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[54] **GOLF TEE OF SYNTHETIC FOAM**
9 Claims, 6 Drawing Figs.

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[50] Field of Search..... 273/33.4X,
209, (Polyurethane Digest); XD34.5/10.1

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ABSTRACT: A golf ball supporting tee formed from a synthetic foam disk adapted to lie on the surface of the ground, having an upper surface and a lower surface, the upper surface having a golf ball supporting seat and the lower surface having a plurality of downwardly extending projections. The tee is provided with a centrally located aperture extending from the ball supporting seat, at the upper surface to the lower surface. The disk may be cut along a chord to form a cordwise edge whereby a golf ball placed on the tee has a side portion overhanging the edge of the tee.

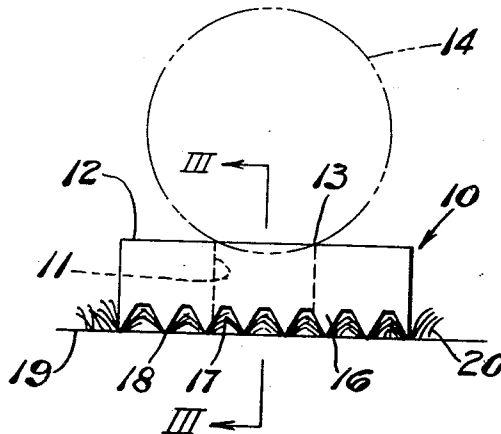


FIG. 1.

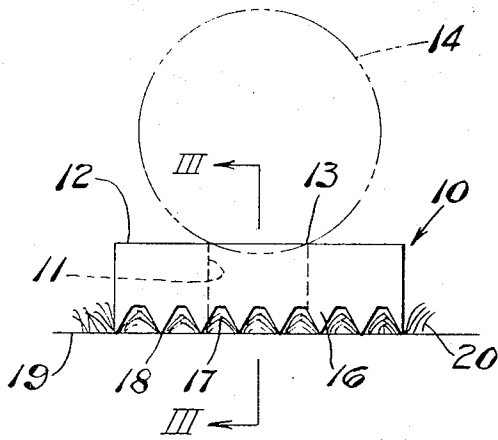


FIG. 3.

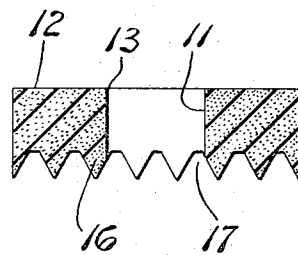


FIG. 2.

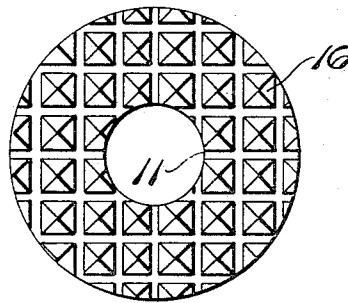


FIG. 4.

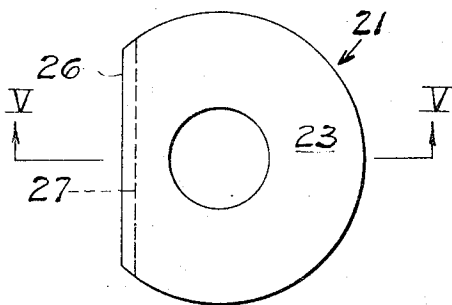


FIG. 6.

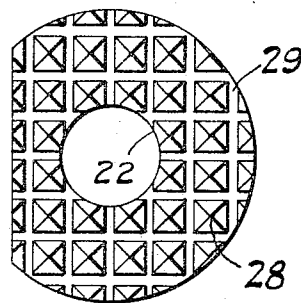
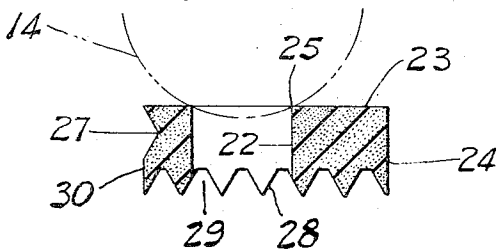


FIG. 5.



