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[54] **BASEBALL PITCHER'S PRACTICE DEVICE**
2 Claims, 2 Drawing Figs.
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ABSTRACT: This invention relates to a device for simulating baseball pitching conditions and more particularly to a novel device constructed to represent true baseball pitching conditions by use of a three-dimensional batter in conjunction with an adjustable rectangular "strike zone."

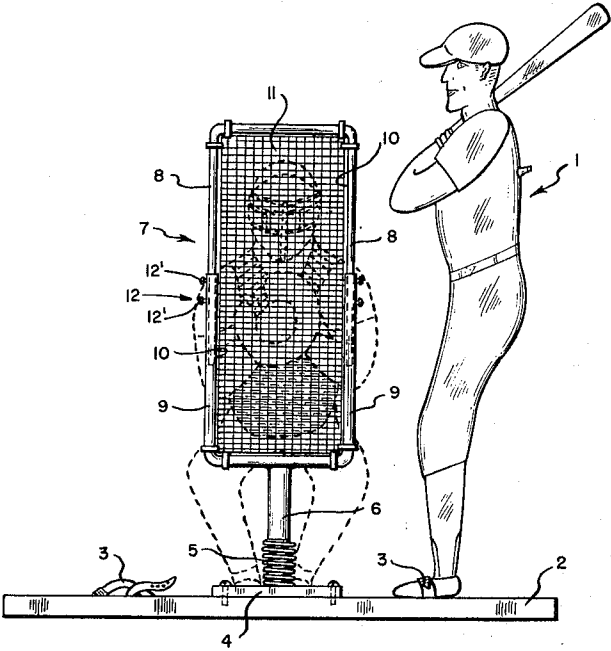
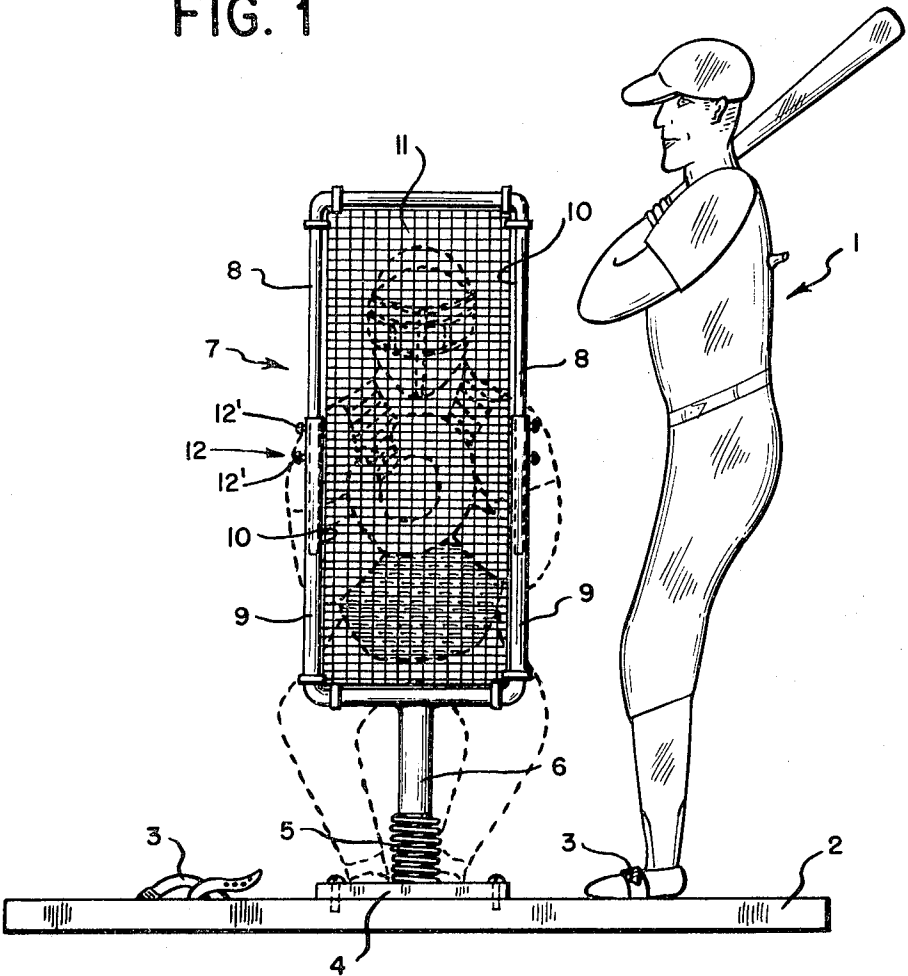


