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(54) **GRIP TRAINING AID FOR GOLF CLUBS**

**Related U.S. Application Data**

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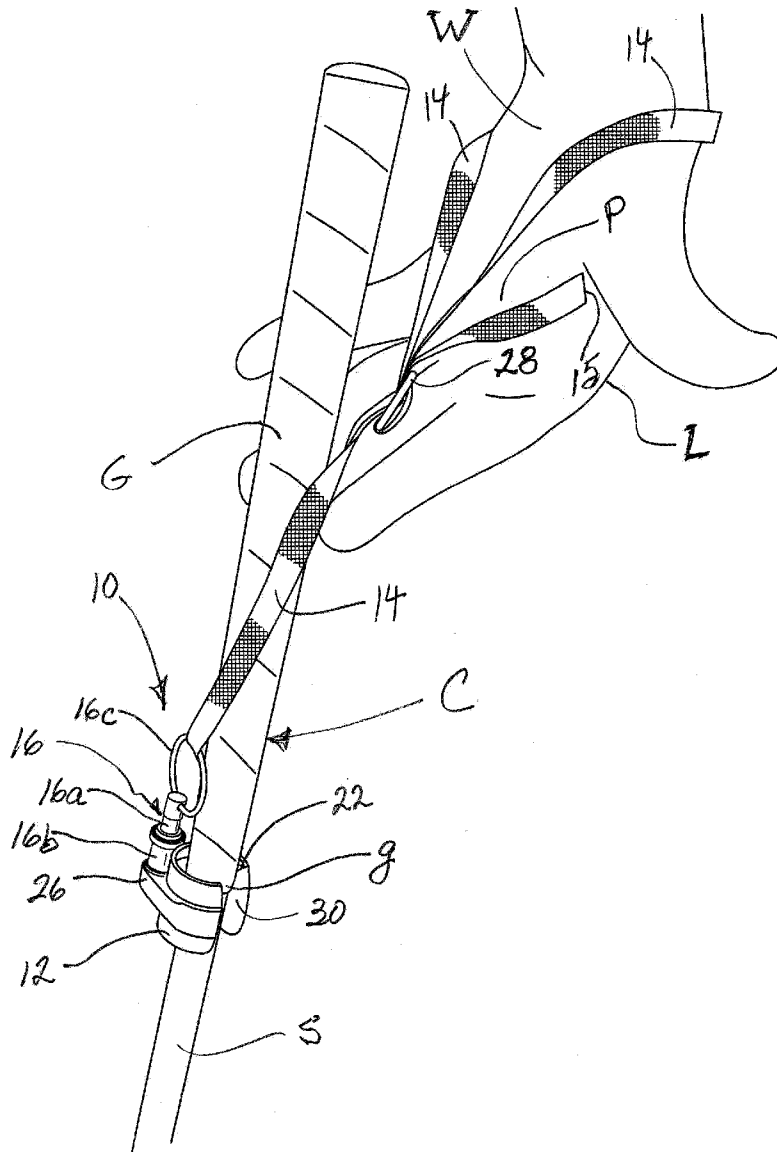
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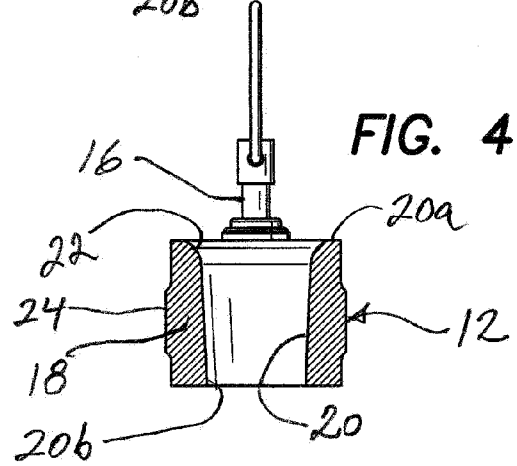
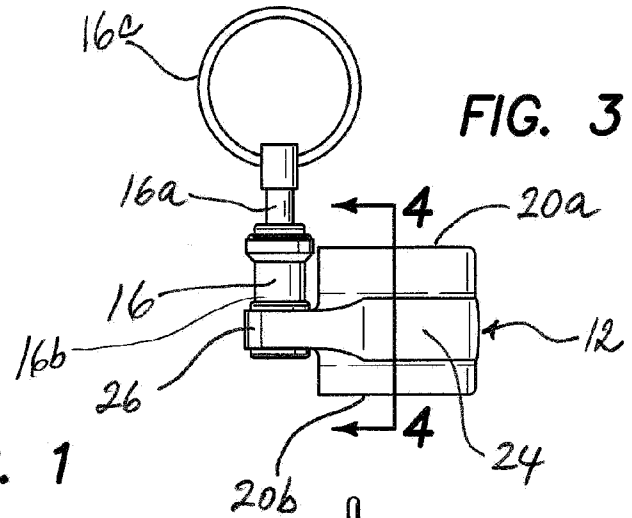
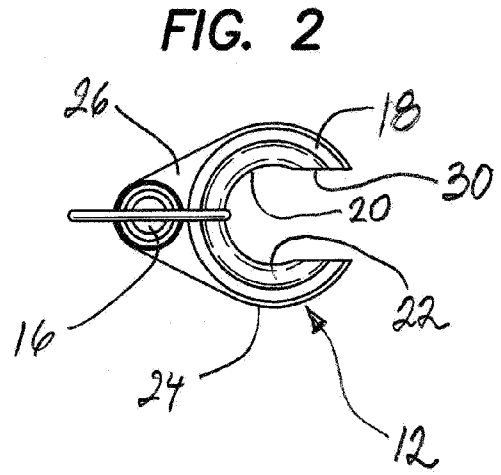
