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(72) Inventor: **Donbaek, Leo
Arnum, 6510 Gram (DK)**

(74) Representative: **Tellefsen, Jens J. et al
Patrade A/S,
Fredens Torv 3A
8000 Aarhus C (DK)**

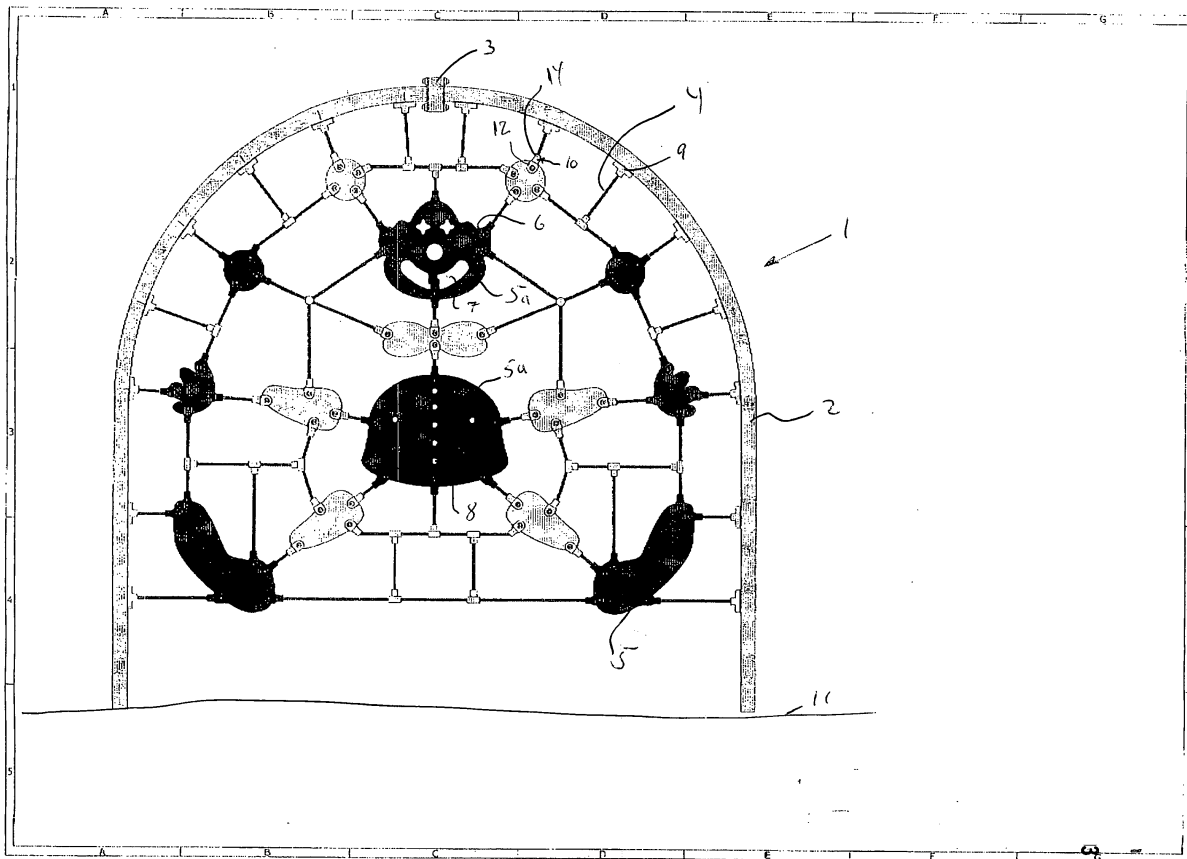
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(71) Applicant: **Ledon A/S
6510 Gram (DK)**

(54) **Free-standing climbing unit**

(57) A free-standing climbing unit (1) is disclosed, comprising a preferably upwards closed frame (2) and a climbing net (4) suspended in the frame, where the

climbing net (84) includes a number of plate elements (5, 5a) that are individually designed as either a figure or a part of a figure.



EP 1 421 977 A1

Description

[0001] The present invention concerns a free-standing climbing unit including a frame preferably closed at the top and a climbing net suspended in the frame.

[0002] Free-standing climbing units are known from military practice grounds, in which are suspended a climbing net, but these units are only used for physical training of soldiers, and not as play equipment.

[0003] On many playgrounds there are climbing tools in the form of a climbing net erected in connection with other play equipment. This implies that the playing children are using the climbing net to get up into other play equipment, as e.g. a slide, a gangway and/or a tower arrangement.

[0004] The disadvantage of a climbing net is that for the children it is regarded as boring to climb around in a net without any purpose, and therefore climbing nets are often only used as accessing tool for other play equipment.

[0005] It is therefore the purpose of this invention to provide a climbing unit which is preferably free-standing, and which can be regarded as exciting and interesting to climb and to play in for children.

[0006] This is achieved with a climbing unit which is peculiar in that the climbing net includes a number of plate elements that are individually designed either as a figure or as a part of a figure.

