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(54) **MUFF**

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(71) Applicants: **Ralph Shuman**, Cape May Courthouse,
NJ (US); **Tarin Mason**, Cape May
Courthouse, NJ (US)

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(72) Inventors: **Ralph Shuman**, Cape May Courthouse,
NJ (US); **Tarin Mason**, Cape May
Courthouse, NJ (US)

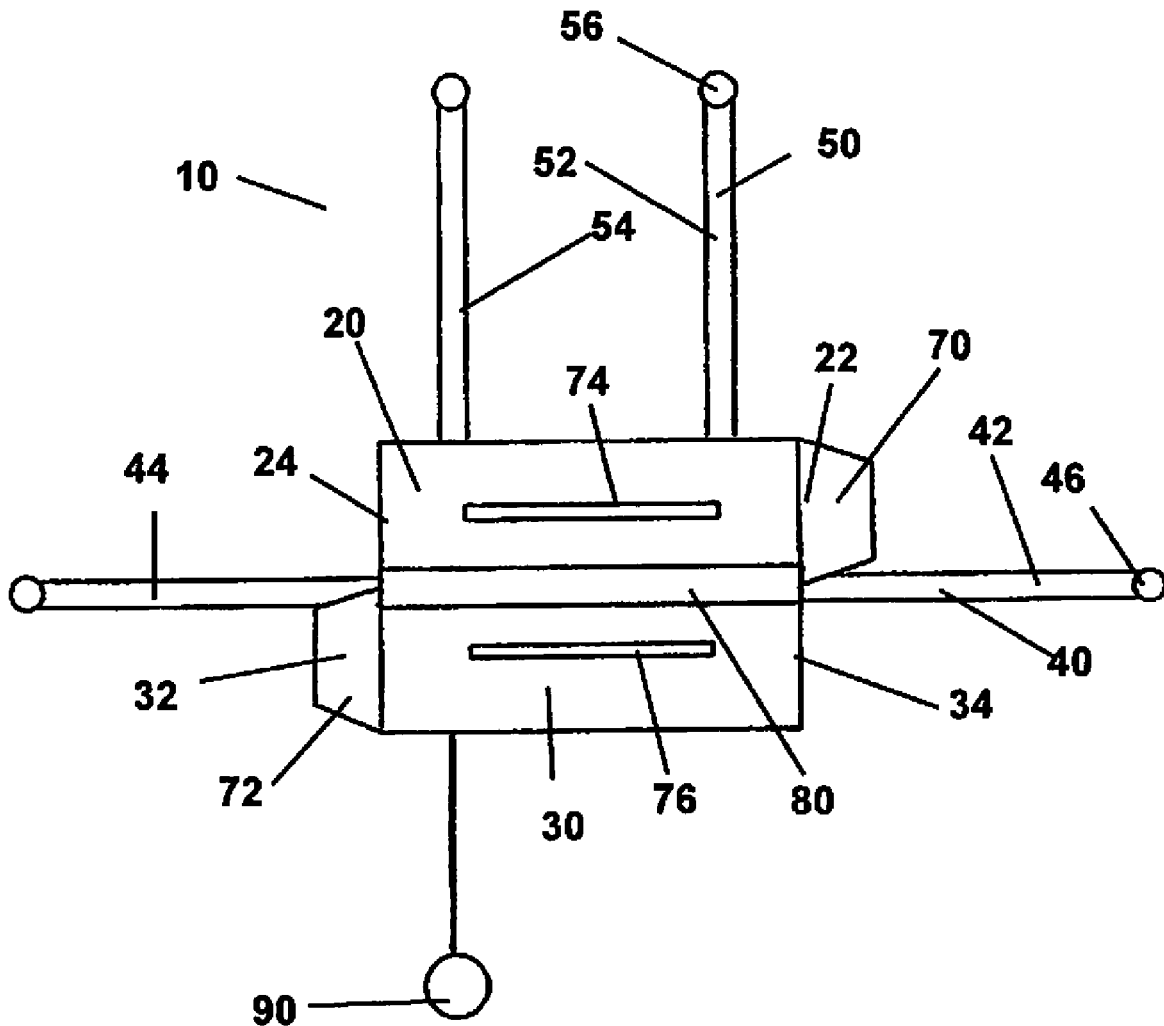
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A muff for receiving both hands of a person includes an upper horizontal tube having a first open end and a second closed end, and a lower horizontal tube attached below the upper tube and having an open first end and a closed second end with the open end of the upper tube positioned above the closed end of the lower tube.

