

Jan. 4, 1966

L. G. MURPHY

3,227,452

ACTION-STRATEGY BASEBALL GAME APPARATUS

Filed Feb. 8, 1963

3 Sheets-Sheet 1

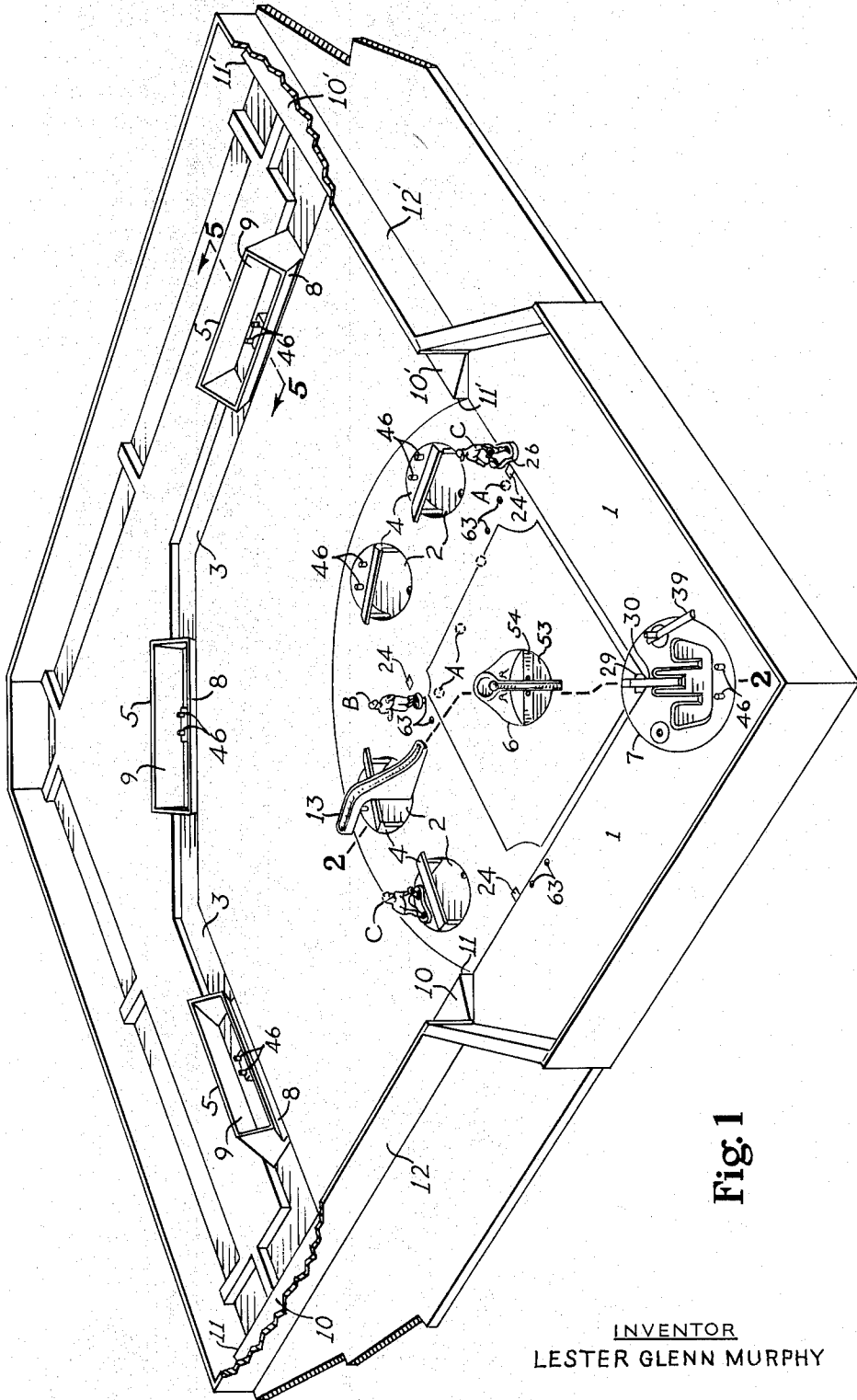


Fig. 1

