

June 29, 1954

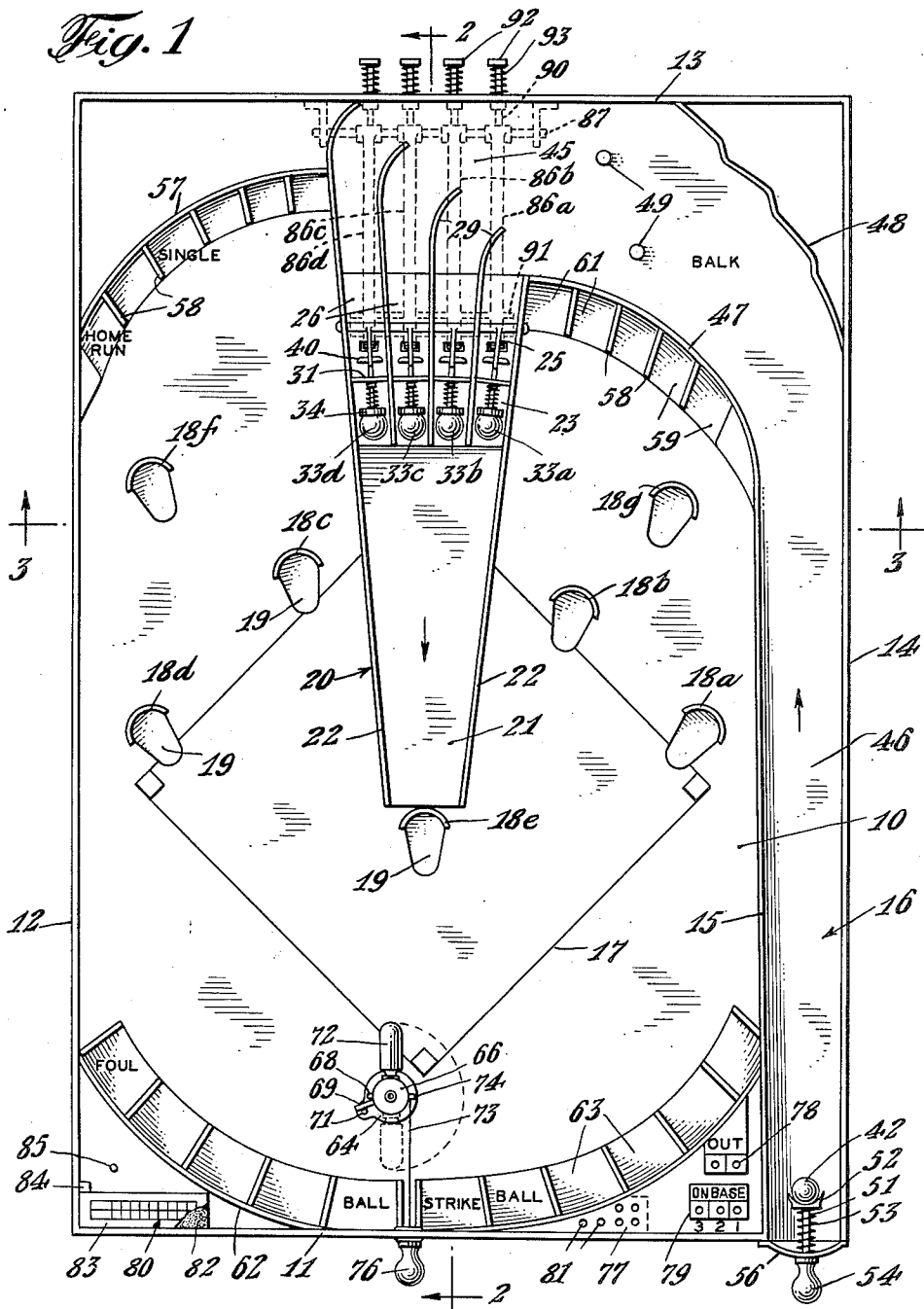
W. IRWIN
BASEBALL GAME

2,682,409

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3 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 1