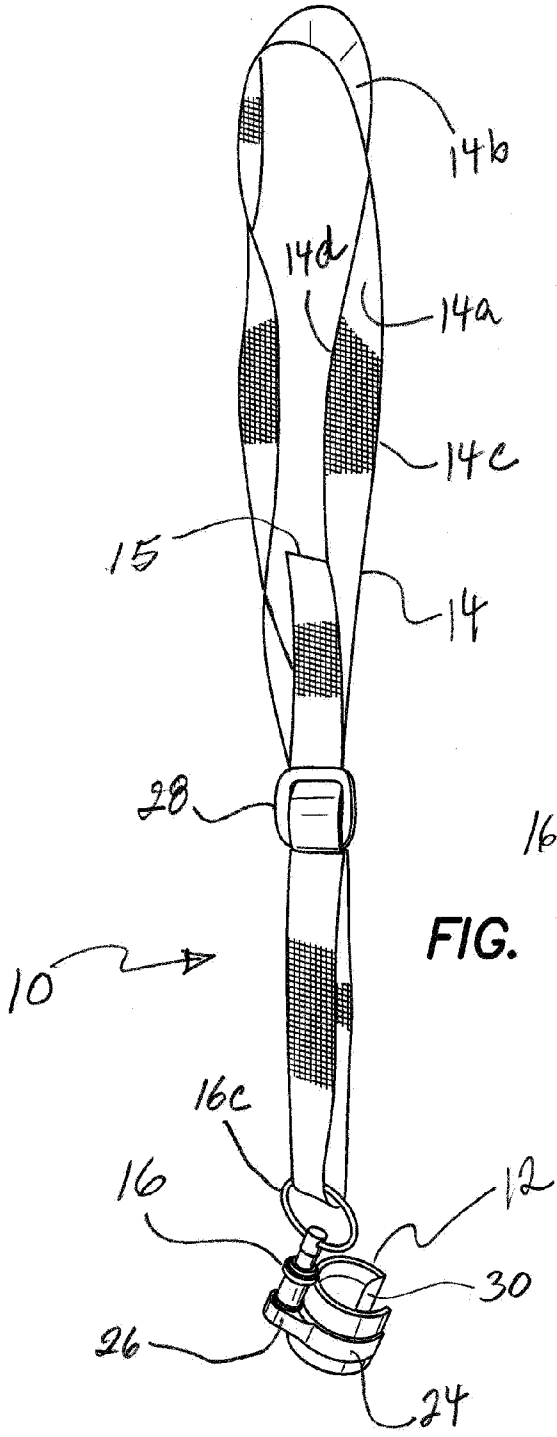
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A training aid for use with golf clubs has a coupler easily interchangeable from one club to another with an attached hand strap for wrapping about the golfer's hand to restrain the club against slipping from the user's grip while swinging the club, thereby to encourage a looser and more natural grip on the club.

