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(54) **Golf tees and sets of golf tees**

(57) A golf tee (10;20;30;40) includes a visible indicium (19;29;39;49) (e.g., color, markings, letters, etc) corresponding to a tee length and part of a coding scheme assigning unique visible indicia to respective tee lengths and/or golf club configurations. A point of purchase display (100) includes a chart (200) correlating tee lengths with identifiers for golf club configura-

tions, brands and models. The chart follows the same coding scheme used on the golf tees. Separate compartments (110,120,130,140) in the point of purchase display contain golf tees of the same length. Appropriate visible indicia are printed on adjacent compartments containing corresponding length tees. Bags containing tees of the same length have visible indicia printed thereon matching visible indicia in the chart.

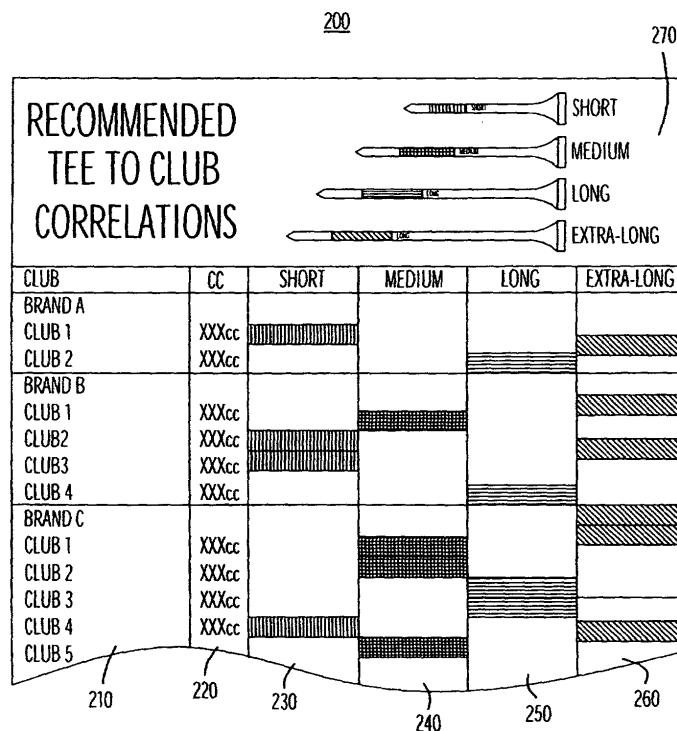


FIG.3

Description

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention pertains generally to golf tees.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] A golf tee enables a golfer to start every hole with a tee to elevate the golf ball to a desired position above the ground. Typically, golf tees are made of wood or plastic and have a shaft having a substantially constant diameter cross section over a predetermined portion of its length. The shaft converges to a pointed end adapted for insertion into the ground. The other end of the tee shaft flares smoothly outwardly and terminates in a concave spherical segment on which the golf ball is seated.

[0003] The desired height of the golf ball above ground is determined by the distance or depth that the pointed end of the tee is inserted into the ground. The ball height above the ground, depending upon the player's action during a golf swing, plays a part in the flight path and distance that the ball will travel when hit. If the ball is set too high above the ground, the ball will be more inclined to travel very high but not very far down the fairway. If the ball height is too low, the ball will tend to not achieve optimal vertical height and it may not, therefore, travel very far horizontally down the fairway.

[0004] The height of the ball above the ground on each tee shot will vary from golfer to golfer based on an individual's swing and, importantly, the golf club being used. In other words, it is desirable to have the clubface meet the ball at an optimum angle for each golf club. The advent of driver club heads of vastly different size has resulted in greater importance being attached to teeing a ball to the proper height. In this regard, tees of various lengths are available to suit the varying needs of different golfers. Many golfers are not educated to the fact that their new large-headed drivers have "sweet spots" located much higher on the clubface than is the case for the conventional size driver club heads, and that the traditional 5.4 cm (2-1/8") length tee does not position the ball at an optimum height to maximize the performance of the larger driver.