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Fig. 2

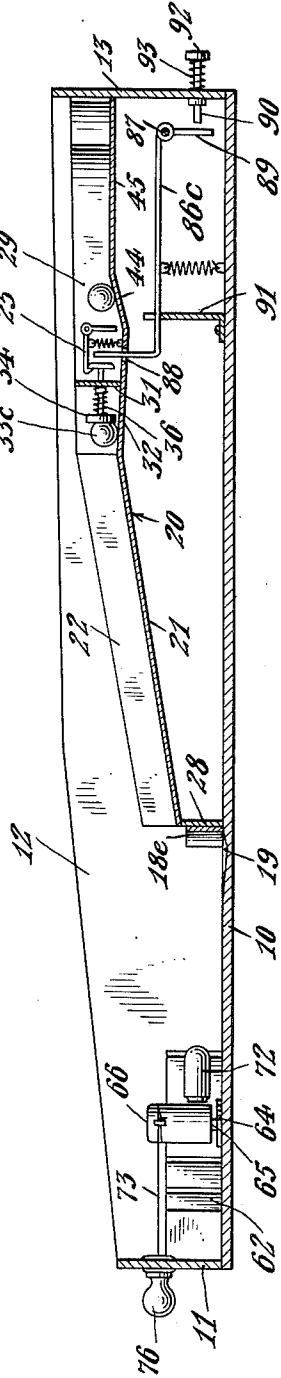
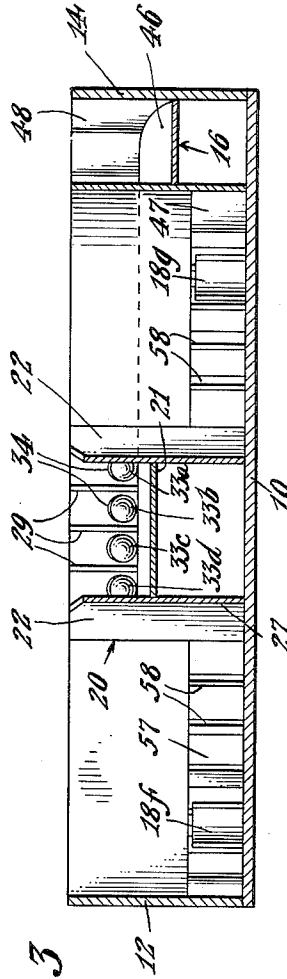


Fig. 3



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BASEBALL GAME

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4 Claims. (Cl. 273-89)

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This invention relates to a game apparatus and has particular reference to a baseball game of the type employing a pitched and batted ball, and to such a game adapted to be played by two players representing opposing teams with one player manipulating the pitching apparatus and the other player actuating the batting apparatus.

One of the objects of the invention is to provide a baseball game which will simulate in many aspects a regular baseball game.

Another object is to provide such a game in which the delivery or travel characteristics of the ball being pitched, such as its speed, angle of delivery, resiliency, balance and the like, may be varied.

Another object is to enable such variable delivery of the pitched ball to be determined in part fortuitously and in part by the skill of the pitching player.

Another object is to provide a game of the above-mentioned type in which the swinging speed of the bat may be variably controlled by the batting player.

Other objects and advantages will hereinafter appear.

In accordance with my invention I provide a simulated baseball game of simple construction which may be played indoors and which comprises a rectangular shaped board having indicated thereon the infield and outfield of a baseball field with a mechanical batter located at home plate, simulated players at the infield positions, and means extending centrally of the outfield into the pitcher's position for delivery of the balls to be batted. The pitching apparatus comprises a chute down which any one of a plurality of balls may be propelled for delivery to the batter's box. Each of said plurality of balls is normally retained at one end of the chute ready for delivery under a retractile spring, the tension or force of which may be different for each spring. The angle of delivery of each ball to the batter's position is also different, and each of the balls may be given other different characteristics such as weight, size, resiliency and balance whereby the characteristics of flight or delivery of each of the balls will be different.

Each of the pitched balls is arranged to be released by an individual latch mechanism actuated by a control ball the movement of which is partially fortuitous and partially dependent upon the skill of the player so that the particular ball released for any play is dependent both upon skill and chance and can not be determined by the batting player until the moment of release of the ball.

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The batting apparatus consists of a pivoted pedestal which supports the bat in definite relation to the path of travel of the pitched ball and is spring actuated through its forward swinging movement, the rate of swing being determined in part by the degree of back swing given to it by the batting player and the timing of the swing being determined by the instant of release of the back swing mechanism.

In addition to the simulated players in the various fielding positions, each of which may serve to entrap the batted ball, the margins of the board in both fair and foul territory are provided with pockets in which the ball may lodge, each of said pockets representing some characteristic of the batted ball, such as a home run, triple, double, single, caught ball, foul ball, strike, and the like.