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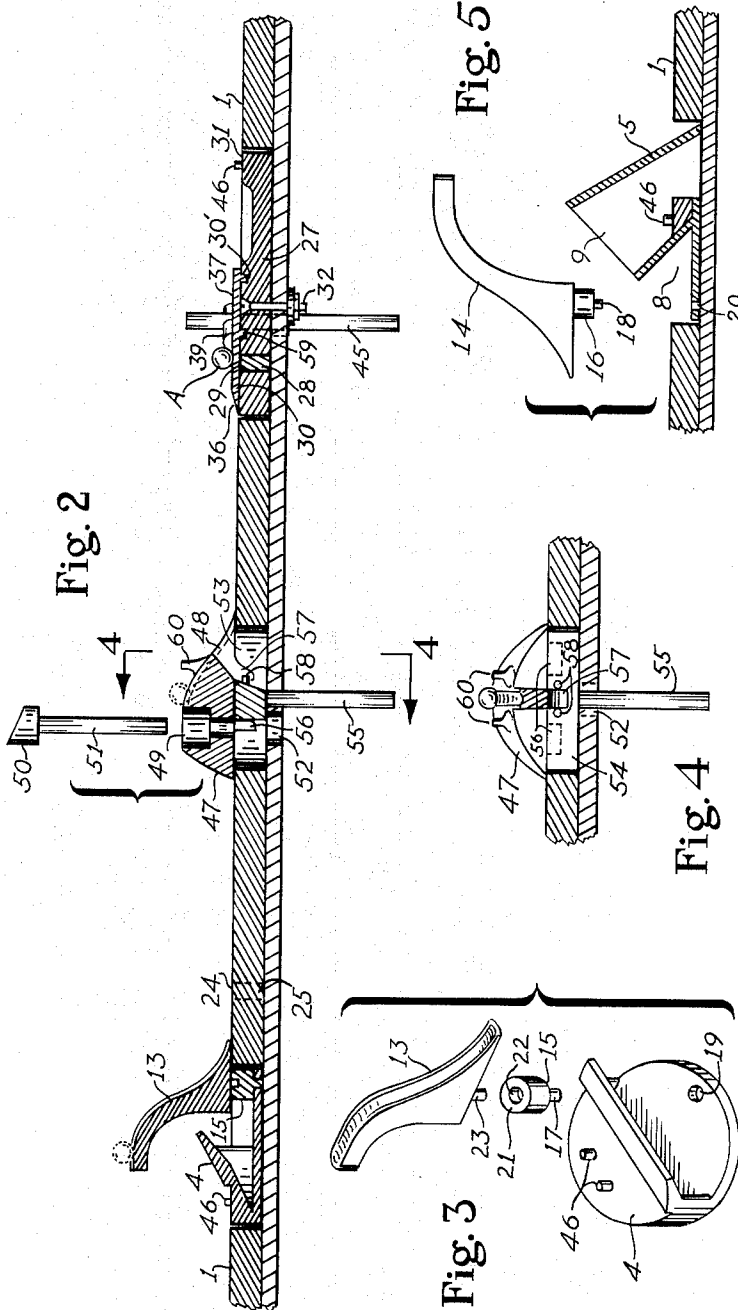
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3 Sheets-Sheet 2