[0005] The difference between tees of different lengths is not readily apparent, particularly to a golfer who is attempting to select correct tee for a specific club or golf shot. This is all the more a problem when an assortment of tees are disposed in container, or even when a single tee is available. Thus, it is desirable to provide a method for enabling a golfer to easily visually recognize tees of the desired length.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] Briefly, a golf tee is provided having a visible

indiciu thereon corresponding to, or is associated with, a length of the golf tee or a club to be used with that tee. The visible indicium is part of a coding scheme that assigns a unique visible indicium to each of a plurality of different golf tee lengths. The visible indicium may, as in the preferred embodiment, be color, but it may also be a particular marking or pattern such as one or more stripes on the golf tee, or a combination thereof. A name may also be printed on the golf tee suggestive of its relative length. In this manner, a tee manufacturer may provide tees of different lengths, each length being associated with a different marking or indicium (e.g., a color in a stripe or pattern or for the entire tee) to enable a golfer or other person selecting tees to easily visually identify the desired tee without having to measure the tee length or compare lengths of plural tees. Sets of golf tees of different sizes and each marked with a respective visible indicium are also provided.

[0007] In addition, a point of purchase display is provided having a chart correlating one or more of a plurality of golf tee lengths with identifiers for a plurality of different golf club brands and models. The chart uses the same visible indicium coding scheme as that used on the golf tees. Separate compartments are provided in the point of purchase display to contain golf tees of the same length. The appropriate visible indicium is printed on the adjacent compartment containing the corresponding length golf tees. Thus, the golf tees have a visible indicium thereon matching a visible indicium in the chart and printed adjacent the compartment of the display containing the corresponding length golf tees.

[0008] Bags may be provided for selling a fixed number of golf tees of the same length. Each bag includes a visible indicium printed thereon that matches a visible indicium in the chart corresponding to the length of golf tees contained therein.

[0009] The golf tee and point of purchase display described herein enable golfers to select for purchase golf tees to best match the golf club that will be used during play.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0010]

FIGS. 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D are side views of golf tees of different lengths.

FIG. 1E is a diagram of a golf tee showing a different type of visible indicium coding scheme.

FIG. 2 is a front perspective view of a point of purchase display for the golf tees shown in FIGS. 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D.

FIG. 3 is an enlarged partial view of a chart on the point of purchase display that correlates golf club head sizes to recommended golf tee lengths.

FIGS. 4 and 5 are front views of bags to contain a plurality of golf tees of the same length.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0011] Referring first to FIGS. 1A, 1B, 1C and 1D, according to one aspect of the invention, golf tees of different lengths are marked with a visible indicium or indicator corresponding to or associated with their length. The visible indicium is part of a coding scheme comprising a plurality of unique visible indicia, each unique indicium assigned to a different golf tee length or the configuration of a golf club for which the particular tee is best suited. Thus, the coding scheme correlates golf tee lengths to golf club head sizes or configurations as described hereinafter in conjunction with FIGS. 2-4.

[0012] FIG. 1A illustrates a golf tee 10 of a longest length, FIG. 1B illustrates a golf tee 20 of a second longest length, FIG. 1C illustrates a golf tee 30 of a third longest length and FIG. 1D illustrates a golf tee 40 of a shortest length. Each golf tee has a shaft, a pointed tip and a concave, generally conical ball support. For example, golf tee 20 has a shaft 12, a tip 14 and a ball support 16. Golf tee 20 has a shaft 22, a tip 24 and a ball support 26. Golf tee 30 has a shaft 32, a tip 34 and a ball support 36. Golf tee 40 has a shaft 42, a tip 44 and a ball support 46.

[0013] There is a visible indicium on each golf tee 10, 20, 30 and 40 according to the aforementioned coding scheme whereby a unique visible indicium is assigned to a different golf tee length. That is, golf tee 10 has a visible indicium 19, golf tee 20 has a visible indicium 29, golf tee 30 has a visible indicium 39 and golf tee 40 has a visible indicium 49. The visible indicium may be a circumferential band or stripe around the shaft of the golf tee, where the band has a color such that a different color is assigned to each golf tee length. For example, the visible indicium 19 may be a blue color band on golf tee 10, the visible indicium 29 may be a green color band on golf tee 20, the visible indicium 39 may be a yellow color band on golf tee 30 and the visible indicium 49 may be a red color band on golf tee 40. Thus, a color-coded scheme is defined for the visible indicium to easily identify and differentiate each of the different length golf tees. For purposes of the figures, the colored bands are indicated by different cross-hatching patterns. While the band is referred to as a circumferential band, it should be understood that it may not extend entirely around the circumference of the golf tee shaft.

[0014] In addition or as an alternative to the above-described visible indicium, each different length tee may be assigned a different name to suggest its relative size. The name can also be used as a trademark for the golf tees. For example, a name for golf tee 10 is "EXTRA-LONG", a name for golf tee 20 is "LONG", a name for golf tee 30 is "MEDIUM", and a name for golf tee 40 is "SHORT". More creative names may also be desirable and still convey the relative size of the tee.