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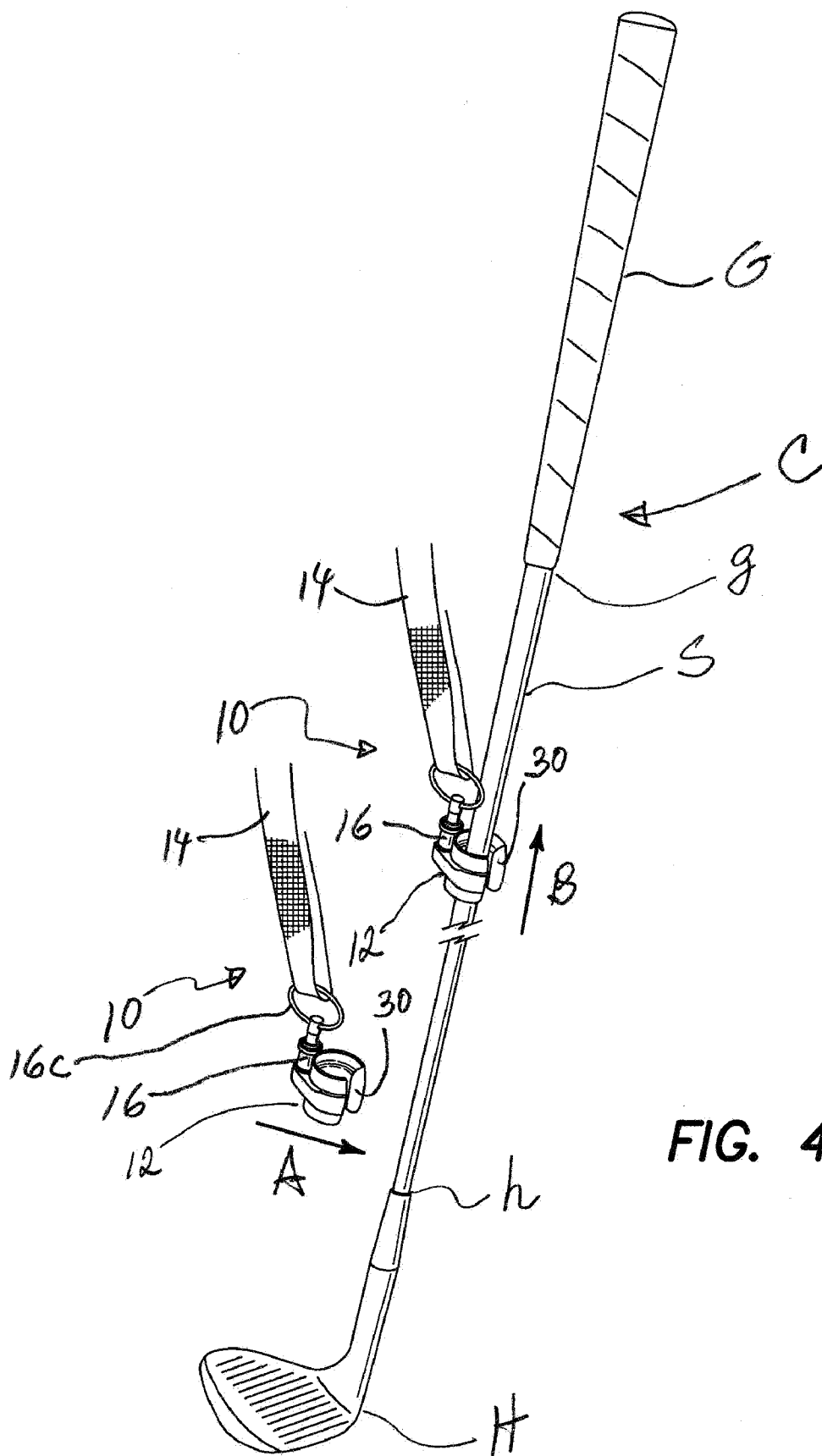