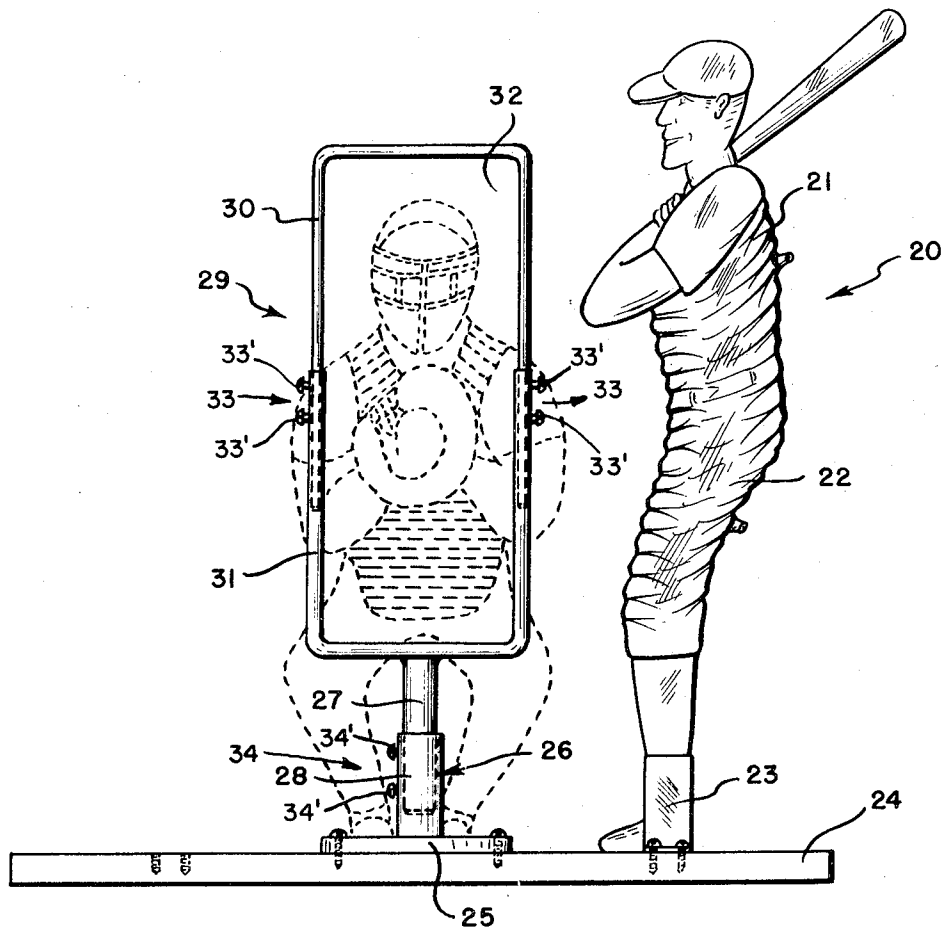
FIG. 1



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FIG. 2



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BASEBALL PITCHER'S PRACTICE DEVICE

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates to a baseball-pitching simulator, and more particularly to a machine representative of real playing conditions for teaching the art of pitching in a baseball game.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Baseball pitching devices sometimes are referred to as pitching targets are employed to develop and improve pitching control and accuracy. They are also employed as a family game.

Such pitching devices usually comprise a piece of flexible material mounted on and held erect by a wooden or tubular frame, the mounted material having holes therein. The device may have figures of players, such as catchers and batters, drawn on the flexible material in an attempt to depict playing conditions and the ball is to be thrown at the pictured scene.