[0015] The lengths of the golf tees 10-40 may of course vary, as well as the lengths of their respective visible indicium, e.g., color bands or stripes. For exam-

ple, the "SHORT" golf tee 40 has a length of 5.4 cm (2-1/8 inches). The "MEDIUM" golf tee 30 has a length of 7 cm (2-3/4 inches). The "LONG" golf tee 20 has a length of 8.3 cm (3-1/4 inches). The "EXTRA-LONG" golf tee 10 has a length of 10 cm (4 inches). For example, the golf tees 10 and 20 are longer to allow for better set-up and alignment with the "sweet spot" of larger volume driver club heads.

[0016] The shorter golf tee 40 may be suitable for iron play or dry hard conditions where it may be difficult to penetrate the ground with a longer tee. The longer golf tee 10, 20 and 30 may be suitable for large volume driver club heads. In addition, the longest golf tee 10 has the greatest flexibility and is stable in soft soil conditions for use with large volume driver club heads.

[0017] According to another aspect, the visible indicium may be positioned on the golf tees, and their lengths chosen to facilitate accurate insertion of the tee in the ground to a sufficient depth to ensure that the golf tee supports a golf ball at the same desired height above the ground. Said another way, the visible indicia are positioned on the golf tees such that when a golf tee is inserted in the ground it supports a golf ball at a prescribed height for a corresponding golf club head size. Written instructions may be printed on a bag for the tees that instruct the golfer to insert the tee such that some portion or marking on the visible indicium is aligned with ground level to achieve the proper support height for a golf ball. For example, the marking or portion may be the top end of the band indicated at reference numeral 17 for the visible indicium 19 of golf tee 10. The golf tees 20, 30 and 40 would be used in a similar manner. Under such circumstances, the golf ball is positioned at a prescribed optimum height for the golf club that the player uses.

[0018] The visible indicium may take on a variety of other forms. Any marking of a distinguishable pattern may be suitable. For example, the visible indicium may be longitudinal or helical or other shape stripe. Yet another type of indicium shown in FIG. 1E is a defined number of bands or stripes (helical or straight) around the shaft of the tee (not necessarily entirely around the tee shaft) where the number of stripes corresponds to a length of the golf tee. For example, golf tee 10 may have four stripes or bands, golf tee 20 may have three stripes or bands, golf tee 30 may have two stripes or bands and golf tee 40 may have one stripe or band. Furthermore, each of the stripes or bands may take on a different color according to the color-coded scheme described above.

[0019] It will be appreciated that the color coding of tees in the manner described herein permits either or both of size and performance (i.e., club selection) to be coded to the color or other indicia on the tee, readily enabling visual recognition of the proper tee by the tee user.

[0020] According to another aspect of the invention, a point of purchase display includes a correlation chart,

displayed at the point of purchase, serving to correlate the length of tee with the size or volume of a golf club head, thereby prompting a golfer to think about which golf tee length he/she might need to match his/her particular golf clubs.

[0021] As illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3, the point of purchase display 100 is in the form of a container having multiple compartments for stacks of bags containing tees, each compartment being designated for a corresponding length golf tee. In the example shown in FIG. 2, there are four compartments 110, 120, 130 and 140. Spaced vertical interior walls 150, 152 and 154 divide the container into the interior vertical compartments 110, 120, 130 and 140. Each vertical compartment 110, 120, 130 and 140 contains a stack of bags of golf tees of the same length. A dispenser opening 160 at the bottom of the container permits a purchaser or user to remove bags of tees from the bottom of each stack in a compartment. Thus, compartment 110 has a dispenser opening 112, compartment 120 has a dispenser opening 122, compartment 130 has a dispenser opening 132 and compartment 140 has a dispenser opening 142.

[0022] On the face of the display 100 above the respective opening to each compartment 110, 120, 130 and 140, there is a corresponding printed section 114, 124, 134 and 144. Each printed section 114, 124, 134 and 144 is aligned with, or adjacent, the opening 112, 122, 132 and 142 of its corresponding compartment (containing a stack) of golf tee bags. The printed sections 114, 124, 134 and 144 have background colors, patterns or indicia matching the visible indicium, e.g., color, for the golf tees contained in the compartment as indicated by the corresponding cross-hatching in the printed section.