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3 Sheets-Sheet 3

Fig. 6

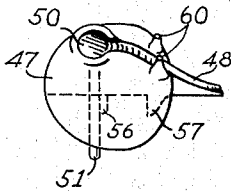


Fig. 8

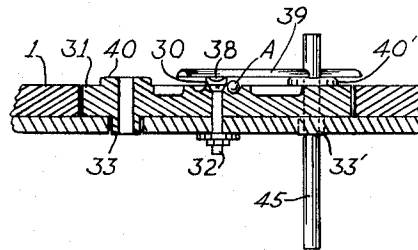


Fig. 6a

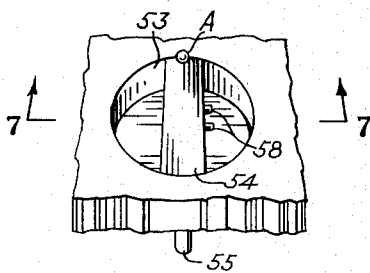


Fig. 9

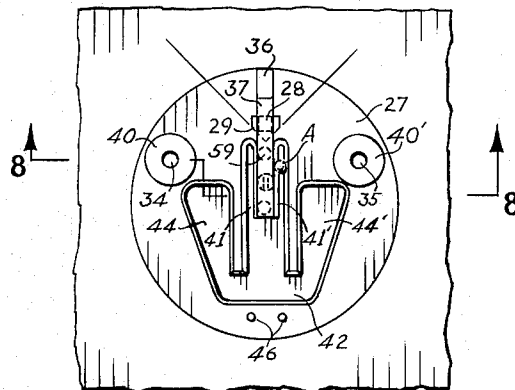


Fig. 7

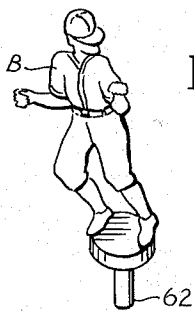
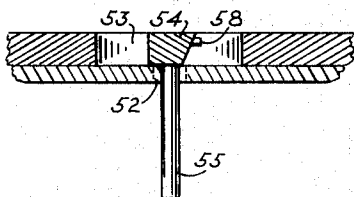


Fig. 10



Fig. 11

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1

2

3,227,452
**ACTION-STRATEGY BASEBALL GAME
 APPARATUS**

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 10 Claims. (Cl. 273-89)

This invention pertains to a miniature game of baseball and is designed to enable the batter to hit "fly balls" as well as "grounders." The invention includes a plurality of miniature manikins in the form of fielders and base runners and means by which favorable playing of the game will depend upon the proper positioning of said fielders and base runners upon the playing board, as will be explained.

The invention includes a plurality of receptacles for catching batted balls. The receptacles have positioned upon them the aforementioned miniature fielders until these are needed to "catch" steel balls rolled to them at magnetic bases. When the miniature fielders are to be used for this purpose, they may be removed from the receptacles and positioned at the bases to "catch" the "thrown" balls. The receptacles are movable and may be positioned to produce what is the best possible defense in the judgment of the participant representing the team in the field.

A detailed description of this invention follows: The accompanying drawings illustrate the various parts and their functions. A few of the miniature manikins are shown, but in general, the manikins have been omitted in order to simplify the drawings. When the game is in use, manikins representing fielders will be positioned where small pegs appear on the various parts seen in the drawings.

FIGURE 1 is an overall perspective view of the invention showing the layout and relationships of its various parts.

FIGURE 2 is a sectional view along line 2-2 of FIGURE 1 showing in detail an infield receptacle, a recessed magnetic base, and the pitching and batting devices.

FIGURE 3 is an exploded perspective view of an infield receptacle and independent ball rolling device or launcher for "throwing" balls to the miniature fielders.

FIGURE 4 is a front view, partially in section, of the pitching device taken on line 4-4 of FIGURE 2.

FIGURE 5 is a sectional view of an outfield receptacle on line 5-5 of FIGURE 1. It also shows an independent ball rolling device used in conjunction with outfield receptacles.

FIGURE 6 is a perspective view of the pitcher's mound removed from its mount.

FIGURE 6a is a fragmentary perspective view of the mount for the pitcher's mound, showing how a ball may be rolled over it from home plate to second base, as will be later explained.

FIGURE 7 is a sectional view on line 7-7 of FIGURE 6a showing the recessed bottom section of the pitching device which serves as a mount for the pitcher's mound.

FIGURE 8 is a sectional view of the batting device on line 8-8 of FIGURE 9 with bat added showing the plane of swinging of the bat and how a ball that passes over a corner of home plate will fall into a groove and be missed by the bat if it is not hit before it has passed home plate.

