Feb. 26, 1935. J. DE HART 1,992,475

FOOTBALL STRATEGY AND GAME APPARATUS

Filed Dec. 29, 1933 2 Sheets-Sheet 1

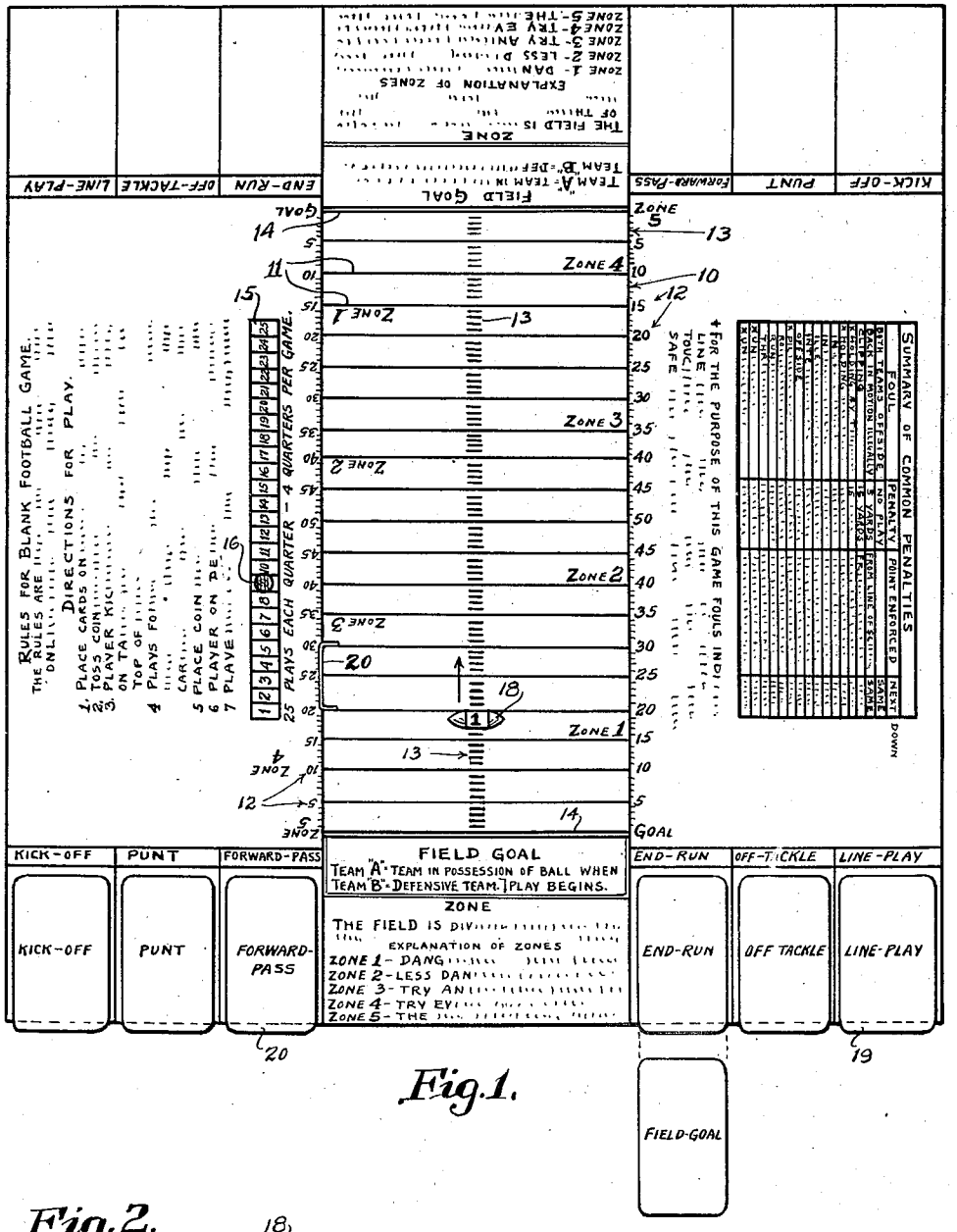
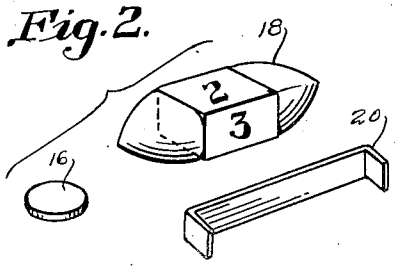


Fig. 1.

