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(54) **A tennis practice aid.**

(57) A tennis practice device 10 providing a rebound surface 13 against which a ball is hit, to be returned to the user, the rebound surface consists of two sub-surfaces 17, 18 which are pivotally mounted so as to be pivotable relative to each other about a vertical axis, while being simultaneously supported so as to be tiltable about a horizontal axis.

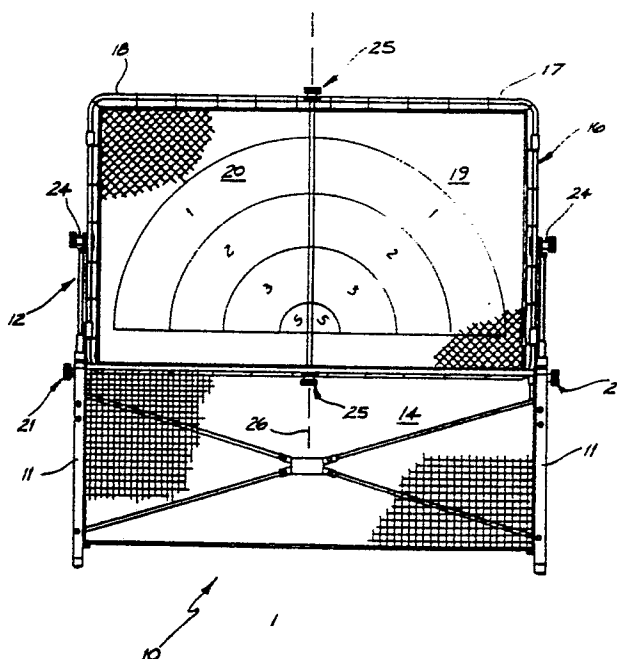


FIG. 1

A TENNIS PRACTICE AID

The present invention relates to sports aids which provide a rebound surface for a ball, and more particularly but not exclusively to a tennis practise aid.

There are commercially available tennis practise aids which provide a rebound surface in the form of a woven mesh or solid surface. The surface is basically upwardly extending and is planar, however it can be adjusted so that the planar surface can be inclined to the vertical. Such devices are shown in USA Patents 4,082,271, 4,093,218, 4,140,313, 3,427,026, 4,183,524, 3,456,945, 4,568,089, 4,456,252, 4,309,032 and 4,456,251. Rebound surfaces which are inclined about a vertical axis or curved are disclosed in USA Patent 3,473,720 and 3,697,068. These devices are generally designed to direct the ball to a central point. However, it should be appreciated that the surfaces are not adjustable.

The above discussed practice devices have the disadvantage that the rebound surfaces are not adjustable about a horizontal axis, as well as a vertical axis, in order to provide a full range of rebound shots. This limits the number of practice shots which can be executed.

Still further to the above, a rebound surface is not provided in conjunction with a surface which does not return the ball so as to simulate a "net ball". Accordingly, known practice aids facilitate the practice of incorrect shots.

The above discussed devices have the disadvantage that the rebound surface is limited in respect of the variety of practise shots which may be played.

It is the object of the present invention to overcome or substantially ameliorate the above disadvantages.

There is disclosed herein a rebound device for a ball game, said device comprising a frame to rest on a support surface, a rebound surface supported on the frame and against which a ball may be hit to be returned to a user, and wherein said rebound surface is adjustably supported on said frame so as to be tiltably adjustable relative to the vertical, and said rebound surface consists of at least two sub-surfaces which are adjustable so as to be movable relative to each other between a first position wherein they are located generally in the same plane, and a second position wherein they define an angle less than 180°.

A preferred form of the present invention will now be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Fig. 1 is a schematic front elevation of a tennis practise aid;

Fig. 2 is a schematic side elevation of the tennis practise aid of Fig. 1; and

Fig. 3 is a schematic plan view of the tennis practise aid of Fig. 1.

In the accompanying drawings there is schematically depicted a tennis practise aid 10 to rest on a ground surface. The practise aid 10 consists of a frame 11 which supports a rebound surface assembly 12 providing a rebound surface 13.