FIGURE 9 is a fragmentary plan view of the batting device showing openings in which the handle of the bat may be positioned for either right-handed or left-handed batting and a small ramp covering home plate which assists the batter in hitting "fly balls," as will be later explained.

FIGURES 10 and 11 show the miniature manikins in detail.

The invention includes the following parts, each part having its own number in both the description and drawings for easy identification thereof.

The playing board 1 will be raised above the floor on legs to about table height. The playing board 1 is constructed with recesses both circular 2 and straight 3 into which are fitted movable receptacles 4 and 5 respectively. Receptacles 4 and 5, pitching device 6 and batting device 7 are situated at the positions usually taken by the players of conventional baseball, said receptacles being for the purpose of catching balls batted into them. Receptacles 4 corresponding to infield positions can be rotated in circular recesses 2 and receptacles 5 corresponding to outfield positions can be moved laterally in recesses 3 for positioning them to suit the judgment of the defensive participant so as to provide what to him is the best possibility of fielding batted balls and produce "outs." Outfield receptacles 5 have two compartments 8 and 9. Balls hit into compartments 8 (and into recess 3) are "singles." Balls hit into compartments 9 are "outs."

Inclined moldings 10 and 10' are parallel and adjacent to the foul lines. Moldings 10, 10' slope downward away from the foul lines, are entirely above the playing surface and their higher edges 11 and 11' coincide with and extend along the foul lines as seen in FIGURE 1. Against the lower edges of moldings 10, 10' are situated retaining walls 12 and 12'. Moldings 10, 10' are for the purpose of determining whether balls batted along the foul lines are "fair" or "foul." If a batted ball hits the end of a molding 10, 10', it will be deflected and therefore "foul," the moldings 10, 10' themselves being entirely in foul territory. Foul balls that fall onto the sloping upper surfaces of moldings 10, 10' and come to rest against the walls 12, 12' will be considered "foul outs."

Grooved rolling devices or ball launchers 13 and 14 fit into receptacles 4 and 5 for rolling or "throwing" balls, said ball launchers 13 and 14 being independent of and separable from receptacles 4 and 5 and playing board 1 until needed for use in making "throws." The separableness of the ball launchers 13 and 14 is illustrated in FIGURES 3 and 5. The infield ball launcher 13 is equipped with a removable post 15 on its underside. The post 16 of the outfield ball launcher 14 is not removable. On the lower ends of posts 15 and 16 are pegs 17 and 18 respectively, which fit into holes 19 and 20 in the bottoms of receptacles 4 and 5. When post 15 is fitted into a receptacle 4, its upper end 21 is flush with the surface of the playing board 1. The top of post 15 is provided with a hole 22 to receive a peg 23 on the bottom of the ball launcher 13. Ordinarily, the post 15 and launcher 13 are kept together, but may be separated for a purpose to be explained. When posts and launchers are fully engaged in receptacles, the launchers will rest on the surface of playing board 1 as seen on the left in FIGURE 2, permitting the defensive participant to use them in rolling the ball from outfield receptacles 5 to receptacles 4 in the infield and from infield receptacles to the bases 24 and home plate 29 where the miniature fielders may be positioned to "catch" balls "thrown" or rolled in this manner down the grooved ball launchers.

The bases 24 are composed of small magnets 25 (FIGURE 2) recessed end up into the playing board 1. Magnetic bases 24 are for use in making extra outs after batted balls have been caught by receptacles 4 or 5 and a base runner is in position to be put out in a "double play." The exposed ends 24 of the magnets 25 are square and painted white to simulate the bases. When a miniature fielder C is positioned properly at a base, as shown at first base in FIGURE 1, the magnet 25 attracts and holds a steel ball A (shown in different positions in dotted lines,

3

FIGURE 1) that is aimed to roll down the ball launcher 13 and be stopped by striking the base 26 of the miniature fielder C. The three bases 24 and home plate 29 are all magnetic and provided with miniature fielders C to enable the defensive participant to make extra outs, or "double plays," at all four points.

