United States Patent

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[54] SWINGABLE STRIKE ZONE BASEBALL DEVICE

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[52] **U.S. Cl.** .....**273/26 A**
[51] **Int. Cl.** **A63b 69/40**
[58] **Field of Search** 273/25, 26

[56] **References Cited**

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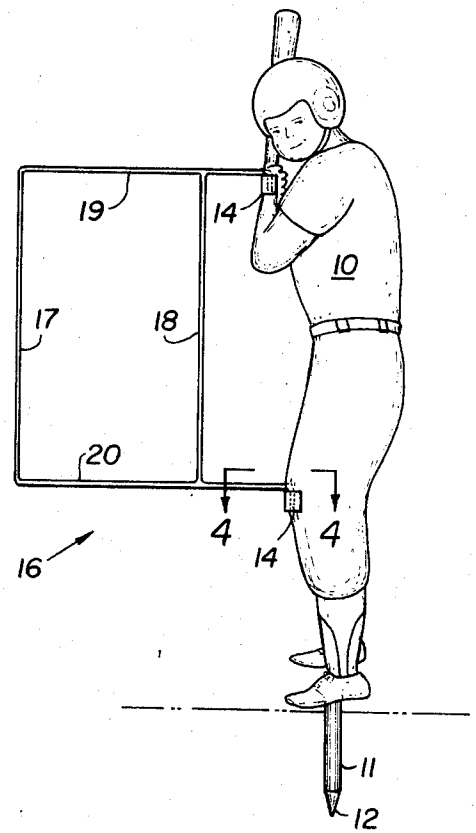
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Assistant Examiner—Theatrice Brown

[57] **ABSTRACT**

This invention relates to a practice device for baseball pitchers wherein the strike-zone is defined by a gate swingably mounted to an upright frame. The gate is provided with a pair of spaced-apart hooks adapted to mate with a pair of apertures or wells disposed in said frame. The frame is constructed in the configuration of a batter and may be of planar solid construction or of inflatable plastic material.