FIG. 4A

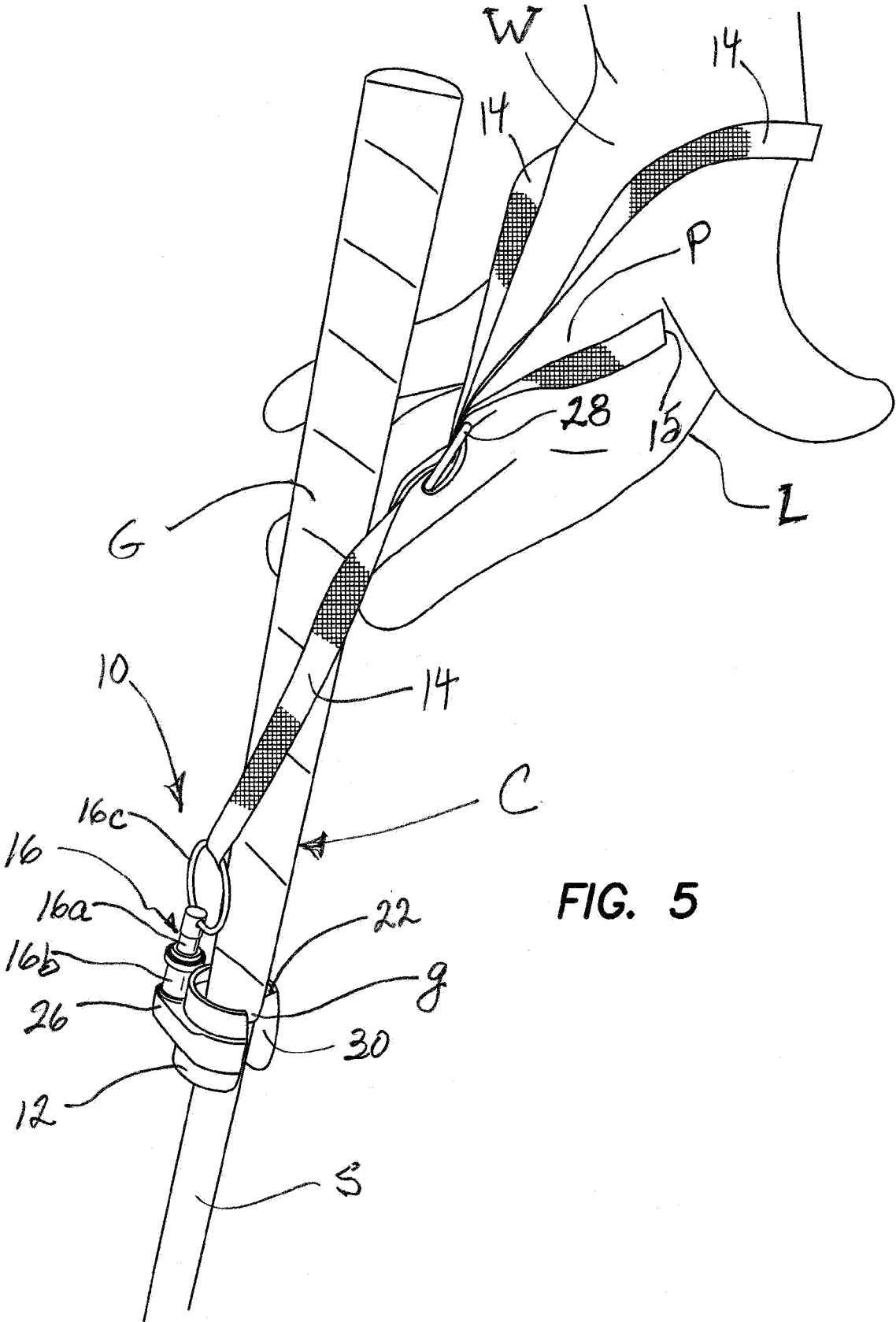
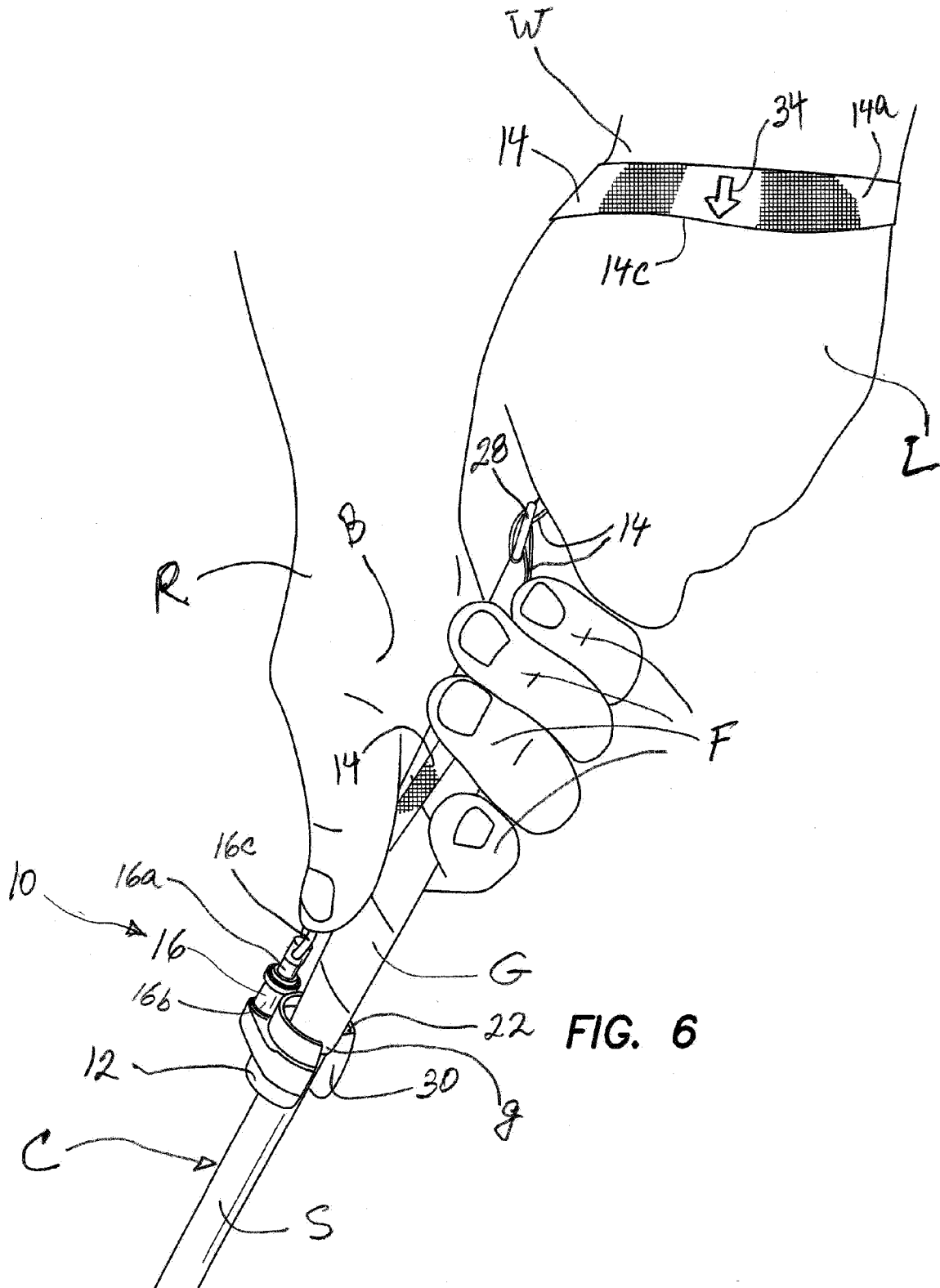