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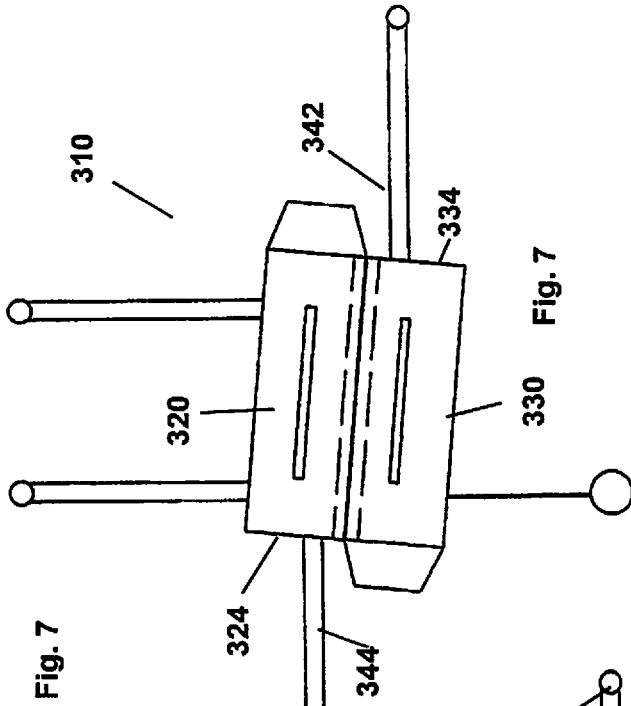