[0023] In addition, the printed sections 114, 124, 134 and 144 may include the corresponding name 18, 28, 38 and 48 for the golf tees contained in the respective compartments 110, 120, 130 and 140. Still further, each printed section 114, 124, 134 and 144 may include an actual size graphic image or drawing 116, 126, 136 and 146 of the golf tee (with its appropriate visible indicium) contained in the corresponding compartments 110, 120, 130 and 140.

[0024] In another part of the display 100 there is a graphic image or drawing 160 showing the head of a golf club approaching and impacting a ball on multiple golf tees of different lengths. In addition, the drawing 160 shows the early stages of ball trajectories, where one trajectory is higher than another depending on the golf tee length and support high above the ground. This graphic is useful to convey the importance of proper golf tee height and the selection of the proper tee length for a particular club head size.

[0025] Also printed on the display 100 above the dispenser opening and the printed sections 114, 124, 134 and 144, is a correlation chart 200 with a list of items suggesting length respective golf tees (10, 20, 30 and/or 40) best suited for certain golf club head configura-

tions, brands and models. The correlation chart correlates the size, (e.g., volume) of a golf club head to a corresponding tee length that will achieve the desired performance (trajectory of flight) for that club head size.

[0026] FIG. 3 shows an excerpt portion of the correlation chart in greater detail. The chart 200 is an important part of the golf tee and golf club correlation system for correlating golf tee lengths to golf club head sizes. The chart 200 contains a brand name/model column 210, a club head size/volume column 220 and recommended tee columns 230, 240, 250 and 260. Each recommended tee column 230, 240, 250 and 260 has a corresponding heading 232, 242, 252 and 262, including the visible indicium and/or name for the golf tee represented by that column. The brand name/model column 210 contains descriptions or identifiers in respective rows for different golf clubs brands and models for each brand. The models for the same brand may be contained in separate sections of column 210. The club head size/volume column 220 lists the size or volume of the golf club head for the golf club listed in the corresponding row in column 210. Recommended tee columns 230, 240, 250 and 260 contain colored areas according to the color code of the golf tees recommended for use with the golf club described in the corresponding row. For example, column 230 contains all of the red color blocks (indicated by the appropriate cross-hatch pattern), column 240 the yellow color blocks, column 250 the green color blocks and column 260 the blue color blocks. As an example, for brand B, club model 3, the SHORT golf tee 40 is recommended as indicated in column 230. For Brand A, club model 2, the LONG tee 20 is recommended as indicated in column 250. It will be appreciated that certain golf club heads may be designed such that two tee lengths are appropriate; hence the need for separate columns for each length tee. It is possible, however, to use a single recommended tee column, whereby different colored blocks will appear in that column; however, only one size tee can be recommended for a particular golf club if a single column is used.

[0027] If desired, and as illustrated in the drawings, depictions of the color coded tees themselves may be provided at the top of the correlation chart 200 as shown at reference numeral 270.

[0028] FIGS. 4 and 5 illustrate examples bags 300 used to contain a plurality of golf tees of a common length. The bag 300 has a color and pattern scheme corresponding to the visible indicium on the golf tees that it contains. For example, the bag 300 shown in FIG. 4 is for the "SHORT" golf tee 40 and has a color background 310 that matches the color of the visible indicium 49 of golf tee 40. Printed on the face of the bag is an actual size diagram 320 of the golf tee 40 in the bag, as well as the appropriate visible indicium 330 for that golf tee shown in the diagram 320. In addition, the name for the golf tee 40 is included on the face of the bag as shown at reference numeral 340. FIG. 5 shows a bag

300' for the "LONG" golf tee 20 and has a color background 310' matching the color of the visible indicium 29 of golf tee 20'. Printed on the face of the bag is an actual size diagram 320' of the golf tee 20 in the bag, as well as the appropriate visible indicium 330' for that golf tee shown in the diagram 320'. There is a similar correspondence on the bags for each of the other golf tees 10 and 40.

[0029] As a variation, a bag may contain tees of each of the various lengths. In this case, the bag may contain an abbreviated version of the correlation chart to generally indicate golf tee lengths suitable for different golf clubs (e.g., driver, 3 wood, 5 wood) as well as different golf club brands or sizes of club heads.

[0030] Referring again to FIGS. 2 and 3, a purchaser of golf tees, when looking at the point of purchase display 100, can look in the leftmost column of the correlation chart 200 to find the golf club he/she uses. Upon locating the golf club, the purchaser can scan across the same row to note the color of the golf tees most appropriate for use with the identified golf club. The purchaser then removes a bag of those tees from the stack at the dispenser opening below the appropriate color coded printed section. It will be appreciated that the concepts described herein apply to any plurality of two or more stacks, depending on the number of different lengths of tees being sold.