FIG. 5



**GRIP TRAINING AID FOR GOLF CLUBS**

**[0001]** This application claims priority to the filing date of provisional patent application No. 61/013,312 filed Dec. 13, 2007.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

**[0002]** 1. Field of the Invention

**[0003]** This invention generally pertains to the field of sporting equipment and more particularly is directed to a training aid for use with golf clubs which are gripped and swung by a player for driving a ball in play.

**[0004]** 2. State of the Prior Art

**[0005]** Many sports require use of an instrument such as a club, racket or bat, etc. Many people cannot develop a consistent powerful swing with the instrument due to gripping the instrument too tight. This is done in many cases because the player has a conscious or subconscious fear of losing the instrument from his or her grip during the swing. This overly tight grip may keep the player from properly “cocking” their wrist and may result in error prone “guiding” of the instrument.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

**[0006]** This invention is an easily attached safety strap that attaches to the instrument on one end and goes around the wrist on the other. This allows the user to properly cock their wrist, at the right time, by safely loosening or even releasing their grip to practice their swing safely. This kind of practice develops a more efficient, powerful, natural swing without error prone “guiding” caused by too tight a grip.

**[0007]** The invention is a training aid for use with golf clubs of the type having a shaft of tapering thickness between a club grip and a club head, comprising a coupler releasably attachable to the shaft near or against the club grip, and a hand strap attached to the coupler and adapted for wrapping about a club user’s hand gripping the club grip thereby to keep the club from slipping out of the user’s grip when swinging the club.

**[0008]** In a presently preferred embodiment the coupler is a retaining collar having an interior dimension sized to encompass the club shaft near the club grip, with a slot in the collar sized for admitting the club shaft radially into the collar at a narrower shaft location spaced from the club grip but for retaining the collar radially on the shaft at a thicker club location near the club grip. The interior dimension of the collar is sized to keep the collar against axial displacement over the club grip while allowing the collar to turn or swivel about the club shaft.

**[0009]** The hand strap is fastened to the retaining collar, preferably by a releasable swivel connector. The hand strap is preferably adjustable in effective length to permit tightening the strap between the user’s gripping hand on the club grip and the coupler or collar attached to the club shaft. For example, the hand strap may be threaded through a buckle to allow adjustment of the hand strap effective length to a relatively taut, slack-free state between the player’s gripping hand and the club shaft in order to restrain the club grip against slipping significantly through the player’s gripping hand while the club is swung.

**[0010]** The coupler with the strap is interchangeably attachable to any of multiple golf clubs in a set of clubs each having

a shaft of tapering width, so that the same grip training aid can be moved from club to club as different clubs come into play during a game.

**[0011]** The presently preferred strap is a flat band with two strap sides or faces between two strap edges. One side or face of the strap may be marked for identifying a correct outward facing side of the strap when wrapped about the wrist of the user’s gripping hand. The strap may be further marked for further identifying one strap edge on the outward facing side as a correct club facing strap edge of the strap when worn about the wrist of the gripping hand.

**[0012]** The invention also encompasses a method for improving a golfer’s two handed grip on a golf club of the type having a club shaft between a club grip and a club head, comprising the steps of releasably attaching a strap to the club shaft; and wrapping the strap about an upper hand of the two handed grip thereby to restrain the club against significant slippage through the two handed grip during swinging of the club by the golfer. The novel method further comprises the step of tightening the strap to minimize displacement of the club relative to the upper hand during swinging of the club by the golfer. The method still further comprises the step of releasing the strap from the club shaft such that the strap is available for use on another golf club in a set of clubs used by the golfer. Preferably the strap is attachable to the golf club by a retainer collar slotted for admitting a narrow portion of the club shaft but sized to hold the collar against release from the shaft on a thicker portion of the shaft near or adjacent to the club grip.

**[0013]** More generally, the invention is a training aid for use with a sport instrument such as a club, bat or racket of the type having a shaft between an instrument head and an instrument grip by a player holding the grip with at least one gripping hand. The training aid has a coupler removably attachable to the shaft near the grip and a hand strap attached to the coupler and adapted for wrapping about the aforementioned hand of the player, the hand strap being adjustable for tightening between the gripping hand of the player and the shaft thereby to substantially prevent longitudinal displacement of the shaft away from the gripping hand during swinging of the instrument by the player.

