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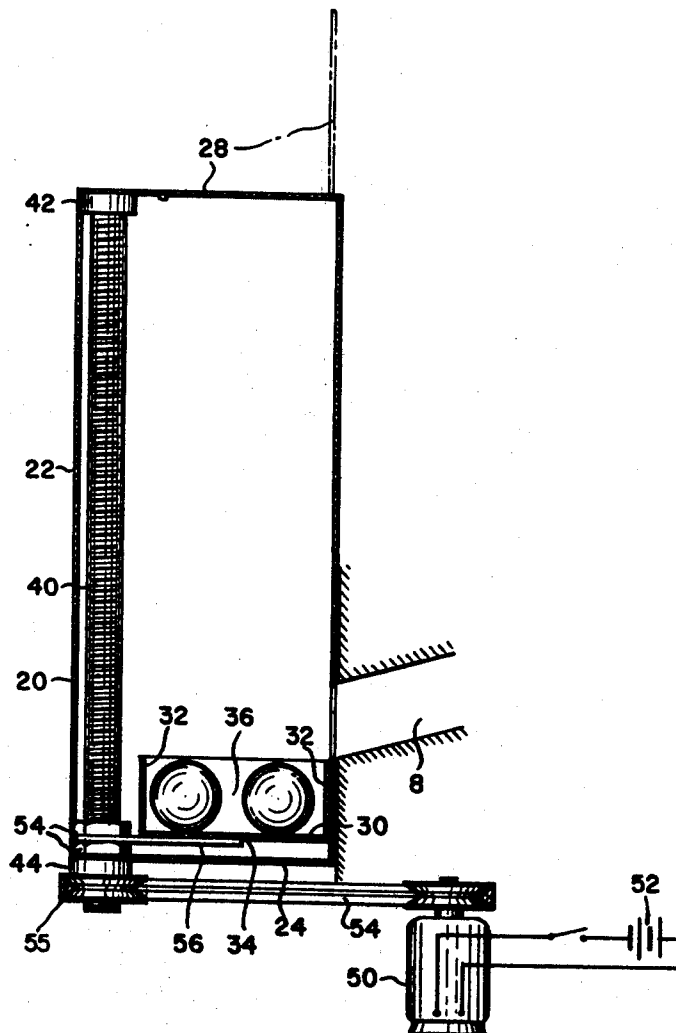
[54] **BALL HANDLING APPARATUS FOR BILLIARD AND POOL TABLES**
1 Claim, 2 Drawing Figs.

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[51] Int. Cl..... A63d 15/00

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121(D), (E), 11, 11(C), 10; 187/24—26

ABSTRACT: A billiard or pool table having a downwardly inclined runway leading from each pocket and discharging into an open container which is attached to a nut on a screw shaft, which when rotated causes the container to move from a lower position where it receives balls from the runways to an upper position adjacent the playing surface of the table from which balls can be easily replaced on the playing surface.