[0031] Golf by its nature is a precise activity. Golfers spend millions of dollars every year in an attempt to fine tune their performances through new club designs, ball designs, shoes, apparel, etc. A golfer may have a \$350 driver and a ball that costs three or four dollars. The resulting performance of these two items depends partly on the inexpensive golf tee with which the ball is positioned for striking. Golfers do not want to damage their expensive drivers and high performance ball with an inexpensive and unpredictable variable positioning device.

[0032] In order to build a brand from a commodity product, it is important to differentiate a product from its competition. High-speed production processes greatly prohibit changing the geometry of a golf tee. All that remains is the decorative appearance of the golf tee. The color coding scheme is useful for length and "brand recognizable" differentiation. The color coding scheme is also a useful guide to consistently gauge how far a golfer inserts the tee into the ground. In addition, names for the golf tees to suggest tee lengths and correlate each length tee to respective color bars provides still a further assistance for golf tee purchasers.

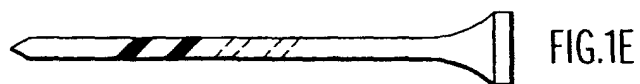
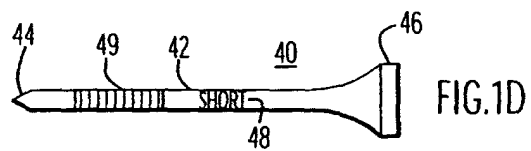
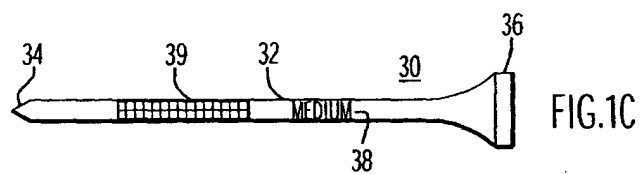
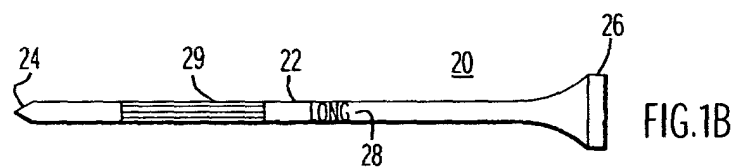
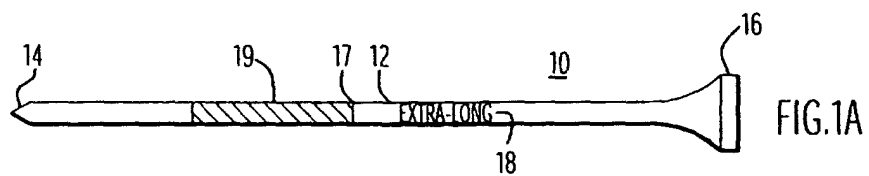
[0033] To summarize, golf tees are provided having visible indicia thereon corresponding or associated with respective lengths of the golf tee and/or a golf club size or configuration. Thus, an individual tee of a particular size in a set of tees of different sizes can be readily visually distinguished. In addition, a point of purchase display is provided comprising a display face having a chart that correlates one or more of a plurality of golf tee