These various pitching targets have been found to be unsatisfactory to teach the art of baseball pitching because they do not provide the lifelike simulation of conditions necessary to teach and improve the pitching ability of students of the game. Persons pitching baseballs at the existing devices encounter great difficulty attempting to determine whether or not a ball has struck that part of the flexible material through which there is no aperture but yet constitutes a part of the "strike zone" thereby leaving to conjecture and surmise what is or is not a strike. The game of baseball is an exacting one and in fact is often referred to as the "game of inches" so that in teaching the art of pitching, the teaching device must be one capable of exactitude and not one that causes confusion and speculation.

The art of throwing a baseball, however, is more than pitching strikes, one must also learn control. The fact that figures were drawn on the flexible material of some of the prior devices did not aid in the teaching control but rather detracted therefrom because, here to, it was left to speculation whether a batter was or was not hit with a pitch.

My invention overcomes these problems because, the "strike zone" is exactly delineated and adjustable, thereby providing a teaching device which demands the necessary exacting standards in that immediate and accurate information is obtained as to whether or not the pitch thrown was a strike. My invention also aids in teaching control because the inherent fear children and adults have of hitting the batter is placated, in that the guesswork of when a batter is hit is gone thereby providing the student with the opportunity to correct his faults and learn control free from the psychological distraction of the possibility of causing harm to a "live" batter.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

I have invented a device consisting of a life-size, three-dimensional figure in a batting position which is removably mounted on a base. The life-size, three-dimensional figure is mounted in a batting position in relation to an adjustable rectangular frame. The area within the inner perimeter of the adjustable rectangular frame exactly delineates a "strike zone." A ball passing through this area would denote a "strike." This pitching simulator achieves true playing conditions because a catcher can assume a catching position as he would in a real contest behind the rectangular frame, defining the "strike zone," provide a glove target for the ball to be thrown to and return each pitch, thereby providing a three-dimensional, true to life, playing simulation with exacting standards rather than the speculative two-dimensional one provided for by prior devices.

The advantages achieved by my invention are many. Much of the mastery of the art of pitching is psychological, my invention presents a condition affording perception, that is, the student is pitching to a "batter" and thereby obtaining a "feel" of the game. Accuracy and control are paramount in achieving the art of pitching and my invention provides exacting standards. A student would know whenever a batter is hit

and would know whenever the ball passes through the "strike zone" he has pitched a strike. The "strike zone" is fully adjustable to achieve the variety of "strike zones" due to the varying sizes of players, a pitcher may face during a game.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

FIG. 1 is a front elevation of one embodiment of the pitching simulator.

FIG. 2 is a front elevation of another embodiment of the pitching simulator.

It will be understood that the above drawings merely illustrate two preferred embodiments of the invention and that other embodiments are contemplated within the scope of the claims hereinafter set forth.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

One embodiment is depicted in FIG. 1, referring to FIG. 1, the pitching simulator comprises a three-dimensional manikin 1 having a relative degree of durability being composed of a synthetic material. The three-dimensional manikin 1 may be composed of vinyl plastic inflatable by pumping air into it, a metal tubular frame with a plastic covering, plastic, wood, polyurethane foam, hard rubber or metal. The manikin 1 is removably mounted on base 2, the base 2 may be composed of wood, metal, plastic, polyurethane foam, or be of a metal tubular construction. The manikin 1 is attached to the base 2 by means of a strap 3, the strap 3 being connected to the base 2. The strap 3 may be leather, heavy canvas, plastic or any other flexible material sufficient to hold said manikin 1 erect and in a "batting position." There are two straps 3, which may also be a series of straps, connected to the base on either side of the "homeplate" 4 to afford the simulation of a right- or left-handed batter, the straps 3 are located in the "batter's box" (not shown in drawing). The "batter's box" would be drawn onto the base 2 on either side of the "homeplate" 4 designating that area in which a batter is to stand while batting. The "homeplate" 4 and "batter's box" having the dimensions conforming to the major league's baseball regulations and the "homeplate" 4 being either drawn on the base 2 attached thereto and composed of wood, plastic, metal, hard rubber or polyurethane foam. Connected to and detachable from the "homeplate" 4 is a spring 5 which is adapted to accept leg 6 of the adjustable rectangular frame 7 to hold the frame 7 in a parallel relationship to the manikin 1. The spring 5 affords resiliency to the leg 6 and rectangular frame 7 so that if either the leg 6 of any part of the rectangular frame 7 is struck by a pitched baseball, the spring 5 will absorb the resultant shock. The spring 5 may be eliminated from the device and instead a bore would be provided through the center of "homeplate" 4 said bore adapted to accept the leg 6 of said rectangular frame 7. The rectangular frame 7 is in two sections, an upper section 8 and a lower section 9, each consisting of a horizontal end member and two vertical side members. Each of the side members of the upper section is connected to a side member of the lower section by a telescoping means and affording a rectangular shape, the inner area of said frame 7 exactly delineating the "strike zone" 10. The telescoping means 12 is adjusted by loosening the adjustment screws 12' adjusting the "strike zone" to the desired position and tightening said adjustment screws 12'. Said rectangular frame 7 may be composed of tubular metal, wood, tubular plastic, solid plastic, hard rubber or polyurethane foam. Said rectangular frame 7 may also be provided with a detachable net 11 or canvas bag to catch and retain any balls thrown through the "strike zone" 10.