The frame 11 supports a net 14 with the upper edge thereof approximating the height of a normal tennis net. The frame 11 also supports a ball collection trough 15.

The assembly 12 consists of a generally rectangular frame 16 formed by two sub-frames 17 and 18. The surface 13 against which a ball is hit, consists of at least two sub-surfaces 19 and 20, with the sub-surface 19 being supported by the sub-frame 17, and the sub-surface 20 being supported by the sub-frame 18. The frame 16 is pivotally supported by pivots 21 so that the surface 13 may be inclined to the vertical, as best seen in Fig. 2. For example, the pivot 21 may include a rack 22 defining several positions (1-5) wherein the surface 13 is inclined to the vertical. The rack 22 would have a series of slots 23 which receive the shaft 24. It should be appreciated that each side of the frame 16 is provided with an associated shaft 24 and rack 22. The pivot 21 would also enable the assembly 12 to be movable from a practise position (A) to a non-operative lowered position (B), as seen in Fig. 2.

The sub-frames 17 and 18 are joined by means of adjustment member 25 so that the sub-surfaces 19 and 20 are movable angularly relative to each other about the axis 26 so as to be movable between a first position wherein the sub-surfaces 19 and 20 are generally co-planar, and a second position wherein the sub-surfaces 19 and 20 define an angle less than 180°. For example, in Fig. 3 the sub-frames 17 and 18 may be inclined so as to be locatable in any one of positions A to D.

The sub-frames 17 and 18 are supported by arms 27 in order to facilitate relative pivoting movement between the sub-frames 17 and 18.

It should be appreciated that by being able to incline the surface 13 to the vertical as well as being able to adjust the relative angle between the sub-surfaces 19 and 20, the aid 10 provides the advantage that a large range of shots may be practised. Still further, the aid 10 may be used as a simple net support once the assembly 12 has been moved to the lowered position (B).

The rebound surface, i.e. including the sub-surfaces 19 and 20, may be formed of sheet material or a woven fabric, whichever is found to be most suitable. The material from which the surface 13 is constructed can be selected to govern the rebound qualities of the surface 13. Preferably the surface 13 would be held in tension by being coupled to the frame 16. The tension could also be adjust to determine the rebound qualities.

Claims

1. A rebound device (10) for a ball game, said device (10) comprising a frame (11) to rest on a support surface, a rebound surface supported (13) on the frame and against which a ball may be hit to be returned to a user, and wherein said rebound surface (13) is adjustably supported on said frame (11) so as to be tiltably adjustable relative to the vertical, and said rebound surface (13) consists of at least two sub-surfaces (19, 20) which are adjustable so as to be movable relative to each other between a first position wherein they are located generally in the same plane, and a second position wherein they define an angle less than 180°.

2. The device (10) of claim 1 wherein said frame (4) consists of a base frame (11) and two sub-frames (17, 18) mounted thereon, with each sub-surface (19, 20) being supported by a respective one of the sub-frames (17, 18).

3. The device (10) of claim 2 wherein the sub-frames (17, 18) have adjacent vertically extending edge portions pivotally attached so that pivoting of the sub-frames relative to each other provides for adjustment of the sub-surfaces (19, 20) between the first position and second position thereof.

4. The device (10) of claim 3 wherein said sub-frames (17, 18) are generally rectangular and pivotally mounted on said base frame (11) so as to be pivotable about a horizontal axis.

5. The device (10) of claim 1 wherein said sub-surface (19, 20) are vertically spaced from the support surface, and said frame (11) further supports a net means (14) approximating the height of a tennis court net positioned generally below the rebound surface (13).

6. A rebound device (10) for a ball game, said device comprising a frame (11) to rest on a support surface, a rebound surface (13) supported on the frame (11) and against which a ball may be hit to return to a user, with said rebound surface (13) being generally upwardly extending and spaced from the support surface, net means (14) also supported by said frames (11) and being positioned generally below said rebound surface (13) and being generally horizontally co-extensive with respect thereto, and wherein said net means (14)

has an upper generally horizontally extending edge portion approximating the height of a tennis court net, and is adapted to inhibit the return of the ball.