Fig. 7

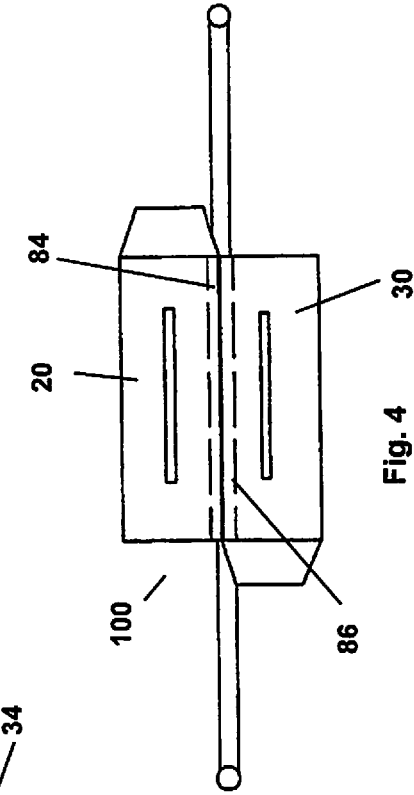


Fig. 4

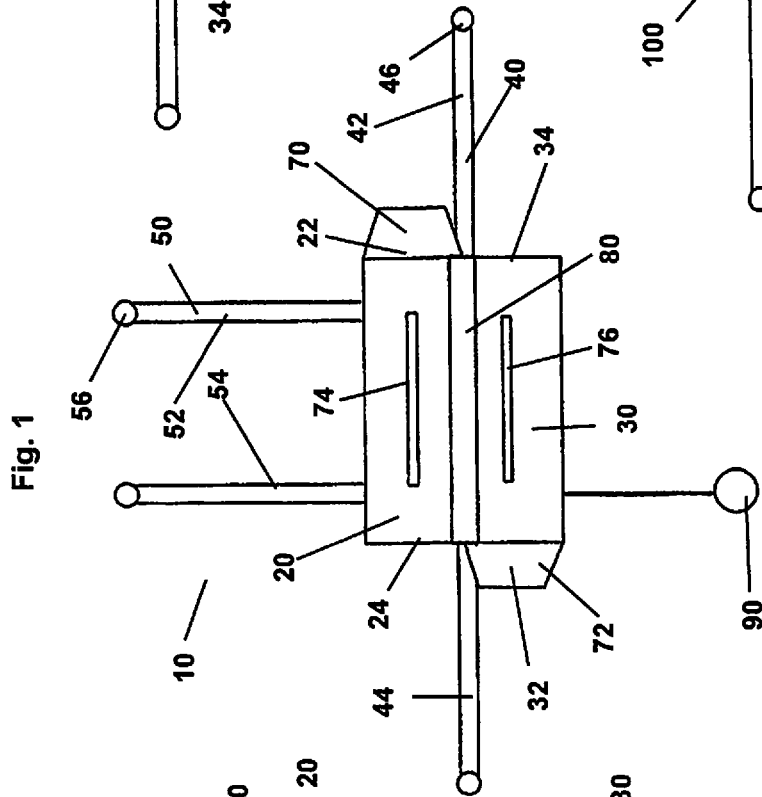


Fig. 1

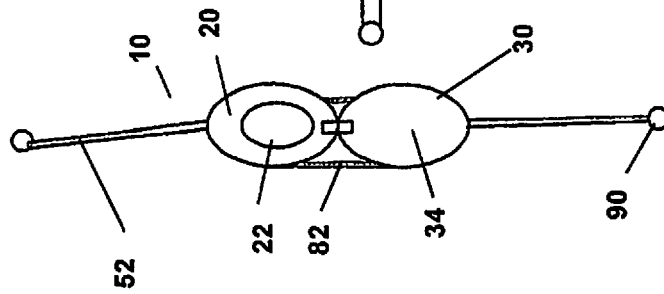


Fig. 2

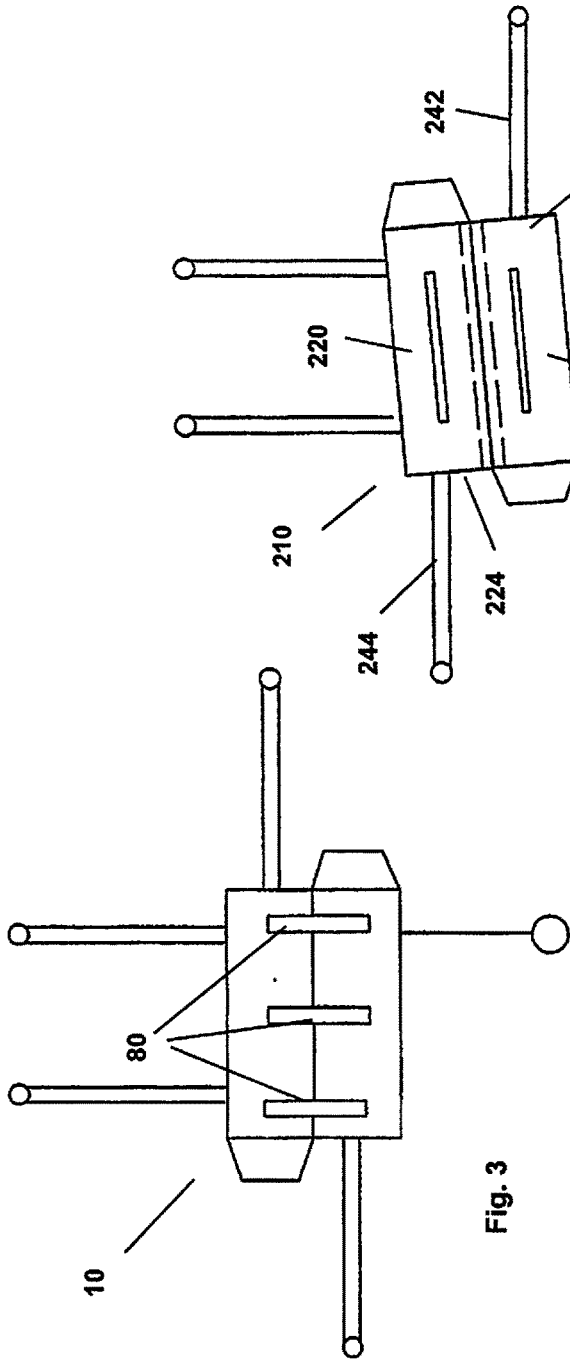


Fig. 3

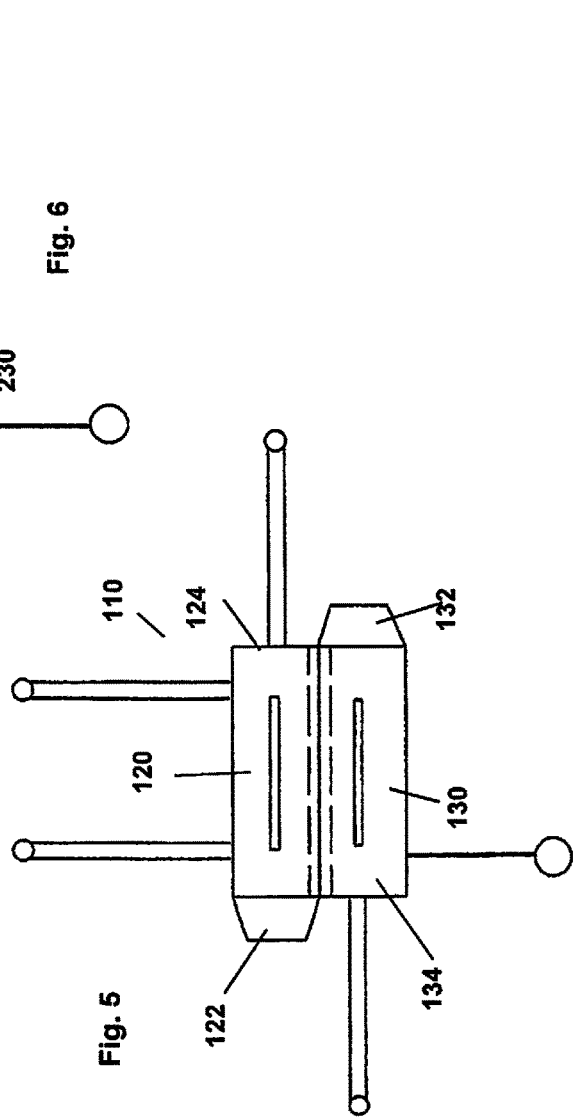


Fig. 5

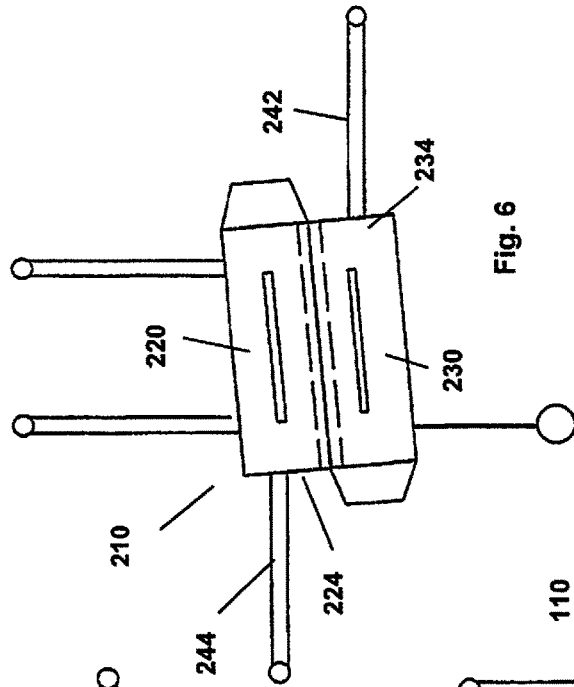


Fig. 6

MUFF

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

[0001] The present invention relates to muffs for keeping a user's hands warm in cold weather.

2. Brief Description of the Prior Art

[0002] Muffs for keeping a user's hands warm are well known, and were a popular article of women's clothing in the Nineteenth Century, and are disclosed, for example, in U.S. Pat. Nos. 25,582, 95,240, 353,861, 405,097, 482,432, and 629,579. More recently, muffs have been adapted for use by hunters who must wait patiently, often for long periods, for game to approach within range of their weapons. Weapons, including rifles and bows, typically are adapted to be operated with bare hands. In cold weather, while gloves may offer protection against low temperatures, gloves can make weapons awkward to operate, and the time it takes to remove gloves diminishes the period of time in which game is likely to remain within range. In contrast, bare hands can be quickly and easily removed from muffs.