Fig. 2.



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Filed Dec. 29, 1933 2 Sheets-Sheet 2

Fig. 3.

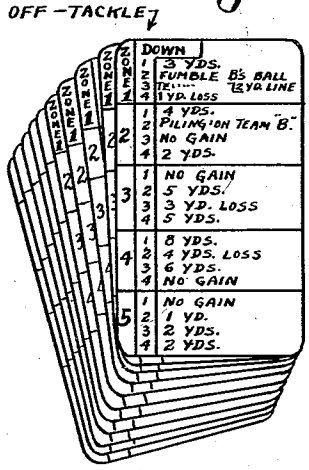


Fig. 4.

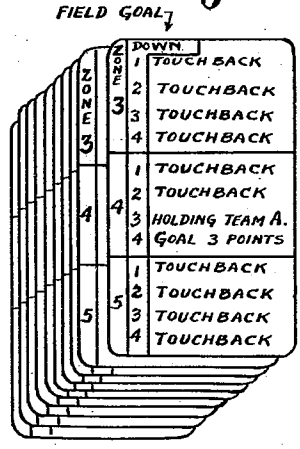


Fig. 5.

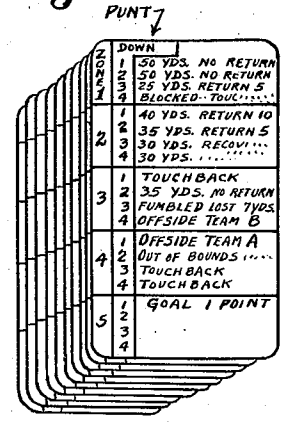


Fig. 6.

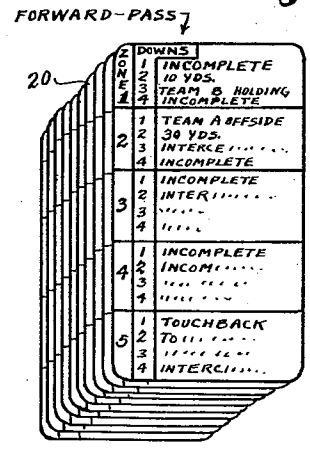


Fig. 7.

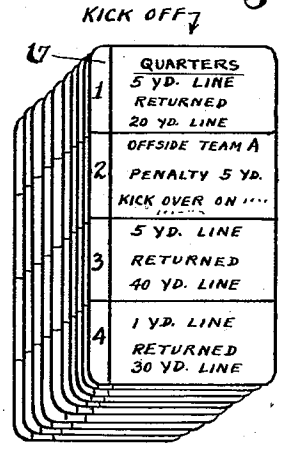


Fig. 8.

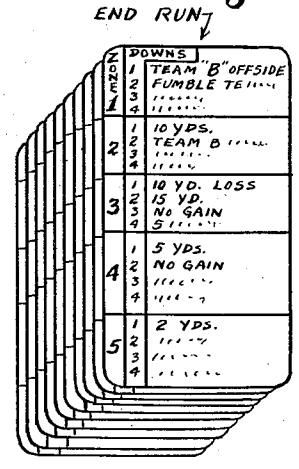
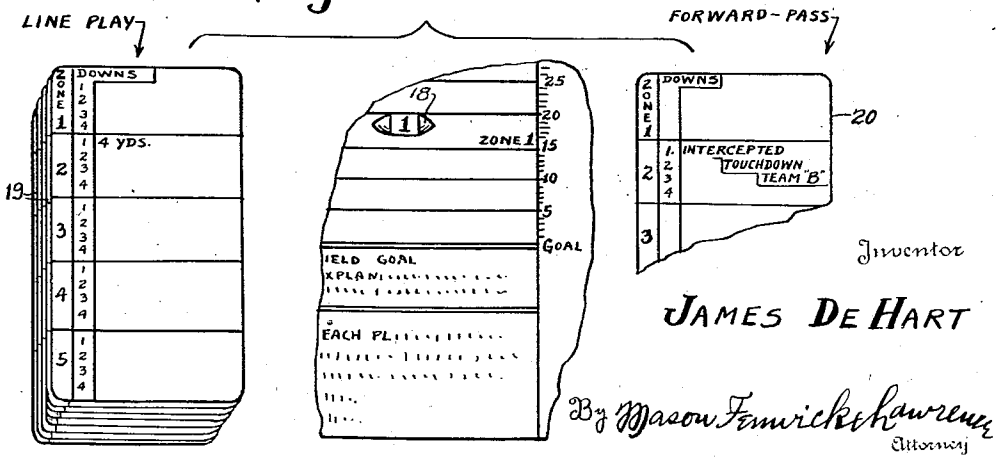


Fig. 9.