The batting device 7 is seen in detail on the right side in FIGURE 2 and in FIGURES 8 and 9. The batting device 7 consists of a disc 27 containing a recessed magnet 28 at home plate 29 and a small removable ramp 30 having studs 30' fitted into holes in disc 27. Said ramp 30 covers magnet 28 and extends in the direction of pitched balls. The batting device disc 27 is recessed into playing board 1 so that its top surface 31 is flush with the surface of playing board 1, (FIGURES 2 and 8). The batting device disc 27 is held firmly in its recess by centrally located bolt 32. Disc 27 is properly positioned so as to align ramp 30 with the direction of pitched balls by the insertion of tubes 33 and 33', FIGURE 8, through pre-determined holes in the bottom of the recess into which disc 27 fits. Tubes 33, 33' are in alignment with holes 34 and 35 and extend downward on the underside of batting device disc 27. The front end 36 of ramp 30 is inclined downward toward the pitcher. The top surface 37 of the ramp 30 is level and raised slightly above the playing board 1. Extending along the top of the ramp 30 is a shallow groove 38 (FIGURE 8) through which the ball may roll over the entire raised surface 37 of the ramp 30. The inclined front end 36 permits pitched balls aimed directly at home plate to roll up onto the raised surface 37 of the ramp 30.

The bat 39 is raised slightly above the surface of playing board 1 to a height equal to that of ramp 30 by the bosses 40 and 40' which surround the holes 34 and 35 (FIGURE 9). Balls that roll up the inclined front end 36 and onto surface 37 of the ramp 30 can be hit into the air by the swinging bat 39 which is able to get under them as shown in FIGURE 2. By this means, balls may be hit over fielding receptacles 4 and 5 for longer hits, or over the fences for home runs. When batted, balls that do not roll up the ramp 30 are not understruck by the bat but merely "topped" and, so, roll on the surface of the playing board 1 as "grounders." These may be easily caught by the receptacles 4 for "outs," or they may roll beyond receptacles 4 for "hits." On either side of home plate and ramp 30 are grooves 41 and 41' into which may roll pitched balls that pass over the left and right edges of home plate 29. The grooves 41, 41' lead to a pocket 42 in the rear of the batting device disc 27 and balls A that pass through these grooves 41, 41' are "strikes." Balls that pass over the ramp 30 and are not hit by the bat 39 are also "strikes." On either side of grooves 41, 41' are two pockets 44 and 44' for catching balls that pass too wide of home plate 29 and are therefore designated "balls."

The objective of the defensive participant is to aim and "pitch" the ball so that it will roll over one of the edges of home plate 29 and into one of the grooves 41, 41', whereupon the swinging bat 39 will not be able to connect with said pitched ball once it has passed home plate 29. This requires pitching skill on the part of the participant representing the team in the field. His opponent, too, must be skillful and able to swing the bat 39 at the proper time so as to strike the ball before it has passed beyond home plate 29 and into one of the grooves 41, 41'. If the bat 39 is swung too soon, the ball will go foul. The most opportune time to swing the bat 39 at an on-coming ball is when it rolls up the ramp 30 onto surface 37 and is then in position to be hit into the air for an extra base hit.

The bat 39 is a half-cylinder flat on the underside and round on the upper side. The bat 39 has a vertical rod or handle 45 which can be inserted into one of two holes 34 or 35 on either side of home plate, making it possible to swing the bat 39 from a right-handed or left-handed batting position. The handle 45 of the bat 39 extends

4

downward through the holes 34 or 35 and is swung from under the raised playing board 1 by twirling the handle 45 between the thumb and forefinger. When the bat 39 is swung, its flat underside sweeps over the level upper surface 37 of the ramp 30, enabling the rounded upper side of bat 39 to connect with the underside of balls that roll upon ramp 30 and hit them into the air.