The construction of the game board and the manner of playing the game will appear more fully with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is a plan view of a game board embodying the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a vertical sectional view on the line 2-2 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a transverse sectional view of the board on the line 3-3 of Fig. 1;

Fig. 4 is an enlarged plan view of the pitched ball retaining and releasing mechanism;

Fig. 5 is a sectional view of the pitched ball releasing mechanism, taken on the line 5-5 of Fig. 4;

Fig. 6 is an enlarged fragmentary plan view of the game board showing the control ball propelling mechanism;

Fig. 7 is front elevation of that portion of the board shown in section in Fig. 6;

Fig. 8 is a vertical sectional view of the bat actuating mechanism; and

Fig. 9 is a horizontal view of the batting mechanism taken partially in section on the line 9-9 of Fig. 8.

Referring first to Fig. 1, the game board comprises a rectangular base 10 having marginal walls 11, 12, 13 and 14, and a vertical partition wall 15 defining, with the wall 14, an alley 16 for guidance of the control ball, as will more fully appear.

Delineated on the base 10 is a baseball diamond 17 and disposed in relation thereto are a number of arcuate stops or ball traps 18a to 18g simulating fielders. In advance of each of the ball stops a depression 19 is formed in the base 10 to assist in retaining a ball within the confines of the stop.

The ball delivery or pitching apparatus is lo-

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cated centrally of the field, extending from the rear wall 13 to a point adjacent the pitcher's position, and comprises a chute 20 having a convergent base 21, vertical side flanges 22, a plurality of ball retaining recesses 23, ball propelling plungers 24, release latches 25 for the plungers 24, and control ball guide ways 26.

The chute 20 is spaced above the base 10 by vertical extensions 27 of the side flanges 22 and a front wall 28 and the base 21 of the chute is inclined downward from the ball retaining section thereof towards the pitcher box so that a ball delivered by any one of the propelling devices will roll down the incline, pass from the end of the chute over the pitcher's trap 18c and on past the batting mechanism, the angle of delivery depending upon the particular ball released.

The ball retaining recesses 23 are formed by extensions of the side flanges 22, vertical partitions 29, transverse partitions 31, and an extension 32 of the chute base, the latter being inclined slightly downward to the rear or to the right, as seen in Fig. 2, in order to retain the balls 33a to 33d in contact with the arcuate heads 34 of the propelling plungers 24. The plungers 24 each extend through a sleeve bearing or guide 35 (Figs. 4 and 5) carried by the partition plates 31 and are urged to the left, as seen in these figures, by the compression springs 36, to expel the ball from the recess, when the plunger is released. Normally the heads 34 are held retracted, with the springs 36 compressed, by the latch 25, all of the latches being carried on a single pivot pin 38 extending through the side flanges 22 and partitions 29. The plunger shafts 24 are hollow and internally threaded to receive the threaded shank 39 of a latch disk 40, the rear face of which is beveled to cooperate with the forward cam face 37 of the horizontal arm of the latch 25. The disk 40 is adjustable into the plunger 24 to vary the amount of compression of the spring 36, in the latched position of the plunger, and hence the propelling force on release. This permits the speed of delivery of the various balls 33a to 33d to be modified as desired and made different one from the other. The latch 25 is held in latching position by a light spring 41 and is adapted to be tripped by the control ball 42 engaging the depending portion 43 of the latch members.

For the purpose of tripping the latches 25, the partitions 29 are extended to form the control ball guideways 26 and the base of the chute is inclined sharply downwardly at 44 to insure a ball entering between any pair of guideways 26 having sufficient velocity to effect the tripping of the corresponding latch.

The chute base levels off at the extreme rear of the field to form a platform 45 which is open to the alley 16, the floor 46 of which slopes upwardly from the forward end of the game board to the level of the platform 45. The partition 15 of the alley 16 is curved around at 47 to form a guide for the control ball and serves also as the right field fence of the playing field. An undulating wall or cushion 48 is provided at the rear right corner of the platform 45 and the cushion 48, guide wall 47, and the walls of the alley are preferably covered with rubber or other resilient ball banking material.

If desired, a number of posts 49 or other barriers may be provided extending upwardly from the platform floor, to introduce a greater element of chance into the movement of the control ball, and the ends of the guides 29 may be

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curved as shown, or otherwise shaped to deflect the ball into, or oppose its movement into, one of the pitched ball releasing positions.

