said center block of holes occupying approximately the center $\frac{1}{3}$ of the plate and each end group of holes occupying an end $\frac{1}{3}$ of said plate on opposite ends of the center block of holes, the holes at the end extremities of the plate being displaced inward and offset with respect to the other holes in said plate.

2. A tube retainer for use with golf club receiving tubes and a golf bag having golf club separating members extending across its mouth, said golf club tube retainer comprising: a plate approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick and having an elasticity substantially equal to 60 durometer rubber; said plate having holes therein of a diameter slightly less than the external diameter of golf club receiving tubes; the center one-third of said plate having six symmetrically arranged holes therein and each end one-third of said plate having a group of five holes arranged therein; the inside three of each end group aligning longitudinally with corresponding ones of the six holes placed in the center of said plate; the end two holes at each end of said plate being offset toward a longitudinal center line of said plate whereby the ends of said plate may be of reduced proportions; said six center holes and the inside three holes at each end of said plate being spaced from each other longitudinally whereby separating members of a golf bag may extend between tubes arranged in the six center holes and the inside three holes of each end group.

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