When the game is in use a miniature manikin C representing a catcher will be positioned on pegs 46 of batting device disc 27. The manikin C representing the catcher may be removed from this position and placed directly behind home plate 29 to put out runners trying to score. When such is the case, the ramp 30, which is ordinarily positioned over home plate 29, is removed so that the miniature catcher will have a level surface to stand on. Removal of the ramp 30 also uncovers the magnet 28 recessed into the batting device disc 27 at home plate. When placed directly behind the home plate magnet 28, the catcher is able to "catch" balls rolled to him in the same manner that the fielders "catch" balls rolled to the bases 24.

The pitching device shown at the center of FIGURE 2 and in FIGURES 6, 6a and 7 consists of a pitcher's mound 47 with a grooved inclined runway 48 for rolling the ball toward the batter. A socket 49 (FIGURE 2) is situated at the crest of the pitcher's mound 47 and fitted with a cylindrical block 50 which has a rod or handle 51 extending downward through over-sized hole 52 in the bottom of circular recess 53. The top surface of block 50 is inclined downward in the direction of home plate. When a ball is placed on block 50, it will rest there, being held by the edge of socket 49 into which block 50 is fitted. When the handle 51 is pushed upward from underneath the playing board 1, the ball will move out of the hole 49 and consequently roll down the inclined runway 48 and on toward home plate 29. The pitcher's mound 47 is removable and under it is a circular recess 53 (FIGURE 6a) slightly smaller in diameter than the pitcher's mound 47. Set into recess 53 is a bottom section 54 which freely rotates within the circular recess 53. Bottom section 54 is provided with a rod or handle 55 by which the pitching device is rotated and aimed. Protrusions 56 and 57 on the bottom of the pitcher's mound 47 grip bottom section 54 when pitcher's mound is fitted onto it, and hold mound 47 in proper position. Studs 58 (FIGURE 6a) on bottom section 54 are so spaced as to receive protrusion 57 and, so, properly locate mound 47 on bottom section 54. Bottom section 54 is ordinarily positioned at right angles to the path of pitched balls and forms the rear wall of the ball-catching portion of recess 53 under the inclined runway 48 of pitcher's mound 47. When the pitcher's mound 47 and block 50 are removed from the bottom section 54, the latter may be rotated 90° so that one end of it may point toward home plate, the other end toward second base. This creates a bridge across the circular recess 53 providing a continuous and level path extending from home plate to second base. This permits rolling of the ball A (FIGURE 6a) from home plate to second base when a runner attempts to steal that base according to rules to be formulated. If the participant representing the team at bat attempts to steal second base, the pitcher's mound 47 is removed from bottom section 54, which is rotated to align with home plate and second base, and the ramp 30 is removed from its position above home plate on batting device disc 27. The post 15 is removed from ball launcher 13, and peg 23 under launcher 13 is inserted into hole 59 in the batting device disc 27. Launcher 13 is then aimed so as to send the steel ball A from the catcher at home plate across the bottom section 54 and on to second base to be caught as previously described by a miniature fielder C (FIGURE 11) positioned just behind the magnetic second base. If ball A is successfully rolled from the catcher to second base as just described, the play is scored as an "out." If the ball is not successfully rolled

5

but falls into recess 53 or does not strike the base 26 of fielder C positioned behind second base so as to be stopped, attracted and held by the magnet 25 recessed in playing board 1 at that point, the runner has safely "stolen" second base.

The pitcher's mound 47 will be used in place of ball launcher 13 in "throwing" or rolling the ball from the pitcher to any base or home plate when it is necessary to do so. In this case, the block 50 is removed so that the pitcher's mound 47 can be fully rotated and aimed in any direction to make such "throws." The ball is then rolled down runway 48 of pitcher's mound 47 in the same manner as would be done if launcher 13 were used. The pitcher's mound is designed to accommodate a miniature manikin C (FIGURE 11) representing the pitcher. Pegs 60 (FIGURE 4) on the pitcher's mound 47 fit into holes 61 in the base 26 of said manikin seen in FIGURE 11. Pitched balls roll under the base 26 of said manikin C thus fitted to pitcher's mound 47 on pegs 60.

