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(54) **A stencil device**

(57) A spherical stencil device is provided in two or more parts (10) which come together to encapsulate a spherical sporting article (8) placed therein. The parts (10) each have a series of groups of apertures (12, 14) through which markings onto the surface of the encapsulated article (8) can be made. The device has two opposed locations at which it is cut-away (16) to provide finger holdings of the article (8) placed therein to enable the article (8) to be held stationary in the device during the operation of marking an article.

ulated article (8) can be made. The device has two opposed locations at which it is cut-away (16) to provide finger holdings of the article (8) placed therein to enable the article (8) to be held stationary in the device during the operation of marking an article.

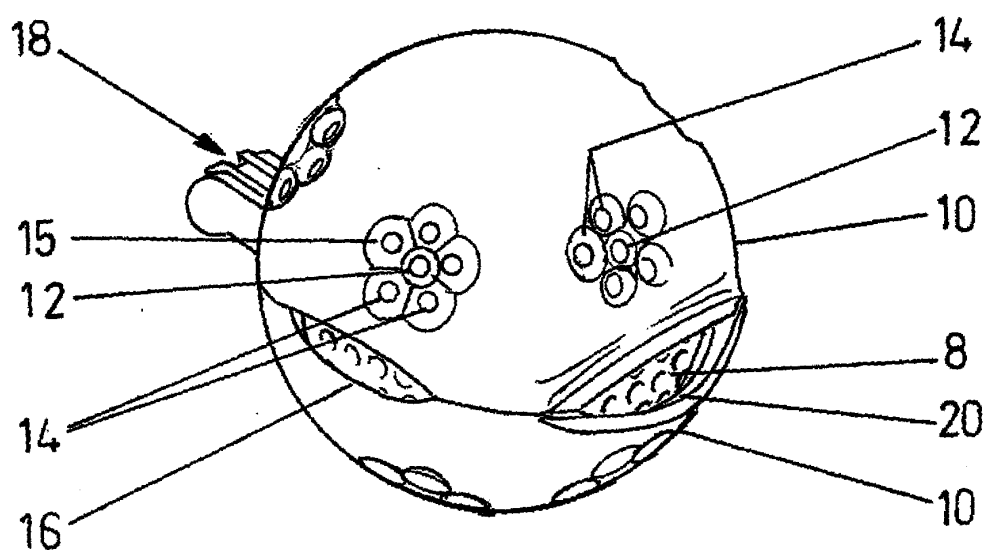


Fig. 1

Description

[0001] This invention relates to a stencil device for use in marking spherical articles used in sports, for example balls such as golf balls, footballs, hockey balls or hurling balls, the marking purpose of which is to assist in eye focus improvement on a target spot at which the spherical article is to be hit. It is a recognised problem that players in sports activities using a spherical article have difficulty in target concentration due to the eye(s) making involuntary movements towards sound and movement in the surrounding area, but that these involuntary movements can be reduced if there is a specific target to focus on.

[0002] An object of the present invention is to obviate or mitigate said problem.

[0003] Accordingly, the present invention is a spherical stencil device in two or more parts which come together to encapsulate a spherical sporting article placed therein, the parts each having a series of groups of apertures through which markings onto the surface of the encapsulated article can be made.

[0004] Preferably, each group of apertures includes a central aperture and a set of surrounding apertures. The marking through the central aperture may be of a darker colour than the colour of the markings made through the surrounding apertures.

[0005] Preferably also, the device has two opposed locations at which it is cut-away to provide finger holdings of the article placed therein to enable the article to be held stationary in the device during the operation of marking an article.

[0006] Preferably further, the device is in two parts hinged together at one diametrical location and closable together at an opposite diametrical location.

[0007] An embodiment of the present invention will now be described, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a stencil device according to the present invention, and showing the device closed with a golf ball therein; and

Fig. 2 is a side elevation of a sporting article in the form of a golf ball marked using the device.

[0008] Referring to the drawings, a spherical stencil device is provided in two parts 10 which come together to encapsulate a spherical sporting article 8, for example a golf ball, placed therein. The parts 10 each have a series of five groups of apertures 12, 14 through which markings onto the surface of the encapsulated article 8 can be made. The apertures are circular as shown but may be of other shapes such as hexagonal. Each group of apertures includes a central aperture 12 and a set of five surrounding apertures 14. The apertures 12, 14 are countersunk, i.e. the land surrounding the apertures 12, 14 is taperingly shaped at 15 from the outside surface to the aperture at the inside surface as shown. This countersinking assists in the marking operation. The marking 17

through the central aperture 12 is desirably of a contrasting colour, for example black, than the colour, for example green, of the markings 19 made through the surrounding apertures 14. The golf ball has a dimpled surface and the ball may be rotated in the device to align the dimples with the apertures.

[0009] The device has two opposed locations at which it is cut-away at 16 each to provide a finger holding of the article 8 placed therein to enable the article 8 to be held stationary in the device during the operation of marking an article. The device is in two parts hinged together at one diametrical location 18 and closable together at an opposite diametrical location 20.

[0010] In use, with an article 8 positioned in the device and the device closed therearound, it is finger held between the two locations and markings 15, 17 are made through the apertures 12, 14 as stated above. When the marked article 8 is in play, whichever way the ball rolls, a black dot or marking 15 surrounded by a series of green dots or markings 17 is always visible.

[0011] The parts of the device are desirably made of plastics material. The device may be in three or more parts.

[0012] In a modification, the set of surrounding apertures 14 may be other than five.

[0013] Variations and other modifications can be made without departing from the scope of the invention described above and as claimed hereinafter.