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FOOTBALL STRATEGY AND GAME APPARATUS

James De Hart, Winston-Salem, N. C.

Application December 29, 1933, Serial No. 704,545

3 Claims. (Cl. 273—94)

This invention relates to improved game apparatus and method of playing the same in simulation of the game of football.

My apparatus and method of playing is more than merely a game, as it is designed from a technical standpoint to teach the value of certain plays in regard to the position of the ball on the field of play, the down and distance to be gained. A number of football games have been devised which involve a football field, a pack of cards and some chance device in the nature of dice, a spinner, or cards played by the defense team to counteract the offense.

In my game, I have divided the field off into zones, the zones constituting territory between the goal and 20 yard line, the 20 and 40 yard line, the 40 and defense 35 yard line, defense 35 and 10 yard line, defense 10 and goal line. The success of the play selected by the offensive quarterback or player will be largely determined by the zone in which the ball rests and the down. The offensive quarterback, knowing the position of the ball and down, will carefully survey the situation and select a play which, in his opinion, will be most successful under the conditions of zones and down.

On the opposite side of the card thus selected, I have indicated the result of the play based on years of experience and a careful study of the probable success of the play selected under the conditions.

Interposed between the probable yardage gained or lost on the assumption that the play is properly executed, I have placed the results of improper execution, such as fumbles or other mechanical faults based on the type of play selected. I feel that under an arrangement of this sort, players can quickly be instructed through the results of their selections of mistakes made, and that such a game will be used as equipment for football squads, as well as a game which can be utilized in the home to not only give enjoyment to the players, but to instruct the public generally on the finer points of the game.

At the present time, persons attending a football game are prone to criticise the quarterback for selecting a particular play, especially after such a play has been unsuccessful. Heated debates are had as to what should be done under the circumstances. My game will give football followers an opportunity to place themselves in the position of the quarterback and make decisions with resulting success or failure, and at the same time, teach the fundamentals of proper generalship without the element of chance being the sole factor.

The object of my invention is to provide apparatus for playing the game of football so that plays may be selected in accordance with the position of the ball on the field and the down with resulting failure or success that will educate the player to the proper type of play to be used under the conditions, and at the same time, bring to his attention some of the hazards of selecting the plays.

Another object is to afford the player the opportunity of selecting the play without depending on chance, thus cultivating the judgment of the player.

Still another object is to reward the quarterback or player for the proper selection of plays under the conditions of down and position of the ball and to eliminate the mere chance element of success.

Another object is to provide a game which will instruct through penalty or success the proper play under game conditions.

Other objects will be disclosed in the specification and claims forming a part of this application.

In the drawings:

Figure 1 is a plan of a game board showing a miniature football field in regard to the playing apparatus and certain rules in connection therewith;

Figure 2 is a perspective of a game piece with flattened sides in the shape of a football and a 10 yard marker;

Figure 3 is a perspective of a set of cards symbolic of an off-tackle play marked for zones and downs;

Figure 4 is a perspective showing a stack of cards utilized in connection with the field goal;

Figure 5 is a perspective of a stack of cards used in connection with a punt;

Figure 6 is a perspective of a stack of cards used in connection with a football;

Figure 7 is a stack of cards used in connection with a kick-off, this stack not showing the down since there would be no down in connection with this play;

Figure 8 is a perspective of a stack of cards used in connection with an end run; and

Figure 9 is illustrative of one play, fragmentary views being shown of the playing field and the forward pass card with a perspective of a line play stack of cards, that portion of the cards and field relating to the particular play illustrated being shown.

Referring to the drawings, in which similar parts are designated by like numerals:

Numeral 10 designates a playing field divided by cross lines 11 into five yard markers 12. Between each five yard marker are yard lines 13. At each end of the field 10 are double lines 14 indicating the goal line. The playing field 10 is divided into five zones, 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Zone 1 extends from the goal to the twenty yard line; zone 2, from the twenty to forty yard line; zone 3, from the forty to the opposite thirty-five yard line; zone 4, from the thirty-five to the ten yard

line; and zone 5 from the ten to the goal line.