Miniature manikins B represent base runners (FIGURES 1 and 10). Each base runner has a peg 62 for inserting into holes 63 in the playing board 1 (FIGURE 1). Two holes 63 are positioned near each of the three bases 24 and the movement of the runners around the bases will be determined according to the placement of the runners into these holes. That is, one hole being a short distance from a base designates a "short lead" when a runner is inserted therein. The other hole being a longer distance from the same base designates a "long lead" when a runner is positioned in it. This necessitates a choice by the offensive participants as to which lead he will give to a particular base runner. By positioning a runner in either the short lead position or long lead position, action favorable or unfavorable to the base runner will result. Both the long lead and short lead positions have advantages and disadvantages, and the favorable or unfavorable results that occur to the runners will be determined by the action of the pitching, batting and fielding, as will be explained in appropriate rules. When base runners are to be advanced they are removed from the hole of the one base and inserted into either the short lead hole or long lead hole of the next base to which they are entitled to "run."

Miniature manikins representing fielders C (FIGURE 11) fit onto pegs 46 of receptacles 4 and 5 and the batting device disc 27, and onto pegs 60 of the pitcher's mound 47.

While the now preferred embodiment of the invention has been illustrated and described, many of the details of construction may be varied within the spirit of the invention and the scope of the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A baseball game apparatus comprising the combination of a board having a simulated baseball diamond thereon, a ball-pitching device mounted on said board having an inclined runway for the ball, a batting device mounted on said board for striking a ball delivered by said pitching device, a plurality of recesses in the upper surface of said board certain of which are disposed in areas corresponding to the playing positions of defensive players, and a ball-catching receptacle to receive a ball from said batting device and movably mounted in each of said certain recesses for adjustment on the board relative to the batting device, the recesses corresponding to the outfield player position being straight-walled and elongated with portions extending perpendicularly to the foul lines, respectively, and another portion extending diagonally with respect to the foul lines between the first-mentioned portions, and the ball catching receptacles being elongated and movable longitudinally of said portions of the recesses, and wherein others of the recesses that correspond to the infield positions are circular and the ball-catching receptacles in the circular recesses are circular and rotatable in the recesses and have ball-catching pockets whose mouths can be caused to face in different

6

directions upon rotation of the receptacles in the recesses.

2. A baseball game apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said ball-pitching device is rotatably mounted in one of said circular recesses to change the angular relation of the runway to the batting device.

3. A baseball game apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said ball-pitching device is rotatably mounted in one of said circular recesses and said pitching device includes a bottom section rotatable in said recess with a portion flush with said upper surface of the board and a mount section separably connected to said bottom section.

4. A baseball game apparatus as defined in claim 1 wherein said ball-pitching device is rotatably mounted in one of said circular recesses and said pitching device includes a bottom section rotatable in said recess and a mound section separably connected to said bottom section, and said mound section has a socket in the crest thereof and a ball-supporting block rotatably and vertically movable in said socket and formed with an inclined upper surface for normally holding the ball in the socket when said block is in its lowermost position and for directing the ball over the edge of the socket when the block is elevated so as to cause the ball to roll down the inclined runway.

5. A baseball game apparatus comprising the combination of a board having a simulated baseball diamond thereon, and a batting device on said board including a ramp having an upper surface above the upper surface of the board and over which a ball is to be rolled, and a bat rotatably mounted in said board on a vertical axis and being semi-cylindrical in cross section with its flat surface movable along said ramp upon rotation of the bat and its convex surface faced upwardly from said ramp.

6. A baseball apparatus as defined in claim 5 wherein there is at least one groove in the surface of the board at each side of and below the upper surface of the ramp into which a ball may be rolled from a pitcher's position.