[0007] In an embodiment of the invention, the climbing net is provided with a plate element designed as a figure. This figure can assume different shapes, as e.g. a house, an animal, a human being, a ship, a car, a train and the like, which figure is preferably suspended at the centre of the climbing net and which furthermore may be suspended strategically in the climbing net for achieving a visual effect or a greater enjoyment of playing for the children.

[0008] In a further embodiment of the invention, the climbing net is provided with several plate elements that are each designed as a part of a total figure that together with the pattern in the climbing net constitutes a visual presentation of a known element, e.g. a clown, spider, snakes or similar.

[0009] Furthermore, these plate elements may be designed as letters or numbers that are arbitrarily suspended in the climbing net, so that the children can have a play of climbing from number to number, or to climb from letter to letter, thus spelling a word or calculating an arithmetic.

[0010] The climbing net itself is provided so that it secures the individual plate elements in the desired position and furthermore forms a pattern that together with the plate elements present a visual effect in the climbing unit.

[0011] In order to make the figure, or the parts of the figure made of the plate element, easier to climb in, and maybe present a more visually attractive appearance, these plate elements are provided with holes, projec-

tions, foot pieces and/or handles. By providing the plate elements with one of these above mentioned units, the figures will thus come to resemble real figures, or, if the plate elements are large, one may attach foot pieces/handles so that they form part of decoration of the figure and may simultaneously be used as step/grip elements so that children playing in the climbing net may use the figure to get further up into the climbing net.

[0012] Holes and recesses may provide that the figures will very much resemble the real elements, but they are also providing that one may e.g. view the same figure from both sides of the climbing net.

[0013] In a climbing net designed with special, popular figures, as e.g. cartoon figures, popular animal species and similar, it is important that the climbing net is made of net meshes of different pattern adapted to a figure formed of a number of the plate elements.

[0014] When the climbing net is designed in a pattern adapting the figure in the climbing net, it will also be more natural and funnier for the children as visual effect, and thereby the climbing net is more attractive for the children when the net meshes support the figure. E.g. a spider may be placed in a spider's web.

[0015] In an embodiment of the invention, the plate elements are a part of the climbing net. This means that between the climbing net and the plate element there is used specially designed connection pieces with fork members that may be used for connecting a plate element, and a rope end.

[0016] In a further embodiment of the invention, the plate element is partially enclosed by the climbing net. This implies that the climbing net is made as one large net on which it is subsequently determined, where the plate element is to be located, and preferably identical plate elements are disposed at each their side of the climbing net, after which the plate elements are clamped together so that they squeeze about the climbing net and are thereby held in the desired position.

[0017] As the free-standing climbing units will typically stand outdoors, these plate elements are made of wood or plastic with required strength, as these are materials that may be used or made in a weather-resistant version and which are not degraded. These plate elements are, as mentioned, to be made with a strength providing that they do not succumb to the weight or tension occurring in it when the children are crawling around in the climbing net.

[0018] In order to set up the climbing net, it is to be suspended in a frame. In an embodiment of the invention, the said frame is a portal formed of a number of straight and curved profiles. This implies that the climbing unit may have a frame with two vertically upright posts interconnected with a curved profile, making the climbing unit a visually nice unit.

[0019] A further embodiment could also be that the frame is a portal consisting of two posts with a cross member which are made in identical profiles. Alternatively, the the frame may be designed of two posts be-

tween which a climbing net is suspended.

[0020] In order maybe to make the climbing unit more play-friendly, the portal section of the frame, e.g. the curved part, may e.g. be designed so that the curved profile besides constitutes a sliding tube which the children, when they have climbed up in the climbing unit, may slide downwards, providing that the climbing unit is also having a little sliding effect.

[0021] As disclosed, the climbing unit is preferably a free-standing unit but may furthermore also be built together with a number of other play equipment, whereby the climbing unit e.g. may be used as link between two pieces of play equipment.

[0022] In the following, the invention is described with reference to the drawing that, without being limiting, shows a preferred embodiment of a climbing unit according to the invention.

Fig. 1 shows a climbing unit with suspended climbing net and a clown figure.

[0023] On Fig. 1 is seen a free-standing climbing unit 1 including a frame 2 which is this version of the invention consists of two curved tube profiles that are assembled with an external flange joint 3 at the top. Instead of the flange joint 3, an internal assembly may be used so that the joint is smooth at the outside. In this frame 2 is suspended a climbing net 4 which includes a number of plate elements 5. In this embodiment of the invention, the climbing net 4 and plate elements 5 are designed so that visually a clown is presented, playing with a number of balls.

[0024] Plate elements 5 may be designed with recesses 6 and holes 7, as shown in the plate element 5a forming the clown's head on the figure.

[0025] The plate element 5b forming the body of the clown may in some cases be mounted with foot supports/climbing handles 8 as a part of the decoration of the body.

[0026] The plate members 5 may be in different colours so that it becomes visually more attractive to look at the climbing unit.

[0027] The climbing net 4 is fastened to the frame 2 with special fittings 9 that are developed for the purpose. The climbing net 4 is simultaneously fastened to the different plate elements with specially shaped transitions pieces 10 with fork members 12 and end fittings 14 arranged to receive and fix a rope end of the climbing net 4.