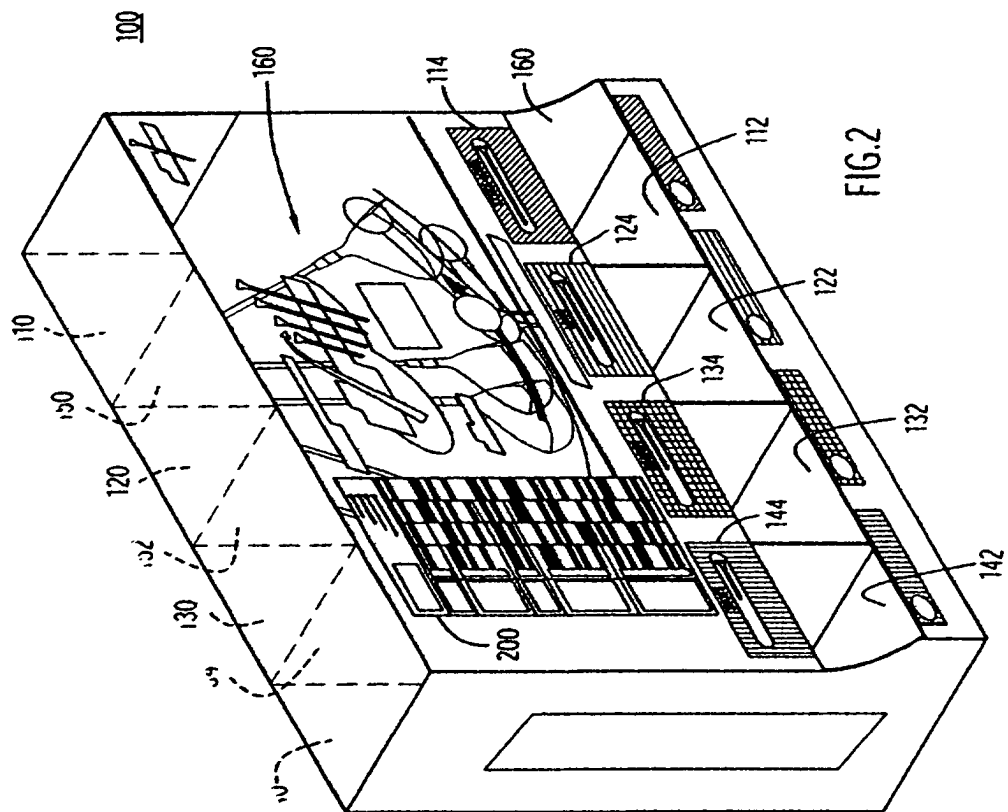
lengths with identifiers for a plurality of different golf clubs, and a unique visible indicium for each golf tee length, and a container for golf tees of different lengths. The golf tees themselves may have a visible indicium thereon matching a visible indicium in the chart corresponding to its length. In addition, bags for selling a fixed number of golf tees of the same length are provided. Each bag includes a visible indicium matching a visible indicium in the chart corresponding to the length of golf tees that it contains. Thus, the same visible indicium coding scheme that appears on the golf tees also appears on the merchandise display and is applied to the printed areas of the bags containing the tees.

Claims

1. A golf tee (10; 20; 30; 40) having a visible indicium (19; 29; 39; 49) thereon **characterised in that** the visible indicium corresponds to a length of the golf tee.
2. The golf tee of claim 1, wherein the visible indicium (19; 29; 39; 49) is part of a coding scheme comprising a plurality of unique visible indicia, each unique indicium being assigned to a different golf tee length.
3. The golf tee of claim 2, wherein the visible indicium (19; 29; 39; 49) is further part of a coding scheme correlating golf tee lengths to golf club head sizes.
4. The golf tee of any preceding claim, wherein the visible indicium (19; 29; 39; 49) comprises a portion of the golf tee (10; 26; 30; 40) having a color, a different color being assigned to each golf tee length.
5. The golf tee of claim 4, wherein the coloured portion is a band on the golf tee.
6. The golf tee of any preceding claim, wherein the visible indicium (19; 29; 39; 49) comprises one or more stripes on the golf tee, a number of the stripes corresponding to the length of the golf tee.
7. The golf tee of claim 6, wherein the one or more stripes have a color corresponding to the length of the golf tee.
8. The golf tee of any preceding claim, wherein the visible indicium (19; 29; 39; 49) further comprises a name suggestive of a relative length of the golf tee.
9. A set of golf tees (10; 20; 30; 40) of different predetermined sizes **characterized in that** tees of each predetermined size are marked with a respective visible indicium (19; 29; 39; 49) to distinguish them from tees of other predetermined sizes.