[0003] U.S. Pat. Nos. 2,495,582 and 2,835,896 disclose hand-warming muffs adapted for hunters. U.S. Pat. No. 4,495,659 discloses a cold-weather muff including a chemical heating element particularly adapted for spectator sports. European Patent EP 3,011,851 discloses a tactical hand warmer apparatus for use by soldiers which can be separated into a mitt for each hand. U.S. Pat. No. 8,108,946 discloses a process for creating a muff by forming a fabric tube, closing the tube ends, and stuffing each closed end into the tube.

[0004] Contemporary muffs intended for hunters are conventionally formed from a single tube of fabric arranged in a "v" shape such that the user can clasp his or her hands inside the muff, but the user's elbows can protrude away from the user's body, increasing the surface area exposed to the elements, and reducing the user's comfort in cold weather. There is a continuing need for a muff adapted to protect and keep warm a hunter's bare hands while minimizing the exposure of the user to the elements.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0005] The present invention provides a muff for receiving both hands of a person, such as a hunter. The muff includes a muff body. The muff body includes a first tube extending along a generally horizontal axis and having a first end and a second end. The first tube is open at the first end and sealed at the second end. The muff body also includes a second tube extending along a generally horizontal axis parallel to the axis of the first tube and having a first end and a second end. The second tube is sealed at the first end, and open at the second end. The first tube is secured to the second tube above the second tube. The first end of the first tube is positioned above the first end of the second tube and the second end of the first tube is positioned above the second end of the second tube.

[0006] Preferably, the muff further includes means for securing the muff to the body of the person. Preferably, the means for securing the muff to the body of the person includes at least one strap adapted to extend around the torso of the person. Preferably, the at least one strap is adapted to

extend around the torso comprises a pair of straps extending from the muff body and latching means for securing the pair of straps together. Preferably, the means for securing the muff to the body of the person includes an attachment means for securing around the neck of the person. Preferably, the attachment means includes at least one strap adapted to extend around the neck of the person. Preferably, the at least one strap adapted to extend around the neck comprises a pair of straps extending from the muff body and latching means for securing the pair of straps together.

[0007] Preferably, the means for securing the muff to the body of the person are adapted to secure the muff such that the axis of the first tube forms an angle of less than 10 degrees from the horizontal. In one presently preferred embodiment the axis of the first tube forms an angle of less than 10 degrees above the horizontal. In another presently preferred embodiment, the axis of the first tube forms an angle of less than 10 degrees below the horizontal.

[0008] Preferably, the open ends of the tubes include elastic cuffs. Preferably, at least one tube includes at least one storage pocket formed on the outside of the tube. Preferably, both tubes include at least one storage pocket formed on the outside of the tube.

[0009] Preferably, the muff includes means for attaching the first tube to the second tube. In one presently preferred embodiment, the means for attaching the first tube to the second tube comprises at least one strap parallel to the axis of the first tube and fastened to the first tube and the second tube. Preferably, in this embodiment the means for attaching the first tube to the second tube comprises at least one strap perpendicular to the axis of the first tube and fastened to the first tube and the second tube. In another presently preferred embodiment, the means for attaching the first tube to the second tube comprises at least one line of stitches attaching the first tube and the second tube together. Preferably, in the embodiment, the muff has a front and a back, and the means for attaching the first tube to the second tube comprises at least one line of stitches attaching the first tube and the second tube together formed on the front of the muff and at least one line of stitches attaching the first tube and the second tube together on the back of the muff.

[0010] Preferably, the muff further includes at least one tether for gear.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] FIG. 1 is a schematic front elevational view of a first embodiment of a muff according to the present invention.

[0012] FIG. 2 is a schematic right side elevational view of the muff of FIG. 1.

[0013] FIG. 3 is a schematic rear elevational view of a variant of the muff of FIG. 1.

[0014] FIG. 4 is a schematic front elevational view of a second embodiment of a muff according to the present invention.

[0015] FIG. 5 is a schematic front elevational view of a third embodiment of a muff according to the present invention.

[0016] FIG. 6 is a schematic front elevational view of a fourth embodiment of a muff according to the present invention.