Another embodiment is depicted in FIG. 2, referring to FIG. 2, the pitching simulator comprises an adjustable three-dimensional manikin composed of vinyl plastic having two separate compartments on upper 21 and a lower 22 which are inflatable by pumping air into them so that the distance between the manikin's 20 shoulders and knees may be varied by varying the amount of air pumped into the compartments.

The manikin 20 may be composed of a metal tubular frame with a plastic covering with telescoping means on the tubular frame of plastic, wood, polyurethane foam, hard rubber or metal with insertable parts to vary its height. The manikin 20 is attached to a lever spring 23 which spring is removably connected to the base 24. The lever spring may be connected to the base on either side of "homeplate" 25 to afford the simulation of a right- or left-handed batter. Connected to and detachable from "homeplate" 25 is a leg 26 having an upper 27 and lower 28 portion connected with a telescoping means 33 so as to vary the height of the rectangular frame 28 and to hold the frame 28 in a parallel relationship to the adjustable manikin 20. The telescoping means 33 is adjusted by loosening the adjustment screws 33', adjusting said telescoping means 33 to the desired position and then tightening said adjustment screws 33'. The rectangular frame 28 is in two sections, an upper section 29 and a lower section 30, each consisting of a horizontal end member and two vertical side members. Each of the side members of the upper section is connected to a side member of the lower section by a telescoping means 34 and affording a rectangular shape, the inner area of said frame 28 exactly delineating the "strike zone" 31. The telescoping means 34 is adjusted by loosening the adjustment screws 34', adjusting said telescoping means 34 to the desired position and then tightening said adjustment screws 34'.

It is to be noted that this device is to be completely disassembled to afford easy storage.

It is also to be noted that this device can be used utilizing one or more of its parts, that is, with or without the manikin, with or without the strike zone, or with or without the manikin and strike zone.

I claim:

1. An adjustable baseball-pitching simulator comprising:
 - a. a base;
 - b. a three-dimensional, life-size manikin being composed of synthetic material and removably mounted on said base, said manikin also being provided with a means for varying its height; and
 - c. a rectangular frame having side and end members and a leg member extending from one of said end members, the inner area of said frame defining a "strike zone," said leg member being removably mounted on said base at a location which positions the frame in substantially "strike zone" relation to said manikin and the side members of said frame being constructed and arranged such that their lengths may be adjusted to vary the area of the "strike zone" defined by said frame.
2. An adjustable baseball-pitching simulator comprising:
 - a. a base;
 - b. a three-dimensional, life-size manikin being composed of synthetic material and removably mounted on said base, said manikin also being provided with a means for varying its height; and
 - c. a rectangular frame having side and end members and a leg extending from one of said end members, said leg being provided with a telescoping means, the inner area of said frame defining a "strike zone," said leg member being removably mounted on said base at a location which positions the frame in substantially "strike zone" relation to said manikin and the side members of said frame being constructed and arranged such that their lengths may be adjusted to vary the area of the "strike zone" defined by said frame.

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