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GOLF TEE OF SYNTHETIC FOAM

This invention relates to a golf tee and particularly to an inexpensive and improved tee construction.

Conventional wooden golf tees, which are pressed into the ground leaving the heads thereof exposed to provide golf ball supporting surfaces, are inadequate in many respects, particularly in their lack of durability and their tendency to ravel in the direction of the ball after being struck by a clubhead. The ball supporting heads are easily broken off and the supporting surfaces thereof often chip under clubhead impact thereby necessitating discard of the tees. Tees, of this general type, are easily lost when struck by a clubhead and propelled a distance in front of the golfer. Moreover, they are often impacted in the ground either deliberately or accidentally, thereby cluttering the fairway and increasing the difficulty of properly maintaining the golf course. In tees of this type, the height of the ball supporting surface above the ground is a variable for each tee setup, and the stems thereof have sharp points which can scratch, puncture or otherwise wound golfers when handling the same.

Further, such commonly used tees require the golfer to stoop over and position the tee in the ground. This can be particularly difficult where only hard, dry ground is available.

Other tee constructions have been proposed. However, so far as I am aware they have not been adapted to any significant degree.

Accordingly, it is a primary object of the present invention to provide an improved golf tee which need not be pressed into the ground and which is virtually indestructible.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an improved golf tee which is extremely light in weight whereby the distance traveled by the tee after being struck by a golf club is minimized.

It is yet another object of the present invention to provide an improved, extremely lightweight golf tee adapted to lie in an upright position on the surface of the ground and constructed to obviate the tilting effect of grass or other ground surface irregularities.

It is a further object of the present invention to provide an improved golf tee which can be thrown or dropped into proper teeing position.

It is still another object of the present invention to provide an improved and inexpensive golf tee formed of a synthetic plastic foam material having sufficient strength to seat a ball in teed position thereon and shaped so that the clubhead will strike the golf ball prior to impact of the clubhead against the tee.

In one aspect thereof, a golf tee of the present invention is characterized by the provision of a pad having upper and lower surfaces with the upper surface having a golf ball supporting seat, the pad being formed of a synthetic foam material with the lower surface including a multiplicity of downwardly extending ground engaging projections defining a plurality of openings therebetween for accommodating upwardly extending ground surface irregularities.

Various other novel features of construction and advantages inherent in the golf tee construction of the present invention are pointed out in the following detailed description of two typical embodiments thereof considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawing depicting the same wherein like numerals represent like parts throughout the various views and wherein:

FIG. 1 is an elevational view of one form of a golf tee constructed in accordance with the present invention, the same being illustrated in teeing position on the ground and supporting a golf ball shown in phantom;

FIG. 2 is a bottom plan view of the golf tee illustrated in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a cross-sectional view thereof taken about on line III-III of FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a top plan view of another form of a golf tee constructed in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view thereof taken about on line V-V of FIG. 4, supporting a golf ball shown in phantom; and

FIG. 6 is a bottom plan view of the golf tee illustrated in FIG. 4.

Referring to the drawing, and particularly to FIGS. 1-3, there is shown one form of a golf tee constructed in accordance with the present invention comprising an annular pad or disc 10 having a central cylindrical opening 11 passing therethrough and a generally flat upper surface 12. The juncture between opening 11 and upper surface 12 provides an annular seat 13 for teeing a golf ball 14.

Disc 10 is preferably formed of a synthetic plastic foam material, such as polyurethane, although it may be formed of any suitable, lightweight spongy material. By forming the tee of the present invention of a synthetic foam or spongy material, which is light in weight, inexpensive and also inherently resilient, the present tee can resiliently flex under the impact of a clubhead to provide a virtually indestructible tee.