Claims

1. A spherical stencil device in two or more parts (10) which come together to encapsulate a spherical sporting article (8) placed therein, the parts (10) each having a series of groups of apertures (12, 14) through which, in use, markings (17, 19) onto the surface of the encapsulated article (8) can be made.
2. A device as claimed in Claim 1, **characterised in that** each group of apertures (12, 14) includes a central aperture (12) and a set of surrounding apertures (14).
3. A device as claimed in Claim 2, **characterised in that** the marking (17) through the central aperture (12) is of a contrasting colour than the colour of the markings (19) made through the surrounding apertures (14).
4. A device as claimed in Claims 1, 2 or 3, **characterised in that** the device has two opposed locations (18, 20) at which it is cut-away to provide finger holdings of the article (8) placed therein to enable the article (8) to be held stationary in the device during the operation of marking an article (8).
5. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding

claims, **characterised in that** the device is in two parts (10) hinged together at one diametrical location (18) and closable together at an opposite diametrical location (20).

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6. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** the parts (10) are made of plastics material

7. A device as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, **characterised in that** the apertures (12, 14) are counter-sunk (15).

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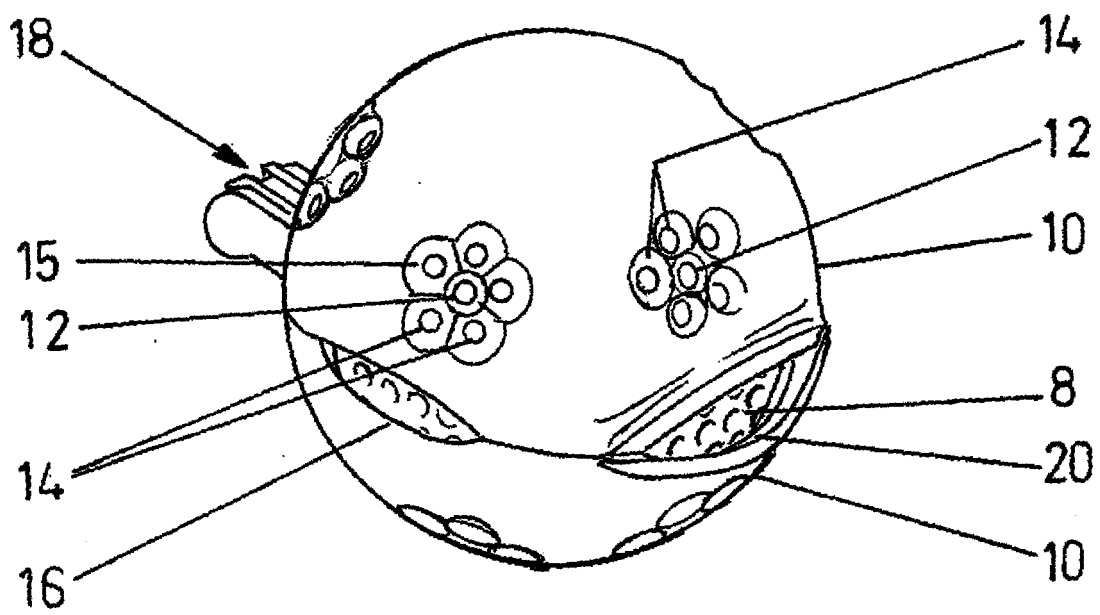


Fig. 1

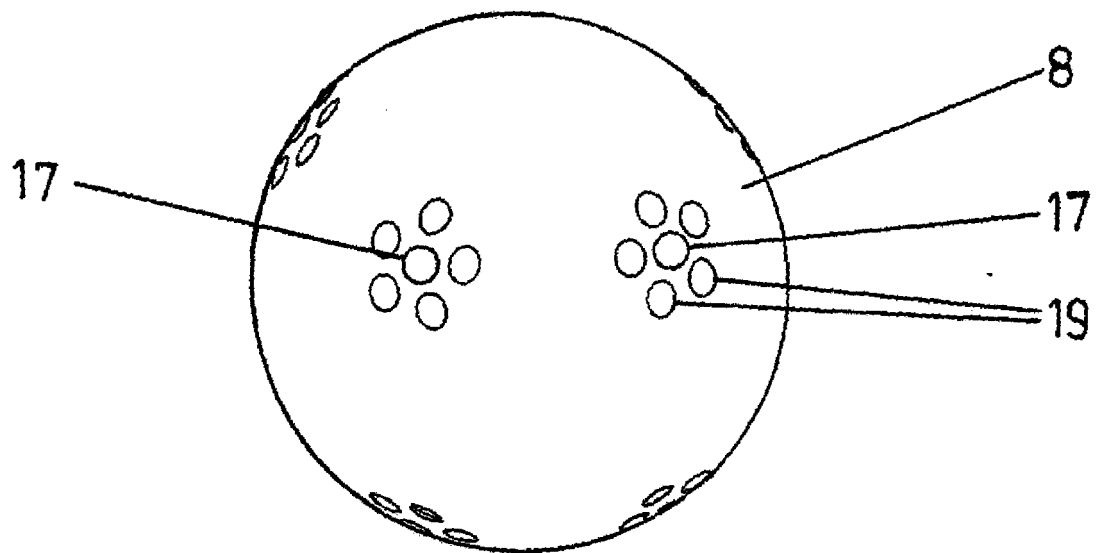


Fig. 2



European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 07 15 0390

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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 25 April 2008	Examiner D'Incecco, Raimondo
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>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</p> <p>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</p>			

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
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EP 07 15 0390

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82