7. A baseball game apparatus comprising the combination of a board having a simulated baseball diamond thereon, a ball-pitching device mounted on said board having an inclined runway for the ball, a batting device mounted on said board for striking a ball delivered by said pitching device, a plurality of recesses in the upper surface of said board certain of which are disposed in areas corresponding to the playing positions of defensive players, and a ball-catching receptacle to receive a ball from said batting device and movably mounted in each of said certain recesses for adjustment on the board relative to the batting device, the recesses corresponding to the outfield player positions being straight-walled and elongated with portions extending perpendicularly to the foul lines, respectively, and another portion extending diagonally with respect to the foul lines between the first-mentioned portions, and the ball catching receptacles being elongated and movable longitudinally of said portions of the recesses, and wherein said batting device includes a ramp in alignment with the runway of the pitching device and a bat rotatably mounted in said batting device on the vertical axis, the bat being semi-cylindrical in cross section with its flat surface movable along said ramp upon rotation of the bat.

8. A baseball game apparatus comprising the combination of a board having a simulated baseball diamond thereon, a ball-pitching device mounted on said board having an inclined runway for the ball, a batting device mounted on said board for striking a ball delivered by said pitching device, a plurality of recesses in the upper surface of said board certain of which are disposed in areas corresponding to the playing positions of defensive players, and a ball-catching receptacle to receive a ball from said batting device and movably mounted in each of said certain recesses for adjustment on the board relative to the batting device, the recesses corresponding to the outfield player positions being straight-walled and elongated with portions extending perpendicularly to the foul lines, respectively,

and another portion extending diagonally with respect to the foul lines between the first-mentioned portions, and the ball catching receptacles being elongated and movable longitudinally of said portions of the recesses, and wherein said batting device includes a ramp in alignment with the runway of the pitching device and whose upper surface is above the upper surface of the board and a bat rotatably mounted in said batting device on the vertical axis, the bat being semi-cylindrical in cross section with its flat surface movable along said ramp upon rotation of the bat so that a ball on the ramp will be struck by the convex surface of the bat, and there is at least one groove in the surface of the batting device at each side of and below the upper surface of said ramp into which a ball may roll from the runway of the pitching device.

9. A baseball game apparatus comprising the combination of a board having a simulated baseball diamond thereon, a ball-pitching device mounted on said board having an inclined runway for the ball, a batting device mounted on said board for striking a ball delivered by said pitching device, a plurality of recesses in the upper surface of said board certain of which are disposed in areas corresponding to the playing positions of defensive players, and a ball-catching receptacle to receive a ball from said batting device and movably mounted in each of said certain recesses for adjustment on the board relative to the batting device, the recesses corresponding to the outfield player positions being straight-walled and elongated with portions extending perpendicularly to the foul lines, respectively, and another portion extending diagonally with respect to the foul lines between the first-mentioned portions, and the ball catching receptacles being elongated and movable longitudinally of said portions of the recesses, and with the addition of a ball launcher comprising a body portion having an inclined runway, and wherein the ball launcher and said receptacles and said batting device have coacting elements for separably connecting the ball launcher to the receptacles and to the batting device.

10. A baseball game apparatus comprising the combination of a board having a simulated baseball diamond thereon, a ball-pitching device mounted on said board having an inclined runway for the ball, a batting

device mounted on said board for striking a ball delivered by said pitching device, a plurality of recesses in the upper surface of said board certain of which are disposed in areas corresponding to the playing positions of defensive players, and a ball-catching receptacle to receive a ball from said batting device and movably mounted in each of said certain recesses for adjustment on the board relative to the batting device, the recesses corresponding to the outfield player positions being straight-walled and elongated with portions extending perpendicularly to the foul lines, respectively, and another portion extending diagonally with respect to the foul lines between the first-mentioned portions, and the ball catching receptacles being elongated and movable longitudinally of said portions of the recesses, and wherein said batting device includes a ramp whose upper surface is above the upper surface of the board on which a ball is rolled, a bat rotatably mounted in said board and having a flat bottom surface and a convex upper striking surface to strike a ball rolling on said ramp, said ramp and said board having coacting elements for separably connecting the ramp to the board, and with the addition of a ball launcher having an inclined grooved runway for the ball and provided with an element coacting with said element on the board for separably connecting the ball launcher to the board in place of said ramp to direct a ball into the infield portion of the board.

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