4 Claims, 6 Drawing Figures



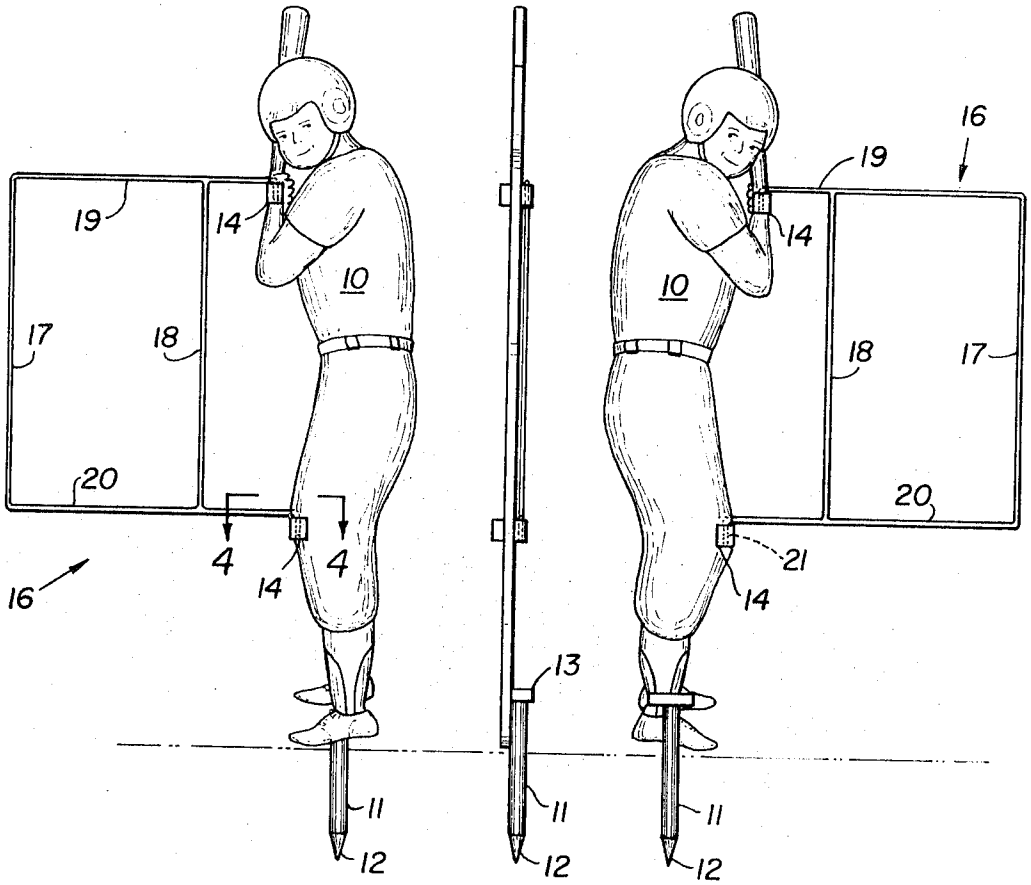


FIG. 1 FIG. 2 FIG. 3

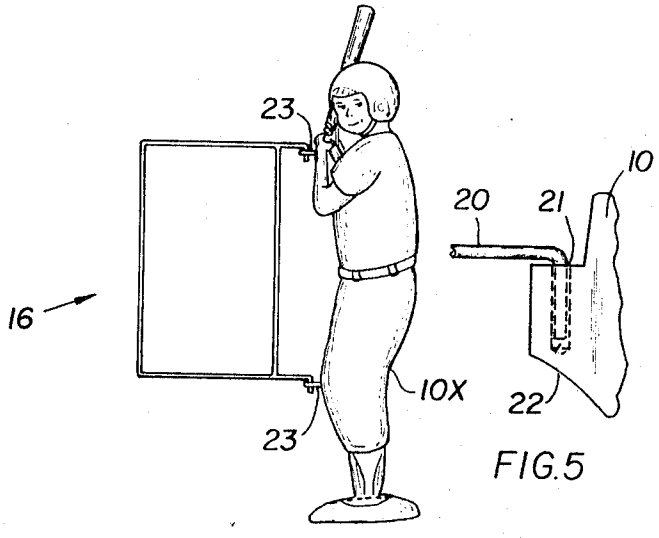


FIG. 6

FIG. 5

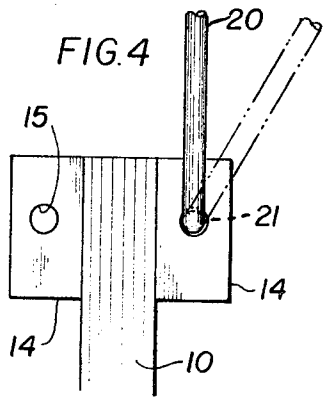


FIG. 4

SWINGABLE STRIKE ZONE BASEBALL DEVICE

It is an object of this invention to provide a practice device for baseball pitchers of simple yet effective and inexpensive manufacture.

It is another object to provide a baseball practice device having a swingable gate so that if inadvertently hit by a thrown ball, it will yield swingably with the force of the ball.

These and other objects of this invention will become apparent upon reading the following disclosure of a plurality of illustrative embodiments shown in the accompanying drawing in which

FIG. 1 is a front view of the device disposed in the ground and presenting the configuration of a right-handed batter and showing one manner of mounting the swingable strike-zone gate to the frame disposed in the ground by means of a peg,

FIG. 2 is an end view of the device,

FIG. 3 is a front view of the device of FIG. 1 rotated 180° to present the configuration of a left-handed batter,

FIG. 4 is a section view taken on line 4—4 of FIG. 1 and showing one manner of mounting the swingable gate to the fixed frame using separated blocks secured to each respective side of the frame,

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary view of a modified frame and showing the manner of securing the swingable gate directly to the laminated wood frame by means of integral spaced-apart protuberances disposed on the gate facing edge of the frame and

FIG. 6 is a front view of an inflatable plastic embodiment having a pair of hooks receiving lugs integrally molded in the plastic body.