The control ball is propelled up the alley 16 at any desired angle by a plunger 51 having a ball receiving head 52, a propelling spring 53 and a retracting knob 54. The plunger 51 extends through a horizontal slot 55 in an arcuate plate 56 so that upon retraction of the plunger by one of the players the ball may be directed or aimed so as to be banked off any part of the alley wall or the wall 48 in an attempt to direct it into a desired one of the ball releasing channels, thus introducing an element of skill into the pitching procedure.

A curved partition 57 extends upwardly from the playing field and forms the left field wall, and extending forwardly from the walls 47 and 57 are a number of partition members 58 forming stalls or pockets 59 for entrapping a batted ball. Depressions are formed in the base 10 adjacent to and extending into the stalls 59 to assist in retaining a batted ball therein.

A back stop wall 62 behind the batter's box is provided with similar stalls or pockets 63 and the pockets 59 and 63 are labeled to represent a characteristic of the batted or pitched ball, such as a home run, triple, double, single, caught ball, foul, strike, ball, passed ball, hit batter, and the like.

Located adjacent to the batter's box is a spring operated mechanical batter comprising a base plate 64 carrying a vertical post 65, on which is an inverted cup-shaped spring housing 66 pivotally mounted and retained in place by a nut 67. A coiled spring 68 encircles the post 65 within the housing 66 and has its opposite ends anchored to the post 65 and housing 66. A stop pin 69 threaded into the housing 66 engages an upstanding post 71 secured in the base 64. The bat 72 is threaded into a boss formed on one wall of the spring housing in such position relative to the pin 69 that the bat may be swung in an arc of 180° or more backward and forward in the line of delivery of a ball from the chute 20 and at a distance above the base 10 equal substantially to the radius of the ball.

The tension on the spring 68 may be adjusted by removing the pin 69, turning the housing 66 one or more revolutions in either direction to increase or decrease the spring tension, and then replacing the pin so that it again engages the stop post 71. Thus the maximum swinging speed of the bat may be determined and limited to a value which is sufficient for the purpose of the game, without danger of driving the ball beyond the confines of the field. The back swing of the bat is effected by a flexible cord or wire 73 secured to a lug 74 formed on the housing 66 and looped about the housing with the opposite end passing through an aperture 75 in the front wall 11 and secured to a rubber cushioned knob 76. Pulling back on the knob rotates the bat clockwise against the tension of the spring. The timing of the forward swing of the bat is determined by the instant of release of the knob and the speed of the swing is determined by the extent of the back swing and the initial tension to which the spring 68 is adjusted.

In playing the game one player representing the team in the field causes one of the balls 33a to 33d to be delivered by withdrawing the control ball plunger 51, placing the ball 42 in place, aiming the ball at the desired angle and releasing the plunger. By proper skill in the angling of the

ball 42 and control of its speed, through manipulation of the knob 54, the ball may be made to enter any of the pitched ball releasing channels to deliver a desired one of the balls to the batter, subject however to the fortuitous conditions imposed by the posts 49, bank 48, and the contour of the guides 29. A control ball that comes to rest on the platform 45 or alley 16 constitutes a balk and permits all base runners to advance one base.

Upon delivery of a pitched ball the player representing the team at bat releases the knob 76 in an attempt to hit the pitched ball. After each pitch the ball is replaced in its recess 23 by pushing it against the plunger head 34 until the plunger latches.

The game is scored as in regular baseball, and any ball which is missed by the batter is a strike regardless of where it ultimately comes to rest, except that any ball coming to rest in one of the back stop stalls 63 is scored as a strike, passed ball, hit batter, caught foul, or foul, depending upon the legend on the entrapping pocket in which it comes to rest. A hit ball coming to rest in foul territory other than the stalls 63 is an ordinary foul ball. Any ball caught in the traps 18a to 18g in the various players' positions is an out and a potential double play depending on whether or not there is a player on base in a position to be forced out. A hit ball coming to rest any place on the playing field, except in the outfield pockets 59, is an out and any hit ball resting in one of the pockets 59 is scored as a single, double, triple, or home run, as indicated on each of the stalls.

To assist in keeping score the space behind the back stop wall 62 is elevated to the level of the wall and marked into section 77, 78, 79 and 80, the former having a plurality of perforations therein in which pegs 81 may be retained for use as markers. Section 78 has two openings indicating one or two outs for the team at bat in which the pegs 81 may be inserted. Section 79 has three openings for the pegs 81, representing a player on first base, second base or third base. Section 80 consists of a self-effacing scoring section comprising the usual black ground 82, a translucent covering sheet 83 having two rows of nine squares each lined thereon for marking the box scores and a slide 84 movable between the sheet 83 and ground 82 for effacing the marked scores. A stylus 85, carried in an aperture in the board may be provided for marking up the scores on the sheet 83.