**[0014]** The invention further contemplates a general method for improving a player’s hand grip on a club, bat or racket of the type having a shaft between an instrument head and an instrument grip, comprising the steps of attaching a coupler to the shaft near the grip with a hand strap attached to the coupler and adapted for wrapping about a gripping hand of the player, the hand strap being adjustable for tightening between the gripping hand of the player and the shaft thereby to substantially prevent longitudinal displacement of the shaft away from the gripping hand during swinging of the club, bat or racket by the player.

**[0015]** These and other improvements, features and advantages of the present invention will be better understood by reference to the following detailed description of the preferred embodiment taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

**[0016]** FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a grip training aid according to this invention;

**[0017]** FIG. 2 is a top-plan view of the coupler or retaining collar of the grip training aid of FIG. 1;

[0018] FIG. 3 is a side elevational view of the retaining collar of the grip training aid of FIG. 1;

[0019] FIG. 4 is a longitudinal section of the retaining collar taken along line 4-4 in FIG. 3;

[0020] FIG. 4A shows how the grip training aid of FIG. 1 is releasably attached to a typical golf club by radially admitting the shaft into the slotted retaining collar and then sliding the slotted collar upwardly towards the club grip to a thicker location of the club shaft;

[0021] FIG. 5 shows how the hand strap of the training aid is wrapped about the wrist of the upper gripping hand of the golf club user; and

[0022] FIG. 6 shows a typical two-handed grip on the golf club of a right handed golfer showing how the hand strap is worn around the wrist of the upper gripping hand and the strap extends along the club grip to the retaining collar below the club grip.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0023] A presently preferred embodiment of the invention is used on a golf club and has an adjustable strap that goes around the wrist of the golfer gripping the club. In this embodiment the strap attaches to a 0.75" long by 1" diameter O.D. 0.6" I.D. metal tube, with a 0.4" slot in the side that allows it to fit onto the lower part of the club shaft. It slides up the tapered shaft to the grip where it can't come off. The end of the tube that comes in contact with the grip is tapered inside to outside for 0.3" to act a compression fit to prevent the grip from being pushed up the shaft during use. When the strap is adjusted properly, the golfer's hands fit the grip normally. Since (typically) all clubs in a golfer's bag have the same grip, the strap can be used quickly and easily to attach to any of the clubs without any further adjustment and no damage to the clubs.

[0024] With reference to the accompanying drawings wherein like elements are designated by like numerals, FIG. 1 shows a grip training aid, generally designated by numeral 10, according to the present invention. The training aid 10 is used with commercially available golf clubs for the purpose of improving the golfer's swing when driving a golf ball with the club.

[0025] A typical golf club, generally designated by the letter C, is shown in FIG. 4A. Club C has a club shaft S between a club grip G and a club head H. The club shaft S is usually of circular cross-section and of tapering thickness between the club grip G and club head H, having greatest thickness immediately adjacent to the lower end g of club grip G, and smallest thickness near the top end h of the club head H.

[0026] With reference to FIGS. 1 through 4 of the drawings, the training aid 10 has a retaining collar 12 which is attached to a hand strap 14 by means of a swivel connector 16. As better seen in FIGS. 2 through 4, the retaining collar 12 has a generally annular or ring shaped collar wall 18 with an interior collar surface 20. In horizontal or axial cross-section the collar wall 20 is circular in curvature as best seen in the top view of FIG. 2. In vertical or longitudinal section, shown in FIG. 4, the collar interior surface 20 tapers in diameter from the top 20a to its bottom 20b. The taper of inner surface 20 is preferably chosen to match the taper of the club shaft S. In the vicinity of the top end 20a the inner surface 20 flares outwardly at an increased rate to form a rounded shoulder 22. The collar 12 further has an external rib 24 which provides

support and strength for a boss 26. The collar 12 with rib 24 and boss 26 may be machined as a one piece, unitary element from a block of material such as aluminum or other relatively strong and rigid material.

[0027] Boss 26 has a hole therethrough (not shown) extending axially parallel to the longitudinal axis of inner surface 20. A quick release swivel connector 16 mates to this hole and passes through boss 26 as best seen in FIG. 3. Swivel connector 16 may be a commercially available key chain swivel connector, for example, of a type which is commercially available as Article No. 9500 from S. Axelrod Company, 7 West 30 Street, New York, N.Y. 10001. Briefly, the swivel connector 16 has a spring loaded plunger 16a which when depressed into connector sleeve 16b radially retracts a ball detent with the throughhole in boss 26. The throughhole has a stepped inside diameter to provide a detent shoulder which prevents the sleeve 16b from pulling out of boss 26 while the detent ball of connector 16 is in its normal radially extended position. Pushing the plunger 16a into connector sleeve 16b retracts the ball detent and allows the connector 16 to be detached from collar 12. Operation of such swivel connectors 16 is well known and does not require further description herein.

[0028] The plunger 16a of the swivel connector 16 has a ring 16c at its upper free end. Ring 16c passes through a diametric hole in plunger 16a and is free to swivel about the axis of this diametric hole, i.e., side to side relative to the plane of ring 16c. Furthermore, plunger 16a is free to turn or swivel about its own axis within connector sleeve 16b and consequently also relative to the retaining collar 12.