Turning to the drawing, the frame 10 in the configuration of a life size batter is preferably of suitably thick laminated wood or integral plastic construction. Where the frame is of plain wood or plywood construction, the peg 11 is preferably round and pointed at its lower end 12 for easy insertion into the ground. The peg may be glued, screwed or nailed to the frame 10. Preferably a plate 13 is secured as by adhesive or otherwise to the top of the peg to receive the hammer blows necessary to force the peg into the ground.

As shown in FIG. 4, a pair of blocks 14 are secured by adhesive or screws to the frame 10. Where the frame is of plastic construction the blocks are integrally molded in the frame. The blocks 14 are provided with apertures or wells 15 for receiving hooks of the swingable gate. The blocks 14 are mounted to adjacent opposite sides of the frame 10 so that the gate may be selective for a right-handed or a left-handed batter, and thus to be farthest away from the pitcher and thereby permit a gate struck by a ball to harmlessly swing away from the pitcher.

The gate 16 is preferably of integral rod construction. It may be made of metal rods welded together or it may be of integral plastic construction. The rectangular strike-zone of the gate 16 is defined by a pair of vertical suitably spaced-apart rods 17 and 18 integral with a pair of suitably spaced-apart horizontally disposed rods 19 and 20. The rods 19 and 20 extend beyond inner rod 18 and are each provided with integral depending hooks 21. The hooks 21 are disposed in respective apertures or wells in the blocks 14 located farthest away from the pitcher.

FIG. 5 is a fragmentary view of a modified frame 10, a frame having a pair of protuberances 22 on the gate 16 facing edge, in place of the pairs of blocks 14. The protuberances are each provided with an aperture or well to receive a respective hook of the gate.

Moreover, the device of this invention may be modified to provide an inflatable frame 10X made of rubber or plastic material in the configuration of a life-size batter. The frame 10X is preferably provided with a pair of suitably spaced-apart molded integral apertured studs 23. However, the studs may be of separate construction and secured as by adhesive to the body. The foot of frame 10X is provided with a sac into which sand or other particulate material may be placed so that the frame 10X will stand upright on the ground.

In the operation of the device, the baseball is thrown through the strike zone formed by rods 17,18,19 and 20. If the ball should hit any rod of the gate 16, the force of the ball will swing the gate away from the pitcher.

If desired, the device may be provided with a coil or flat spring to return a struck gate into planar relationship to the frame.

I claim:

1. A practice pitching baseball device comprising a frame element having an outline in the shape of a baseball player holding a bat and having means thereon for maintaining said frame element vertically to the ground; a pair of spaced-apart apertured means on one edge of said frame, each adapted to receive a depending hook in the respective aperture thereof; and an integral gate of rod construction having a pair of vertically disposed spaced-apart rods integral with a pair of horizontally disposed spaced-apart rods defining a rectangular strike-zone, each of said horizontally disposed rods extending beyond said strike-zone and having a depending hook portion for insertion into said apertures of said apertured means for removable and swingable mounting said gate to said frame.

2. The device of claim 1 wherein the frame is of planar construction and wherein said pair of apertured means each consist of a pair of apertured blocks secured in adjacent opposed relationship to each vertical side of said frame, whereby said frame is adapted for right- or for left-handed batters, said hooks being selectively placed in a block so as to permit a struck gate to swing away from a ball hitting the gate.

3. The device of claim 1 wherein the pair of spaced-apart apertured means consist of a pair of apertured protuberances integral with the planar edge of said frame facing said gate.

4. The device of claim 1 wherein the frame is of inflatable plastic construction and wherein said apertured means consist of a pair of plastic studs secured to said frame.

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