10. The set of golf tees of claim 9, wherein each golf tee is constructed according to any of claims 1 to 8.
11. A point of purchase display (100), comprising:
 - a. a display face having a chart (200) correlating one or more of a plurality of golf tee lengths with identifiers for a plurality of different golf clubs, and a unique visible indicium for each golf tee length; and
 - b. a container (110, 120, 130, 140) for golf tees of different lengths.
12. The point of purchase display of claim 11, and further comprising golf tees in the container, each golf tee having a visible indicium matching a visible indicium in the chart (200) corresponding to its length.
13. The point of purchase display of claim 11, and further comprising a plurality of bags containing golf tees in the container, wherein each bag contains golf tees of the same length and each bag includes a visible indicium matching a visible indicium in the chart corresponding to the length of golf tees contained in said each bag.
14. The point of purchase display of claim 11, wherein the container comprises a plurality of compartments (110, 120, 130, 140), each compartment containing golf tees of the same length.
15. The point of purchase display of claim 14, and further comprising a visible indicium on the container aligned with each compartment corresponding to the length of golf tees contained in that compartment.
16. The point of purchase display of any of claims 11 to 15, wherein the visible indicium is a color, wherein a different color is assigned to each golf tee length.
17. The point of purchase display of any of claims 11 to 15, wherein the visible indicium comprises a name suggestive of the relative length of the golf tee.
18. The point of purchase display of any of claims 11 to 17, wherein the visible indicium is part of a coding scheme correlating golf tee lengths to golf club head sizes.
19. The point of purchase display of claim 14, wherein the container comprises a plurality of vertical compartments (110, 120, 130, 140) separated by vertical interior walls, each vertical compartment containing golf tees of the same length, and an opening (112, 122, 132, 142) at the bottom of each compartment to permit removal of golf tees.
20. The point of purchase display of claim 19, and further comprising a plurality of bags containing golf tees of the same length and disposed in a vertical compartment corresponding to the length of golf tees each bag contains, and wherein each bag includes a visible indicium matching a visible indicium in the chart corresponding to the length of golf tees contained in said each bag.
21. The point of purchase display of claim 19 or claim 20, and further comprising a printed area (114, 124, 134, 144) adjacent each opening to each vertical compartment, and wherein the printed area includes a visible indicium matching a visible indicium in the chart corresponding to the length of golf tees that the vertical compartment contains.
22. The point of purchase display of any of claims 11 to 21, wherein the chart (200) lists identifiers for a plurality of different golf clubs and one or more golf tee lengths for each golf club.
23. The point of purchase display of claim 22, wherein the chart (200) includes a visible indicium for the golf tee length recommended for each of the plurality of golf clubs.
24. The point of purchase display of claim 22 or claim 23, wherein the chart (200) further comprises information describing a size of the golf club head for each of the plurality of golf clubs.
25. The point of purchase display of claim 24, wherein the chart (200) lists the identifiers for the plurality of golf clubs by brand name and model.
26. The point of purchase display of claim 24, wherein the visible indicium comprises a name suggestive of the relative length of a golf tee.
27. The point of purchase display of any of claims 11 to 26, and further comprising a graphical diagram (160) depicting impact of a golf club head with golf tees of multiple lengths.