[0029] Hand strap 14 is a continuous length of strong, pliable material such as a woven synthetic material. The strap is a flat band with opposite strap sides or strap faces 14a, 14b between two opposite strap edges 14c, 14d. One end of strap 14 is fastened to a buckle 28 and a free end 15 of strap 14 is threaded through the buckle 28 to form two loops connected by the buckle; a lower loop between ring 16c and buckle 28 and a free upper loop freely extending from buckle 28. The looping of strap 14 through buckle 28 allows the strap 14 to be adjustable in effective length, and permits adjustment of each of the two loops of the strap relative to each other. For example, the effective length of the lower loop (i.e. the distance between buckle 28 and ring 16c) can be lengthened or shortened by suitable repositioning of the buckle 28 along the strap 14 in a well known manner. Likewise, the free end 15 of the strap can be pulled through the buckle 28 for shortening or lengthening the free upper loop of the strap extending above buckle 28 in FIG. 1. A combination of these adjustments can be made to achieve a desired net length of the hand strap 14 and of the relative sizes of the two loops of hand strap 14.

[0030] The annular wall 18 of retainer collar 12 is interrupted by an axially extending slot 30. The slot 30 has a width measured in a circumferential direction of the collar 12 sized to admit the thickness of club shaft S at a location spaced from the club grip G and nearer to the club head H. The club shaft S is admitted into collar 12 in a radial direction as suggested by arrow A in FIG. 4a. Collar 12 is then slid upwardly along club shaft S as suggested by arrow B in the same figure until the shoulder 22 abuts against the lower edge g of club grip G, a condition illustrated in FIG. 5. As collar 12 is slid upwardly on shaft S the thickness of shaft S increases to a shaft width greater than the width of collar slot 30, thereby preventing the collar 12 from separating radially from the club shaft S.

[0031] Once the collar 12 is installed as just explained, the golfer, player or club user then inserts his or her hand through the free upper loop of hand strap 14 as shown in FIG. 5. The upper loop of hand strap 14 is wrapped around the wrist of the golfer's hand L with buckle 28 generally contained between the palm P of golfer's hand L and club grip G. The shoulder 22 of collar 12 provides an abutment against the lower end g of the club grip G and prevents collar 12 from further upward movement over the club grip G and anchors strap 14 relative to golf club C against upward pulling force by the club user's hand.

[0032] Retaining collar 12 is free to turn on the club shaft to accommodate pulling force transmitted through the hand strap 14 or simply in response to manual positioning of the collar by the golfer, allowing orientation and positioning of the boss 26 about the shaft circumference to keep the strap 14 from wrapping around shaft S and facilitate a relatively straight connection of strap 14 along the club shaft S between collar 12 and the user's gripping hand on the club grip G.

[0033] The golfer then completes his or her two handed grip on golf club C in a normal manner. The golfer's strong or dominant hand is normally the lower hand in the two-handed grip used by golfers, while the weaker hand becomes the upper hand in the two-handed grip. FIG. 6 illustrates a typical two handed grip of golf club C by a right handed golfer. The overall or effective length of hand strap 14 is adjusted such that there is little and preferably no substantial slack in the hand strap looped around wrist W of the player's upper gripping hand L as the strap extends downwardly from the wrist alongside the club grip G to its attachment at ring 16c of swivel connector 16 and thus to the retaining collar 12, which itself is in abutment against club grip G as has been previously explained thereby keeping taut the hand strap 14. Proper length adjustment of strap 14 helps to correctly position the golfer's upper hand along club grip G, lending consistency to the golfer's grip on the golf club C. The lower gripping hand R in FIG. 6 grips the club grip G in normal fashion below hand L. The hand strap 14 generally extends along the club grip G between the fingers F and the ball B of lower gripping hand R. As a result the hand strap 14 including buckle 28 do not appreciably interfere with the golfer's hand grip on club grip G, and the golf club C is used and swung in a normal manner for driving a golf ball with the club head H. For a left-handed golfer, the dominant left hand will normally be the lower gripping hand in which case the strap 14 is worn around the wrist of the upper right hand in such player's two-handed grip on club C, reversing the positions of the hands shown in FIG. 6.

[0034] The hand strap 14 wrapped around wrist W serves to reassure the player from fear of losing the club C during the swing and encourages the player to lighten his or her hand grip on the club, thereby leading to a more natural and effective swing. The device 10 used in this fashion trains the golfer, particularly novice golfers, to relax their grip on the club and not over grip as is common tendency among novice golfers.

[0035] It will be appreciated that the grip training aid 10 is easily installed and removed from conventional, commercially available golf clubs without modification or damage to the club. A single training aid 10 can be easily and conveniently moved from one club to another in a set of multiple clubs typically carried by golfers as different clubs come into play during a game.

