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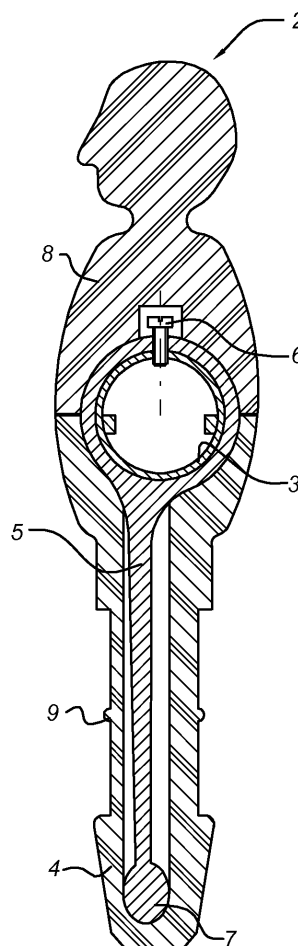
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(54) **Playing figure for table football game**

(57) The invention relates to a playing figure for a table football game, provided with a core part which can be fastened to a playing rod of a table football game, and two playing figure parts which can be fastened to the core part and jointly form the playing figure, wherein the core part extends within the plastic casing up to or in the part with which the ball is usually played, that is to say, the part at the feet.

Fig 3



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Description

[0001] The invention relates to a playing figure for a table football game and to a table football game provided with a playing figure of this type.

[0002] Playing figures or dummies of this type (figurines) are used in table football (foosball). In a table football game, a number of playing figures of this type are mounted on various rods. These rods can be rotated about their axis so that the playing figures in a playing field of a table football game can touch the ball provided. Furthermore, the rods move obliquely parallel to the longitudinal axis.

[0003] Netherlands patent application NL 7017563 describes such a playing figure consisting of various components. In this case, a plastic playing figure, optionally consisting of various components which can be fastened to one another, is provided with a preferably supple covering element representing a shirt of a playing figure. Other remaining covering parts can also be made of a supple material, for example a textile. A number of playing figures provided with covering parts of this type identify a team. In this case, the playing figure can be provided with a central tubular bush with which the playing figure can be made to engage with an operating rod. The Netherlands patent document does not go on to describe the material of which the bush is made.

[0004] German utility model DE 202005011422 U describes a specific table football game which can use playing figures which can consist of two components which can grip around a playing rod and can be fastened to an operating rod with the aid of a long nut extending through at least a part of the playing figure.

[0005] UK patent application GB-A-2,289,631 describes a playing figure for a table football game, wherein a playing rod is provided with a special lining part which extends over almost the entire length of the playing rod and over which playing figures can be slid.

[0006] German patent application DE-A1-19944820 describes a playing figure for a table football game, which playing figure can be provided with a textile shirt which is fastened to the playing figure and with which the playing figure can represent a player from a specific desired team.

[0007] CA 2,225,110 describes a playing figure wherein a bar is apparently welded to a playing rod, and a moulded figure is fastened to this bar. No further details may be inferred from this document. There is no indication that a playing figure can be replaced, nor is there even any suggestion as to whether that is indeed possible. The internal rod is welded tight, and may therefore be said to be non-removable or non-displaceable.

[0008] EP 978300 describes a playing figure for a table football game wherein the playing figure is made up of two hinging parts which hinge to the end of the feet. Both parts are further fastened to each other by means of a screw. A special hexagonal playing rod is required. Furthermore, the playing figure would appear to be vulner-

able to breakage. After all, the parts would appear to be injection-moulded.

[0009] EP 1,066,865 describes a playing figure made up of two parts which can be snapped onto each other. Again, the parts would appear to be injection-moulded. The playing figure is in fact cut through along a longitudinal axis. In this case too, the playing figure would appear to be vulnerable.

[0010] A drawback of the playing figures described hereinbefore is that in many cases they are either complex or else difficult to replace, or else it is not possible to replace the playing figures with playing figures from a different team.

[0011] The object of the invention is to provide an improved playing figure.

[0012] It is a further object of the invention to provide a playing figure which plays nicely, is easy to replace, and can easily be replaced with playing figures wearing the colours of a different team, thus allowing various teams to compete with one another.

[0013] The invention provides for this purpose a playing figure for a table football game, provided with a core part which can be fastened to a playing rod of a table football game, and two substantially plastic playing figure parts which can be fastened to the core part and jointly form the playing figure, wherein the core part extends within the playing figure parts up to or in the part with which the ball is usually played, that is to say, the part at the feet.

[0014] The plastic playing figure parts are easy to fasten to the core part, thus allowing it to be replaced without much difficulty.

[0015] In one embodiment, the core part is a metal core part. The metal core part, which extends up to or else in the foot part of the metal playing figure, provides the playing figure with a nice balance allowing it to play nicely. In one embodiment, the core part is made of Zamack, a zinc/aluminium alloy. The core part can however also be made of a different metal which imparts sufficient sturdiness.