On one side of the playing field 10 is a play strip 15 divided into twenty-five sections, numbered from 1 to 25. It has been found that an average of twenty-five plays will be actually run in a quarter. Therefore, this number of plays is selected to represent a quarter of a game; in other words, as soon as twenty-five plays have been made, regardless of which side makes them, the quarter will end on the twenty-fifth play. A marker 16 is placed on the strip 15 and advanced as each play is made. To the left of the strip 15 are placed directions. At both ends of the board are formed card divisions adapted to receive stacks of cards designated "kick-off", "punt", "forward pass", "end run", "off-tackle" and "line play". In these divisions, the stacks of cards are placed under the respective headings. It is also contemplated that on the board in these spaces the names of famous coaches may be printed with their pictures.

On the opposite side of the playing field is listed the most common infractions of the rules, with the resulting penalties so that a player, as soon as a foul is indicated on the card, may refer to this chart and ascertain the penalty.

As actually played, a coin will be flipped, as is customary before starting a football game, to determine which team is to kick-off and which to receive. The team electing to kick-off, places the kick-off cards in the kick-off section in front of him, after the cards have first been shuffled. The cards are placed face down so that the word "kick-off" on the back of the cards will be uppermost. A card is drawn from the bottom of the stack and turned over, face upward, on the table. The card, as shown in Figure 7, has in the left hand column 17 the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4, respectively, representing quarters, and opposite the numbers, the results of the kick-off. Using the card as illustrated in Figure 7, the quarter being the first, the ball is indicated as having been kicked to the five yard line and returned to the twenty yard line. The team in possession of the ball is referred to as "Team A" and the defensive team as "Team B". The ball is now on the twenty yard line of "Team A" and the flat sided football piece 18 is placed on the twenty yard line. The stacks of cards designated "punt", "forward pass", "end run", "off-tackle" and "line play" are now placed in the sections before the "Team A" player so that the designated plays are uppermost and "Team A" player has the privilege of selecting the type of play he desires.

It is to be noted that the ball being on the twenty yard line is in zone 2, and any play selected will be governed by this zone. For the sake of illustration, Figure 9 shows two possible plays—a line play card 19 having been selected which would be conservative under the conditions and shows a gain of four yards. On the other hand, a forward pass could have been selected at this point, which at this early stage of the game, would probably be extremely hazardous, and, as illustrated by card 20, would result in the ball being intercepted and a touch-down for "Team B". On the other hand, assuming that the player selected the line play, which resulted in a gain of four yards, the card would be placed on top of the stack, face down, and the football piece 18 advanced four yards. "Team A" player would then be called upon to select his next play. The ball is on the twenty-four yard line, second down.

It is to be noted that the piece 18 has the figures 1, 2, 3, and 4 appearing on its faces which correspond to the downs. A U-shaped marker 20, corresponding to the sticks used in a regular game of football, is placed so as to cover ten yards.

"Team A" player will then glance over the types of play afforded him, namely, punt, forward pass, end run, off-tackle, line play, or field goal, and select the one which in his judgment will be most successful at this stage of the game. Obviously, the field goal would be eliminated because of the position of the ball. In all probability, he would select a play with possibilities for gaining yards such as "end run" or "off-tackle" plays, with the hope of picking up enough yardage to make first down, as failure to do so would probably result in his electing to punt on the third down. At any rate, he would select the next play by removing the card from the bottom of the stack selected, turning it over on the board, face up, and look to the second zone for the result of his play. As previously stated, the probability of success has been worked out very carefully in accordance with the play selected, position of the ball, and down. After three plays, and he has failed to gain ten yards, he must either punt or risk a fourth play which would be extremely dangerous and unwise with the ball in his own territory, and if such a play were tried, would result in loss of the ball except in very rare instances.

The rules of the game will follow strictly those recognized in football at the present time and need not be set out at length in my application.

Upon being forced to punt, a punt card will be selected from the bottom of the punt stack, the card faced on the board and reference made to the zone and down for the result of the play. Figure 5 illustrates a punt card and shows that in zone 2, fourth down, a thirty yard punt was made, with the return of five yards. If the ball had been on the twenty-four yard line when kicked, the game piece 18 would have been moved down to the opponent's forty-six yard line, and, with the return of five yards, placed on the kicker's forty-nine yard line, first down, ten yards to go. The cards are now transferred to the player in possession of the ball who becomes the "A team", and the defensive player the "B team". It is possible, of course, to use two sets of cards so that the transfer need not be made, but my invention, as illustrated, utilizes a single set. The ball resting on the "B" or defensive team's forty-nine yard line, the "A" player can, of course, resort to more daring plays than was good judgment for the former offensive team to use on its own twenty-four yard line. He, for instance, might select a forward pass on the first play, in which case, using the card as shown in Figure 6 as an illustration, we find the ball in the third zone and incompleted.