[0017] FIG. 7 is a schematic front elevational view of a fifth embodiment of a muff according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0018] The present invention advantageously provides a muff which allows a person to easily insert his or hands, individually, into the muff, and correspondingly easily remove his or her hands from the muff through the individual openings at opposite ends of the muff. In addition, the present invention provides a muff providing improved retention of body heat because a person using the muff can keep his or her arms close to their body, in contrast to prior designs in which the arms protrude away from the torso allowing wind to blow through the elbow crevice and under the person's arms.

[0019] In a presently preferred embodiment, the present invention provides two angled tubes or "muff pockets", each closed at one end and each preferably having elastic cuffs at the other end. The muff pockets are made so that one tube pocket is on top of the other tube pocket. In one presently preferred embodiment, the pockets are connected one on top of the other with a horizontal strap running the length of the pockets in the front and three vertical straps running equidistant along the back of the two pocket tubes. In another presently preferred embodiment, the pockets are sewn together, one on top of the other with reinforced stitching running the length horizontally on the front and back.

[0020] The present invention also provides a left and right hand version of the muff to accommodate the angled elbow ergonomics. Preferably, the present invention provides at least one storage pocket on each tube on the outside of the muff, and a gear tether.

[0021] In one presently preferred embodiment a back strap is preferably provided attached to the back of the muff pockets at the ends where the arm enters. In another presently preferred embodiment both a back strap and a neck strap are provided. The neck strap preferably connects to the muff pocket that is closest to the chest.

[0022] Referring now to the figures in which like reference numerals represent like elements in each of the several views, there is shown in FIG. 1, a schematic front elevational view of a first embodiment of a muff 10 according to the present invention. The muff 10 includes a first or upper tube or muff pocket 20 having a first end 22 which is open and an opposite second end 24 which is closed. The muff also includes a second or lower tube or muff pocket 30 having a first end 32 which is open and a second end 34 which is closed. The first or upper tube 20 and the second or lower tube 30 are joined together in the front by a horizontal fastening strap 80, such that the open first end 22 of the upper tube 20 overlies the closed end 34 of the lower tube 30, and the closed end 24 of the upper tube 20 overlies the open end 32 of the lower tube 30, such that a right-handed user can insert his or her right forearm into the open end 32 of the lower tube 30 and his or her left forearm into the open end 22 of the upper tube 20 (not shown). The muff 10 also includes a first horizontally extending strap 42 extending from just below the open end 22 of the upper tube 20 and a second horizontally extending strap 44 extending from just below the closed end 24 of the upper tube 20 for fastening the muff 10 to a person's waist (not shown). A closure or latching means such as a snap fastener 46 is provided for securing the ends of the straps 42, 44 together, such that the straps 42, 44 and fastener 46 comprise a first attachment means 40 for the muff 10. The muff 10 is also provided with a vertically extending first strap 52, and a vertically extending second strap 54, which both extend from the upper tube

20 proximate the ends 22, 24 thereof for fastening the muff 10 around the neck of a person (not shown). A closure or latching means such as a snap fastener 56 is provided for securing the ends of the straps 52, 54 together, such that the straps 52, 54 and fastener 56 comprise a second attachment means 50 for the muff 10. The open end 22 of the upper tube 20 is provided with a first elastic cuff 70 and the open end 32 of the lower tube 30 is provided with a second elastic cuff 72 to sealingly engage the forearms of a person using the muff 10 (not shown). The muff 10 is also provided with first storage pocket 74 formed in the upper tube 20 and a second storage pocket 76 formed in the lower tube 30, as well as a tether 90 for securing gear such as a hunting rifle or bow (not shown). As can be seen in the schematic right side elevation view of FIG. 2 and schematic rear elevational view of FIG. 3 (which shows a variant of this embodiment), the upper tube 20 and lower tube 30 are secured on the back of the muff by a plurality of vertically extending straps 80, 82. In the variant of FIG. 3, the straps 44, 46 extend from the closed ends 24, 44 of the upper tube 20 and lower tube 30.

[0023] FIG. 4 is a schematic front elevational view of a second embodiment of a muff 100 according to the present invention. In this embodiment, the upper tube 20 and lower tube 30 are attached to one another by a first line of stitches 84 and a second line of stitches 86, and the vertically extending straps are omitted.