It is to be understood that in addition to differences in the speed and angle of delivery of the various balls 33a to 33d other characteristics thereof may be different, as for instance, the resiliency, weight, balance and size. The balls may be of any suitable material but I have found wood to be entirely satisfactory for the pitched ball, various kinds of wood being employed to give different characteristics to the balls. If desired, some of the balls may be weighted with metal inserts or composites of different kinds of wood in order to modify the balance and to give a more or less erratic travel tendency thereto. The control ball 42 may also be of wood but I prefer to employ a heavier and denser material such as glass, agate or metal, because of the more accurate travel and rebound nature and to give greater certainty in the operation of the latches 25.

In case it is desired to dispense with the release of the pitched balls 33a to 33d by the control ball 42, I have provided mechanism for man-

ually and selectively releasing the balls 33. This mechanism comprises a series of levers 86a to 86d (Figs. 1 and 2) pivotally mounted beneath the platform 45, on a pin 87, each of the levers having an upwardly extending forward end, projecting through an opening 88 in the chute floor extension 32, to a position immediately beneath one of the latch members 25, and a depending rear portion 89 situated opposite the end of an actuating plunger 90. The movement of the trip levers 86 is guided in a comb member 91. The plungers 90 pass through the rear wall 13 of the board and terminate in finger buttons 92, the plunger being held out of engagement with the trip lever extensions 89 by springs 93. Thus the pitching player, by actuation of the plungers 90, may selectively release any of the balls 33a to 33d for delivery to the batter.

It will be understood, of course, that variations may be made in the exact arrangement and construction of the various elements of the game depicted without departing from the essential attributes of the invention, and I desire to include all such changes and modifications as come within the scope of the appended claims.

What I claim is:

1. A ball game apparatus comprising a game board, means disposed on said board for retaining a plurality of balls in position to be delivered to a predetermined location on said board, individual spring actuated propelling means for each of said balls, latch means normally retaining said propelling means against actuation, and means for selectively actuating said latches to release said propelling means to deliver one ball at a time to said predetermined location, said last mentioned means comprising a control ball and means for propelling said control ball into selective engagement with said latches.

2. A baseball game comprising a game board having a base member having a playing field delineated thereon, a batting device pivotally mounted on said base, vertical walls extending upwardly from said base and forming the confines of a baseball field disposed in conventional relation to said batting device, a ball delivery chute extending centrally of said field from an outfield to the infield position on said field, means for retaining a plurality of balls transversely across said chute on the outfield end thereof, said chute converging toward the infield end thereof so that any ball may be delivered from its outfield position on the chute to said batting device, individual propelling means for each of said balls, and means controlled externally of the confines of said field for individually actuating said propelling means to deliver one only of said balls to said batting device.

3. A baseball game comprising a game board having a base member having a playing field delineated thereon, a batting device pivotally mounted on said base, vertical walls extending upwardly from said base and forming the confines of a baseball field disposed in conventional relation to said batting device, a ball delivery chute extending centrally of said field from an outfield to the infield position on said field, means for retaining a plurality of balls transversely across said chute on the outfield end thereof, said chute converging toward the infield end thereof so that any ball may be delivered from its outfield position on the chute to said batting device, individual spring actuated propelling means for each of said balls, means for individually adjusting the actuating force of each of said propelling

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means, whereby the speed of delivery of any of said balls may be modified, and means controlled externally of the confines of said field for individually actuating said propelling means to deliver one only of said balls to said batting device.

4. A ball game comprising a game board, a batting device pivotally mounted on said board, a baseball field disposed in conventional relation to said batting device, a ball delivery chute centrally of said field from an outfield to the infield position on said field, means for retaining a plurality of balls transversely across said chute on the outfield end thereof, said chute converging toward the infield end thereof so that any ball may be delivered from its outfield position on the chute to said batting device, individual propelling means for each of said balls, and means

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for individually actuating said propelling means to deliver one only of said balls to said batting device, said last means comprising a control ball, manually controlled actuating means for said control ball and means for fortuitously guiding said control ball to a position to actuate one of said propelling means.

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