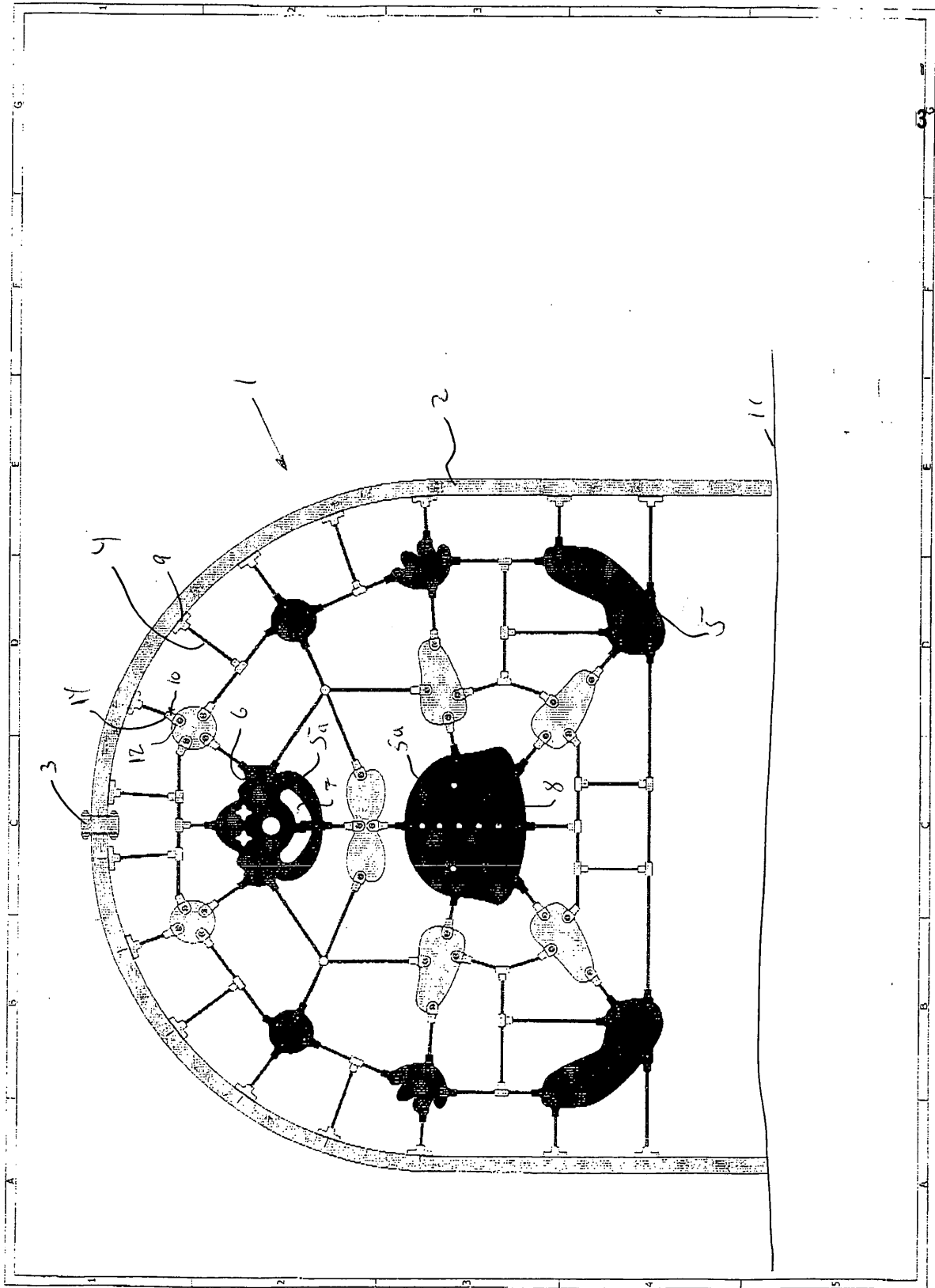
[0028] The climbing unit 1 is anchored in the ground 11 as a free-standing climbing unit.

net includes a number of plate elements that are individually designed either as a figure or as a part of a figure.

- 5 2. Climbing unit according to claim 1, **characterised in that** the said plate element are provided with holes, recesses, foot supports and/or handles.
- 10 3. Climbing unit according to claim 1, **characterised in that** the climbing net is designed with a number of net meshes of different pattern adapted to a figure formed of a number the plate elements.
- 15 4. Climbing unit according to any of claims 1 - 3, **characterised in that** the plate elements are a part of the climbing net.
- 20 5. Climbing unit according to any of claims 1 - 3, **characterised in that** the plate elements are partially enclosing the climbing net.
- 25 6. Climbing unit according to any of claims 1 - 5, **characterised in that** the plate elements are made of wood or plastic with the required strength.
- 30 7. Climbing unit according to claim 1, **characterised in that** the frame is a portal formed of a number of straight and curved profiles.

Claims

- 55 1. Free-standing climbing unit including a frame preferably closed at the top and a climbing net suspended in the frame, **characterised in that** the climbing





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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 03 02 6332

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.7)
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THE HAGUE	9 March 2004	Millward, R	
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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