[0024] FIG. 5 is a schematic front elevational view of a third embodiment of a muff 110 of the present invention, adapted for use by a left-handed person. In this embodiment of the muff 110, the open end 132 of the lower tube 130 is adapted to receive the left forearm of a person, while the open end 122 of the upper tube 120 is adapted to receive the right forearm of the person.

[0025] FIG. 6 is a schematic front elevational view of a fourth embodiment of a muff 210 of the present invention. In this embodiment, the first horizontally extending strap 244 extends from the closed end 224 of the upper tube 220 and the second horizontally extending strap 242 extends horizontally from the closed end 234 of the lower tube 230 such that when the straps 242, 244 are fastened, the muff 210 is canted at an ergonomically acceptable angle, such as less than about 5 degrees from the horizontal, so that a person wearing the muff 210 can more quickly remove his or her left hand from the muff in response to the appearance of game.

[0026] FIG. 7 is a schematic front elevational view of a fifth embodiment of a muff 310 of the present invention. In this embodiment, the first horizontally extending strap 344 extends from the closed end 324 of the upper tube 320 and the second horizontally extending strap 342 extends horizontally from the closed end 334 of the lower tube 330 such that when the straps 342, 344 are fastened, the muff 310 is canted at an angle, so that a person wearing the muff 310 can more quickly remove his or her right hand from the muff.

[0027] Various modifications can be made in the details of the various embodiments of the articles of the present invention, all within the scope and spirit of the invention and defined by the appended claims.

1. A muff for receiving both hands of a person having a torso and a neck, the muff including a muff body including:
 - a) a first tube extending along a generally horizontal axis and having a first end and a second end, the first tube being open at the first end and sealed at the second end;

- b) a second tube extending along a generally horizontal axis parallel to the axis of the first tube and having a first end and a second end, the second tube being sealed at the first end and open at the second end, wherein the first tube is secured to the second tube above the second tube, the first end of the first tube being positioned above the first end of the second tube and the second end of the first tube being positioned above the second end of the second tube.
2. A muff according to claim 1 further comprising means for securing the muff to the body of the person.
3. A muff according to claim 2 wherein the means for securing the muff to the body of the person includes at least one strap adapted to extend around the torso, of the person.
4. A muff according to claim 2 wherein the at least one strap comprises a pair of straps extending from the muff body and latching means for securing the pair of straps together.
5. A muff according to claim 2 wherein the means for securing the muff to the body of the person includes an attachment means for securing around the neck of the person.
6. A muff according to claim 5 wherein the attachment means includes at least one strap adapted to extend around the neck of the person.
7. A muff according to claim 6 wherein the at least one strap comprises a pair of straps extending from the muff body and latching means for securing the pair of straps together.
8. A muff according to claim 2 wherein the means for securing the muff to the body of the person are adapted to secure the muff such that the axis of the first tube forms an angle of less than 10 degrees from the horizontal.
9. A muff according to claim 8 wherein the axis of the first tube forms an angle of less than 10 degrees above the horizontal.
10. A muff according to claim 9 wherein the axis of the first tube forms an angle of less than 10 degrees below the horizontal.
11. A muff according to claim 1 wherein the open ends of the tubes include elastic cuffs.
12. A muff according to claim 1 wherein at least one tube includes at least one storage pocket formed on the outside of the tube.
13. A muff according to claim 12 wherein each tube includes at least one storage pocket formed on the outside of the tube.
14. A muff according to claim 1 wherein the muff includes means for attaching the first tube to the second tube.
15. A muff according to claim 14 wherein the means for attaching the first tube to the second tube comprises at least one strap parallel to the axis of the first tube and fastened to the first tube and the second tube.
16. A muff according to claim 14 wherein the means for attaching the first tube to the second tube comprises at least one strap perpendicular to the axis of the first tube and fastened to the first tube and the second tube.
17. A muff according to claim 14 wherein the means for attaching the first tube to the second tube comprises at least one line of stitches attaching the first tube and the second tube together.
18. A muff according to claim 17, the muff having a front and a back, wherein the means for attaching the first tube to the second tube comprises at least one line of stitches attaching the first tube and the second tube together formed on the front of the muff and at least one line of stitches attaching the first tube and the second tube together on the back of the muff.
19. A muff according to claim 1 further including at least one tether for gear.

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