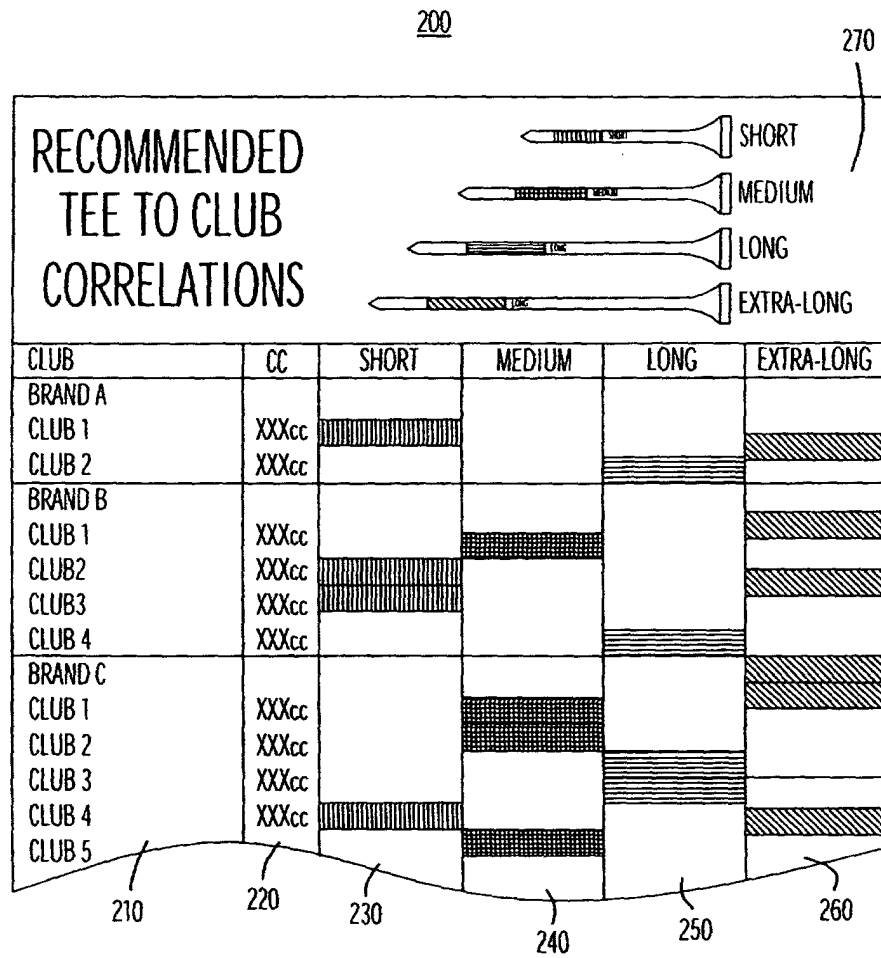
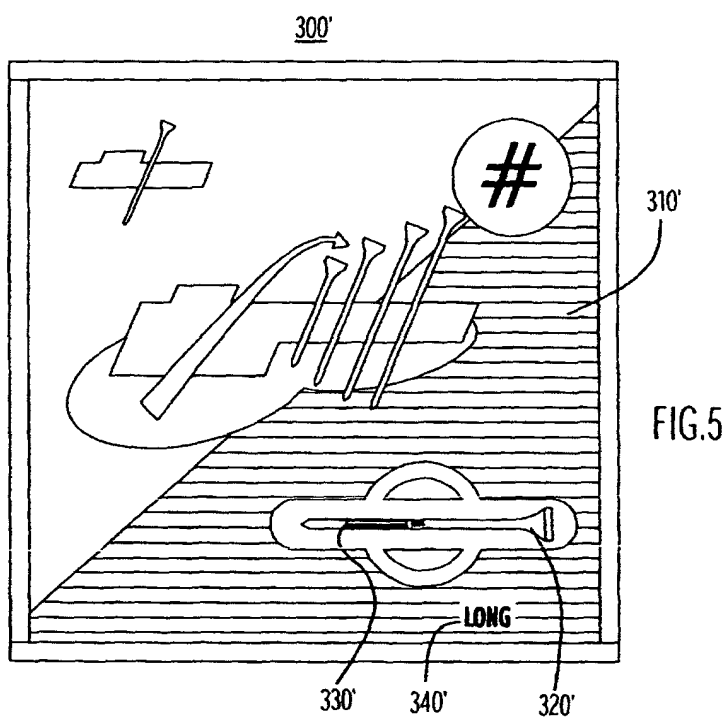
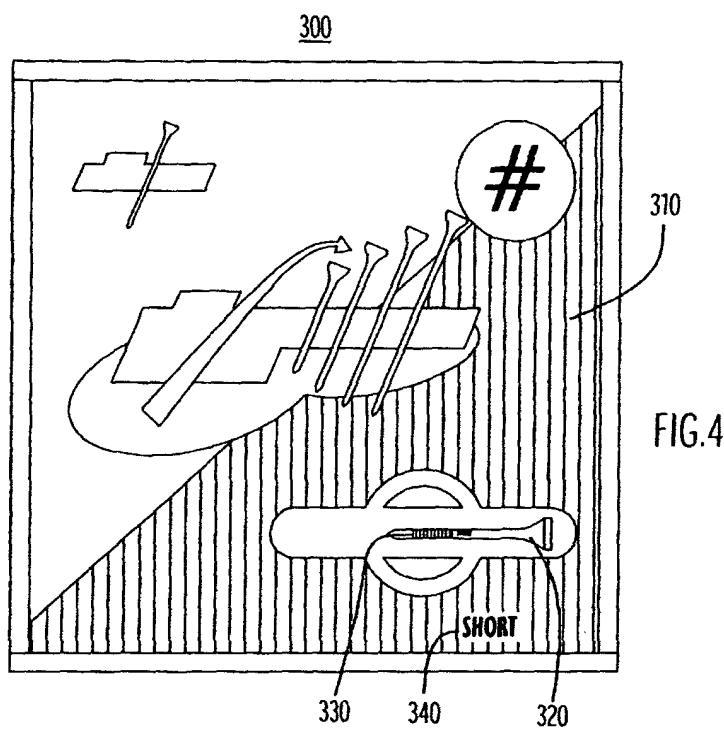


FIG.3





European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 05 25 2211

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 29 July 2005	Examiner Lundblad, H
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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EPO FORM 1503 03/02 (P04C01)



European Patent
Office

EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 05 25 2211

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 29 July 2005	Examiner Lundblad, H
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document			

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.
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