"A team" now has ten yards to make in three downs, the game piece remaining in its former position on the forty-nine yard line of "B team". "Team A" is now confronted with the problem of making ten yards in three plays instead of four, and naturally, it is desired to select a play that will result in sufficient yardage to make up for the incomplete pass. An end run is selected, and, using the card as illustrated in Figure 8, and turning to zone 3, second down, we find that fifteen yards is gained. The game piece 18 is then moved up to the thirty-four yard line of "B team", the U-shaped marker 20 corresponding to the sticks being moved accordingly.

The "A" player again has the selection of plays and will continue until he either loses the ball

upon failure to make ten yards in four consecutive plays, or through punting, intercepted pass, fumble, or some other mishap which commonly occurs in the game of football and which is provided for in the cards. The game will continue under the circumstances as outlined until a total of twenty-five plays have been made, which constitutes a quarter, any scores having been made during the period being entered up to the credit of the team making the same.

The position of the ball will be changed at the end of the quarter, the same as in a regular football game, the players exchanging sides. At the end of the half, the team that lost the toss at the start of the game has the choice of receiving or kicking off, and the ball is put in play as previously described by use of the kick-off cards.

In case of a touch-down, the team may attempt to convert the extra point by either rushing, passing, or attempting field goal, the game piece 18 having previously been moved out to the second yard line as the rules provide at the present time.

It is obvious that other stacks of cards may be supplied than those illustrated, such as trick plays, flat pass, etc., and may be elaborated into various types of formations, such as double-wingback, single-wingback, punt, short punt, and spread formation.

With the beginning of each quarter, the marker 16 is placed on the number 1 of the strip 15 and advanced until twenty-five plays have been completed. After one hundred plays have been made, the game is over, and the team having made the most points is the winner. The scoring is in exact accord with the present rules of football.

From the description of my game, it is apparent that the strategy of football can carefully be studied and that a premium is given for the proper selection of the play in accordance with the down and the position of the ball on the field of play, and penalties given for failure to select the proper play; that the judgment of the player largely enters into the success or failure of the game as contrasted with mere chance which is the case in most of the games of this sort. My game will afford coaches an opportunity to discuss and debate with members of their squad the proper plays at different times in a realistic manner, and at the same time, the members of the squads can play the game and have brought "home" to them mistakes in judgment. My game has an equal appeal to the general public in that it can be played in the home, and inexperienced players have their judgment and knowledge of the game improved. Experienced players will gain equal enjoyment in putting their judgment against that of the law of averages, as illustrated by the cards.

Numerous variations may doubtless be devised by persons skilled in the art without departing from the principles of my game. I, therefore, desire no limitations to be imposed on my game, except such as are indicated in the appended claims.

What I claim is:

1. A game of football comprising a playing field, in accordance with the rules of football, said field being divided into zones, a plurality of stacks of cards, each card bearing on its back the type of play and having its face divided into zones corresponding to the zones of the field, each zone providing for four downs and opposite each down the result of the play selected based on the position of the ball as to zone and down on the playing field.

2. A game of football comprising a playing field in accordance with the rules of football, said field being divided into zones, a plurality of stacks of cards, each card bearing on its back the type of play it represents, one of said stacks designating the kick-off, the face of the kick-off cards bearing reference to the quarters and the result of the kick-off for that quarter, the other stacks referring to the type of play selected, and having their faces divided into zones corresponding to the zones of the field, each zone providing for four downs, and opposite each down the result of the play selected based on the position of the ball as to zone and down on the playing field.

3. A game of football comprising a playing field in accordance with the rules of football, said field being divided into zones, a plurality of stacks of cards, each card bearing on its back the type of play it represents, one of said stacks designating a kick-off, the face of the kick-off cards bearing reference to quarters and the result of the kick-off for that quarter, another stack representing the field goal, the face of the cards being limited to zones 3, 4, and 5, the zones corresponding to the zones on the playing field, each zone providing for four downs, the success of the play being indicated opposite each down, the remaining stacks of cards having their faces divided into zones corresponding to the zones of the field, each zone providing for four downs, and opposite each down the result of the play selected based on the position of the ball as to zone and down on the playing field.

JAMES DE HART.