7. The device (10) of claim 6 wherein said frame (4) consists of a base frame (4) to rest on said support surface, and to which said net means (14) is attached, and a sub-frames (19, 20) means pivotally attached to said base frame (11) and supporting said rebound surface (13), so that said rebound surface (13) is movable between a generally upwardly extending operative position, and a folded position located generally below said net means (14).

8. The device (10) of claim 6 wherein said rebound surfaces (13) is adjustably supported on said frame (11) so as to be tiltably adjustable relative to the vertical, and said rebound surface (13) consists of at least two sub-surfaces (17, 18) which are generally vertically co-extensive, said sub-surfaces (17, 18) being adjustable so as to be movable relative to each other between a first position wherein they are located in the same plane, and a second position wherein they define an angle less than 180°.

9. The device (10) of claim 8 wherein said sub-surfaces (17, 18) are pivotable relative to each other about a vertical axis, and said sub-surfaces are pivotable about a horizontal axis.

Neu eingereicht / Newly filed
Nouvellement déposé
(R 35)

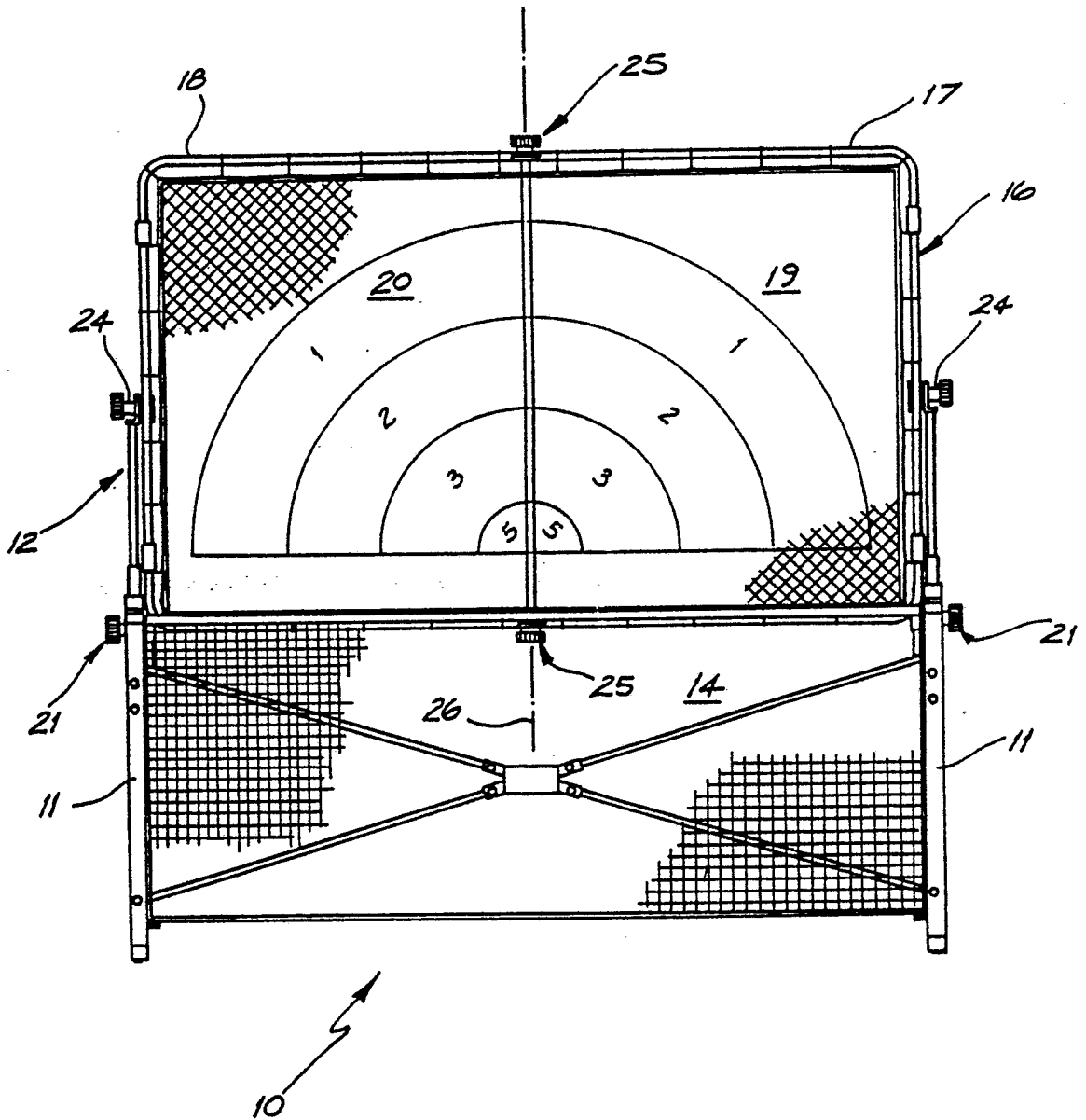


FIG. 1

Neu eingereicht / Newly filed
Nouvellement déposé
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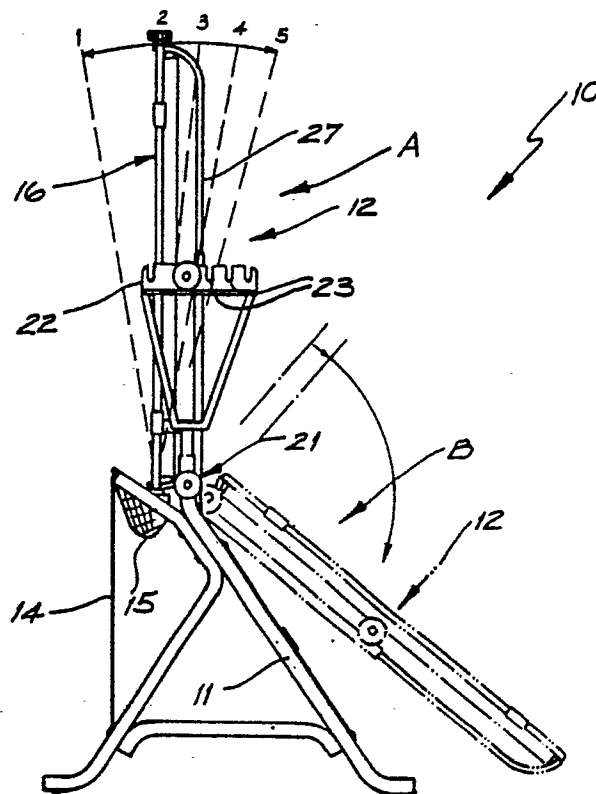


FIG. 2

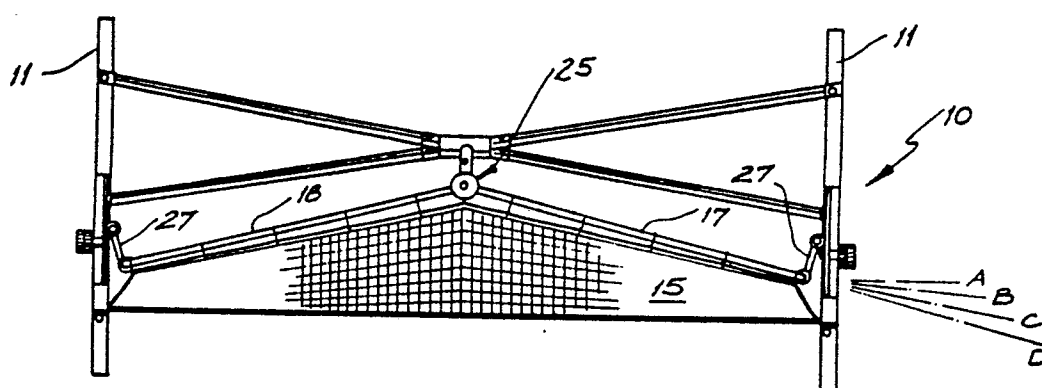


FIG. 3