The present tee is adapted to lie directly on the ground with no anchorage thereto when in teeing position. To compensate for the tendency of such a lightweight tee to tilt upon engaging ground surface irregularities such as grass, small stones or the like, it is a particular feature of my invention that the underside of disc 10 is formed to provide a multiplicity of downwardly extending, ground engaging projections or fingers 16. In the illustrated form, the projections or fingers 16 are inverse pyramidally shaped and formed integrally with the disc by cutting truncated, inverse V-shaped grooves along the underside of disc 10 in both longitudinal and transverse directions. A multiplicity of groove openings or recesses 17 are thus provided along the underside of disc 10 between projections 16.

When disc 10 is placed in teeing position, the apexes 18 of projections 16 engage the ground, indicated at 19, and surface irregularities including grass, indicated at 20, will project upwardly into recesses 17 between projections 16. Pointed apexes 18 segregate the irregularities among adjacent individual recesses 17, and the sidewalls of projections 16 guide such irregularities into recesses 17 wherein the irregularities are compartmentalized and exert minimal, if any, upward force against the tee. Such surface irregularities are thereby accommodated in a manner substantially obviating the tendency of such irregularities to tilt tee 10.

In the form illustrated in FIGS. 4-6, there is shown a substantially annular pad or disc 21 having a central cylindrical opening 22 passing therethrough, a generally flat upper surface 23 and a peripheral edge 24. The juncture of opening 22 and upper surface 23 forms a golf ball teeing seat 25. As in the previous form, disc 21 is preferably formed of a synthetic foamed material such as polyurethane foam. However, in this form disc 21 is cut along a chord line 26 to provide a chordwise indentation in the form of a laterally, inwardly, extending V-shaped groove 27 along a chordwise side edge of disc 21. The lower surface of disc 21 is formed similarly to the previous form and includes inverse, pyramidally shaped projections or fingers 28 formed by cutting truncated, inverse V-shaped grooves along the underside of the disc in both longitudinal and transverse directions. A multiplicity of groove openings or recesses 29 are thus provided between projections 28 to accommodate ground surface irregularities as in the previous form.

Groove 27 is formed along chord line 26 so that a side portion of ball 14 overhangs the chord line 26. This, together with the inwardly V-shaped groove 27, permits a golf clubhead, not shown, having the usual inclined ball engaging surface to strike ball 14 prior to striking the tee 21 since the chord edge is inwardly offset from the side of ball 14 and since the lower portion of the clubhead will be received in the V-shaped groove 27. While the chord edge could be inwardly and upwardly inclined and thus remain in unobstructing position relative to the clubhead, the laterally, inwardly extending V-shaped groove 27 is preferred since greater support can be provided the golf ball 14 along a rear portion of its seat 25. The lower leg portion 30 of groove 27 and the tee material along chord 26 provide this additional support and prevent sagging or tilting of the ball seat under the weight of the ball.

While tees 10 and 21 are referred to as discs they are of substantial thickness to provide a conventional teeing height. Also, golf tees of my invention can be constructed of various thicknesses. A golfer can thus select the tee having a thickness or height corresponding to the height at which he normally tees his ball. The ease of forming the present tee together with the inexpensiveness of the material utilized facilitates the provision of a plurality of tees having various heights at minimal cost.

It is thus apparent that the objects of my invention are fully accomplished in the provision of a golf ball tee which is inexpensive, easily manufactured, light in weight and virtually indestructible. The present tee does not require embedding in the ground, and will provide a substantially horizontal seat for a golf ball, notwithstanding ground surface irregularities, because of the undersurface construction thereof. A tee constructed in accordance with the foregoing has a minimum distance of travel if struck by the clubhead due to its lightness in weight, its relatively large area and its porous material. Also, the tee is easily observed due to its relatively large area and may be readily colored to facilitate retrieval.