[0036] The hand strap 14 may be provided with indicia such as a directional arrow 34 shown in FIG. 6, printed or other-

wise applied to an outer side or face 14a of the hand strap, the arrow pointing towards a particular side edge 14c of the hand strap, to facilitate use of the training aid 10 by visually indicating to the player a correct outward facing side of the strap 14 as well as a correct club facing edge 14c of the same strap, so that once the length of the strap has been correctly adjusted this length for a particular player and a particular set of golf clubs, the strap length is maintained by wearing the strap 14 in a consistent manner on the player's hand.

[0037] The training aid 10 can be modified in various ways without loss of function. For example, it is contemplated that the hand strap 14 could be held together by appropriate use of adjustable Velcro fasteners in lieu of buckle 28.

[0038] While a particular embodiment of the invention has been described and illustrated for purposes of clarity and explanation it must be understood that still other changes, modifications and substitutions will be apparent to those having only ordinary skill in the art without thereby departing from the scope of the invention as defined by the following claims.

What is claimed:

1. A training aid for use with golf clubs of the type having a shaft of tapering thickness between a club grip and a club head, comprising:

a coupler releasably attachable to said shaft near said club grip and a hand strap attached to said coupler and adapted for wrapping about the hand of a club user gripping said club grip thereby to keep said club from slipping out of the user's grip when swinging the club.

2. The training aid of claim 1 wherein said coupler is a collar having an interior dimension sized to encompass said club shaft near said club grip, a slot in said collar sized for admitting said shaft radially into said collar at a shaft location spaced from said club grip but for retaining said collar radially on said shaft at a location near said club grip, said interior dimension sized to keep said collar against axial displacement over said club grip.

3. The training aid of claim 1 wherein said hand strap is adjustable in length for tightening said strap between said hand of a club user gripping said club grip and said coupler attached to said club shaft.

4. The training aid of claim 1 wherein said hand strap is adjustable for keeping said club from significant displacement through said hand of a club user gripping said club grip while said hand is swinging said club.

5. The training aid of claim 1 wherein said hand strap is releasably fastened to said coupler.

6. The training aid of claim 1 wherein said coupler with said strap is interchangeably attachable to multiple golf clubs each having said shaft of tapering width.

7. The training aid of claim 1 wherein said strap is of relatively inelastic material.

8. The training aid of claim 1 wherein said strap is a flat band marked on one side thereof for identifying an outward facing side of said strap when wrapped about said hand.

9. The training aid of claim 8 wherein said flat band is further marked for identifying one strap edge on said outward facing side as a club facing strap edge when wrapped about said hand.

10. The training aid of claim 1 wherein said strap has two strap sides between two strap edges and further comprising indicia on one of said strap sides for identifying one of said strap edges as a club facing edge of said strap when wrapped about said hand.



11. A training aid for use with golf clubs of the type having a shaft of tapering thickness between a club grip and a club head, comprising:

a retaining collar having an interior dimension sized to encompass said club shaft near said club grip, a slot in said collar sized for admitting said shaft radially into said collar at a shaft location spaced from said club grip but for retaining said collar radially on said shaft at a location near said club grip, said interior dimension sized to keep said collar against axial displacement over said club grip, and a hand strap attached to said collar and adapted for wrapping about the hand of a club user gripping said club grip thereby to keep said club from slipping out of the user's grip when swinging the club.

12. The training aid of claim 11 wherein said strap has two strap sides between two strap edges and further comprising indicia on one of said strap sides for identifying one of said strap edges as a club facing edge of said strap when wrapped about said hand.

13. A method for improving a golfer's two handed grip on a golf club of the type having a club shaft between a club grip and a club head, comprising the steps of:

releasably attaching a strap to said club shaft; and wrapping said strap about an upper hand of said two handed grip thereby to restrain said club against substantial slippage through said two handed grip during swinging of said club by said golfer.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of tightening said strap to minimize displacement of said club relative to said upper hand during swinging of said club by said golfer.

15. The method of claim 13 further comprising the steps of releasing said strap from said club shaft such that said strap is available for use on another said golf club in a set of clubs used by said golfer.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein said strap is attachable to said golf club by a retainer collar slotted for admitting a narrow portion of said shaft but held against release from said shaft on a thicker portion of said shaft near or adjacent to said club grip.

17. A training aid for use with a club, bat or racket of the type having a shaft between a head and a grip by a player holding said grip with at least one gripping hand, comprising:

a coupler attachable to said shaft near said grip and a hand strap attached to said coupler and adapted for wrapping about said least one hand of said player, said hand strap being adjustable for tightening between a said gripping hand of said player around said grip and said shaft thereby to substantially prevent longitudinal displacement of said shaft away from said gripping hand during swing of said club, bat or racket.

18. A method for improving a player's hand grip on a club, bat or racket of the type having a shaft between a head and a grip, comprising:

attaching a coupler to said shaft near said grip with a hand strap attached to said coupler and adapted for wrapping about a gripping hand of said player, said hand strap being adjustable for tightening between said gripping hand of said player and said shaft thereby to substantially prevent longitudinal displacement of said shaft away from said gripping hand during swing of said club, bat or racket.

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