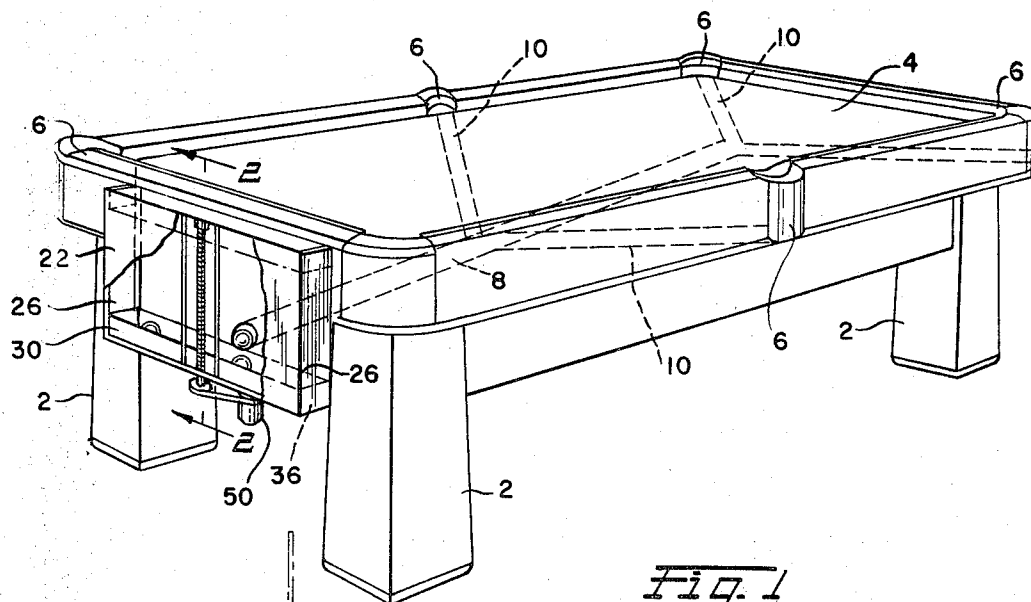


Fig. 1

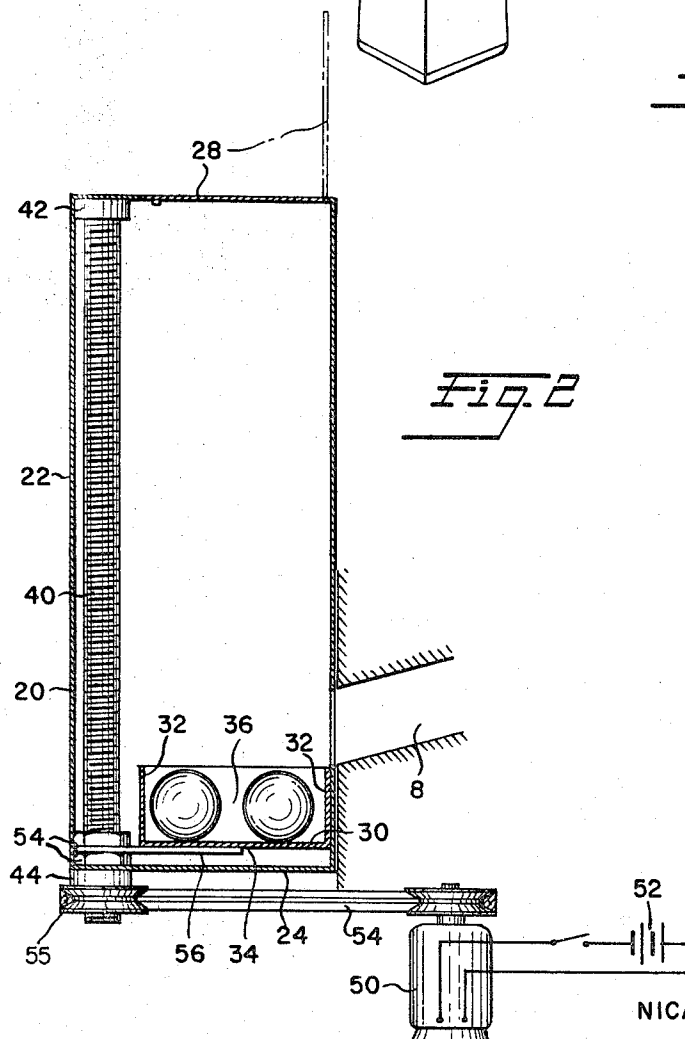


Fig. 2

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BALL HANDLING APPARATUS FOR BILLIARD AND POOL TABLES

DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates broadly to the games of billiards, pool and the like and, more particularly, to apparatus for use in playing these games. As is well known, the conventional and regulation billiard or pool table has six pockets and various games are played on it with different numbers of balls. When a game is completed all of the balls are in the pockets and must be gathered manually and replaced on the table in order to begin a new game. This not only requires considerable effort and time, but in the course of the game more balls may accumulate in a pocket than can be accommodated and, in such a case, balls must be removed from the overcrowded pocket in order to continue the game.