Having thus described and illustrated two presently preferred forms of my invention, it will be understood that such description and illustration is by way of example only and that such modifications and changes as may suggest themselves to those skilled in the art are intended to fall within the scope of the present invention which is intended to be limited only by the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A golf ball supporting tee adapted to lie on the surface of the ground comprising a pad having upper and lower surfaces which are substantially coextensive in plan view, said pad having an opening through said upper surface with the juncture of said opening and said upper surface forming a golf ball supporting seat, said pad being formed of a lightweight synthetic foam material with said lower surface including a multiplicity of downwardly extending ground engaging projections defining a plurality of openings therebetween for accommodating upwardly extending ground surface irregularities, said pad being of substantially uniform thickness throughout except for said projections, the portion of said upper surface which surrounds said seat being generally flat and the major portion of said lower surface being covered by said ground engaging projections.

2. A golf tee according to claim 1 wherein said projections have pointed lower extremities and inclined sidewalls for segregating and guiding ground surface irregularities into said openings.

3. A golf ball supporting tee adapted to lie on the surface of the ground comprising a pad having upper and lower surfaces which are substantially coextensive in plan view, said upper surface having a golf ball supporting seat, said pad being formed of a synthetic foam material with said lower surface including a multiplicity of downwardly extending ground engaging projections defining a plurality of openings therebetween for accommodating upwardly extending ground surface irregularities, said pad being of substantially uniform thickness throughout except for said projections, wherein the openings in said lower surface comprise a plurality of longitudinally extending grooves defining said projections therebetween, said

grooves extending through the side of said pad, and the portion of said upper surface which surrounds said ball seat being generally flat.

4. A golf tee according to claim 3 wherein the openings in said lower surface comprise a plurality of right angularly related grooves extending horizontally along said lower surface.

5. A golf tee according to claim 1 wherein said pad comprises an annular disc and said opening is concentric, said disc being cut along a chord thereof forming a chordwise edge whereby a golf ball teed on said seat has a side portion overhanging said edge.

6. A golf tee according to claim 1, wherein said material comprises foamed polyurethane.

7. A golf ball supporting tee adapted to lie on the surface of the ground comprising a pad having upper and lower surfaces which are substantially coextensive in plan view, said upper surface having a golf ball supporting seat, said pad being formed of a synthetic foam material with said lower surface including a multiplicity of downwardly extending ground engaging projections defining a plurality of openings therebetween for accommodating upwardly extending ground surface irregularities, said pad being of substantially uniform thickness throughout except for said projections, wherein said pad comprises a substantially annular disc having a central opening passing axially therethrough with the juncture of said opening and said upper surface forming said seat, and the portion of said upper surface which surrounds said ball seat being generally flat.

8. A golf ball supporting tee adapted to lie on the surface of the ground comprising a pad having upper and lower surfaces which are substantially coextensive in plan view, said upper surface having a golf ball supporting seat, said pad being formed of a synthetic foam material with said lower surface including a multiplicity of downwardly extending ground engaging projections defining a plurality of openings therebetween for accommodating upwardly extending ground surface irregularities, said pad being of substantially uniform thickness throughout except for said projections, wherein said pad has a lateral edge with a surface thereof inclined inwardly and downwardly, said edge being positioned relative to said seat whereby a golf ball teed on said seat overhangs said edge, and the portion of said upper surface which surrounds said ball seat being generally flat.

9. A golf ball supporting tee adapted to lie on the surface of the ground comprising a pad having upper and lower surfaces which are substantially coextensive in plan view, said upper surface having a golf ball supporting seat, said pad being formed of a synthetic foam material with said lower surface including a multiplicity of downwardly extending ground engaging projections defining a plurality of openings therebetween for accommodating upwardly extending ground surface irregularities, said pad being of substantially uniform thickness throughout except for said projections, wherein said pad comprises an annular disc having a concentric annular recess opening through said upper surface with the juncture of said recess, and said upper surface forming said seat, said disc being cut along a chord thereof forming a chordwise edge whereby a golf ball teed on said seat has a side portion overhanging said edge, together with a laterally, inwardly extending V-shaped groove in said chordwise edge.

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