It is very desirable that some means be provided for immediately removing balls which fall into a pocket and, in addition, it is also desirable that some means be provided for collecting the balls which fall in the pockets and accumulating these at a central location. It has accordingly been a principal object of the invention to provide means which will accomplish these very desirable results and which, in addition, will move the balls from the place at which they accumulate to the level of the surface of the table so that they may be easily placed in starting position thereon.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a billiard or pool table including the means provided by the invention for accumulating balls and moving them to a position adjacent the surface of the table, and

FIG. 2 is a sectional view taken on line 2-2 of FIG. 1.

In FIG. 1 of the drawings there is shown a billiard table having the legs 2, the playing surface 4 and the pockets 6. Instead of the conventional leather or fabric bottom which usually closes the lower end of each pocket the table according to the invention is provided with a downwardly inclined central or main runway 8 which is positioned within or below the body of the table and extends longitudinally thereof and is supported above the floor, and a plurality of downwardly inclined subsidiary runways 10, each of which extends to the main runway 8 from the bottom of one of the pockets. It will be seen that each ball falls into a pocket 6 will immediately roll downwardly along the inclined runways 10 and 8 to the lower end of the main runway.

Means are provided by the invention for accumulating the balls at and adjacent the lower end of the main runway 8, and such means are particularly disclosed in FIG. 2 and comprise a framework 20 which is preferably in the form of a rectangular parallelepiped having the front wall 22, the bottom wall 24, the end walls 26 and an open top which is closed by a pivoted cover 28. This boxlike structure is attached to the end of the table adjacent the outer, lower end of the main runway 8, the bottom wall 24 being disposed below such outer end.

Within the box 20 there is mounted for vertical movement a channel-shaped, elongated receptacle 30 which extends within the box 20 transversely of the end of the table. This

receptacle has sidewalls 32, a bottom 34, end walls 36 and an open top and is preferably slightly more than twice as wide as two billiard balls, as most clearly shown in FIG. 2. Within the boxlike frame 20 there is journaled a vertical shaft 40 which is threaded throughout its length and is supported within the box 20 by an upper bearing 42 and a lower bearing 44. A motor 50 which may be AC or DC and is energized by a source of electrical energy 52 is provided and is connected by a belt 54 to a pulley 55 on the lower end of shaft 40 and is operable when energized to rotate the shaft 40. Within the box 20 the shaft 40 is provided at its lower end with spaced nuts 54 which are threaded to the lower end of the shaft and which, between them, carry a steel strip 56 which is welded or otherwise attached to the lower surface of the ball receptacle 30.

OPERATION

In the use and operation of the billiard table provided by the invention the balls are placed in their starting position on the playing surface of the table, and as the game proceeds they fall in succession into the pockets 6. Each ball which falls into a pocket rolls down the subsidiary runway 10 leading from the pocket to the main runway 8, and from runway 8 falls into the receptacle 30. When all of the balls have been played they will be accumulated within the receptacle 30 and at this time the motor 50 is operated to rotate the shaft 40, causing the receptacle to be raised to the top of the box 20. When it arrives at this position the cover 28 may be opened, exposing the balls at the level of the playing surface. In this position they may easily be removed from the receptacle 30 to the playing surface and placed in position to permit another game to be started. The motor is again operated, but in a reverse direction, in order to lower the ball receptacle 30 to its position below the outlet of the main runway 8 where it again receives the balls.

I claim:

1. Ball handling apparatus for a table for billiards, pool and like games having a playing surface surrounded by a peripheral edge part having pockets therein, comprising:

- a. a plurality of runways beneath the table, each of which is open at its one end to one of the pockets to receive balls therefrom, and is inclined downwardly from that end to a lower end;
- b. all of said runways terminating at their lower ends at a common discharge point which is below the playing surface of the table and below the peripheral edge part of the playing surface;
- c. a ball receiving receptacle normally positioned below the common discharge point of said runways and below and outside the peripheral edge of the playing surface;
- d. means for raising the receptacle to a position outside and adjacent the peripheral edge of the playing surface; said means comprising:
 - e. a vertical threaded shaft having a lower end positioned adjacent the normal lower position of the receptacle;
 - f. a nut on the shaft connected to the receptacle;
 - g. a connection between the nut and the receptacle whereby the nut and receptacle move along the shaft on rotation thereof; and
 - h. means for rotating the shaft.