[0016] In one embodiment, the playing figure comprises a metal core part which can be fastened to the playing rod or tube. In one embodiment thereof, the core part can be slid over a playing tube and is provided with a bolt which can be screwed into the tube for fastening the metal core part to the playing rod. Alternatively, the bolt extends in a wall of the playing tube or playing rod in order to fix the core part to the playing rod.

[0017] In one embodiment, the playing figure further comprises a plastic upper part extending to around a middle of the playing figure and a plastic lower part extending from the middle to the feet or else the playing part with which the ball is usually played. In an alternative or else additional embodiment, the playing figure parts comprise a plastic upper playing figure part extending to or past a middle of the playing figure and a plastic lower playing figure part which substantially forms the playing figure with the upper playing figure part and comprises the play-

ing part with which in use the ball is played. In one embodiment, the parts of the playing figure are made of a flexible, bendable plastic; in one embodiment, a thermoplastic polymer. Examples of this include polyethylene (PE), polypropylene (PP), polyester (such as PET). The flexibility should be such as to allow a good clamping fit to occur without the risk of detachment during the game. Preferably, the plastic is a material to be injection-moulded.

[0018] In one embodiment, the two parts can be snapped onto each other.

[0019] In an alternative embodiment, the playing figure according to the invention comprises a first plastic part forming a front of a playing figure and a second plastic part forming a back of a playing figure.

[0020] In one embodiment, both plastic parts can be snapped onto each other around a metal core part. An alternative embodiment further provides a fastening means for fastening the plastic parts to each other.

[0021] In one embodiment, the core part comprises a first core part snap part and the upper playing figure part a snap part which interacts with the first core part snap part and with which the upper playing figure part can be snapped onto the core part in the longitudinal direction.

[0022] In one embodiment, the core part comprises a second core part snap part and the lower playing figure part a snap part which interacts with the second core part snap part and with which the lower playing figure part can be snapped onto the core part in the longitudinal direction.

[0023] In one embodiment, the lower playing figure part comprises an upper transverse engagement part and the upper playing figure part a lower transverse engagement part interacting with the upper transverse engagement part, which transverse engagement parts engage with each other on mounting of the playing figure parts for interlocking transversely to a plane parallel to the playing rod direction and the longitudinal direction of the playing figure.

[0024] In one embodiment, the transverse engagement parts are attached at the neck on the back of the playing figure.

[0025] In one embodiment, the core part comprises a screw part with which the core part can be fastened to a playing rod.

[0026] In one embodiment, the core part extends within the plastic casing up to or in the part opposing the part with which the ball is usually played, that is to say, in the head.

[0027] The invention further relates to an upper playing figure part for a playing figure as described hereinbefore, comprising a head with a cavity for receiving a part of the core part, and a chest part provided with a snap part on the inside.

[0028] The invention further relates to a playing figure as described hereinbefore, comprising legs with a cavity extending therein for receiving an extending part of the core part, and a back part, provided at the upper back

part on the inside with a snap part.

[0029] Further features of a playing figure according to the invention are inter alia represented in the appended figures. The features shown therein can if appropriate be combined with one another, or else separately form part of a further patent application split off from the present patent application.

[0030] The figures illustrate embodiments of a table football game and playing figures for a table football game of this type. In the drawings:

Fig. 1 shows an example of a table football game;
Fig. 2 shows a playing figure from the table football game from Fig. 1;

Fig. 3 is a longitudinal cross section through the playing figures from Fig. 2 as indicated;

Fig. 4 is an exploded longitudinal cross section through the playing figures;

Fig. 5 is a longitudinal cross section of an alternative embodiment of a playing figure;

Fig. 6 is an exploded perspective view of the playing figure from Figure 5;

Fig. 7 is a partly exploded view of a detail of the upper side from Fig. 5.

[0031] Figure 1 shows a table football game 1 wherein a playing figure (figurine) 2 is indicated. A table football game of this type comprises a playing field and a frame of the playing field that keeps the ball within the playing field, and also two goals at both head ends of the playing field. Also attached through the frame are playing rods 3 which can slide back and forth along their longitudinal axis. Playing figures 2 are mounted on the playing rods, one of which playing figures is denoted by numeral 2. These playing figures are generally secured to the playing rod. The playing rod 3 is furthermore rotatable about its axis, allowing the playing figures to perform a kicking movement which can be used to advance a ball placed in the playing field.

[0032] Figure 2 shows a playing figure 2 from a table football game 1 from Figure 1. As represented, a playing figure of this type is fastened to the rod 3 and a playing figure of this type has a playing part 4 which forms the feet of the playing figure and which is intended to move the ball forward by turning or rotating of the rods about its longitudinal axis.

[0033] Figures 3 and 4 are a longitudinal cross section through a playing figure 2 as indicated in Figure 2. Figure 3 shows the playing figure when mounted, wherein the playing figure 2 is mounted on a playing rod 3 and the playing rod is provided with a metal core part 5 of the playing figure which is fastened to the playing rod 3 by means of a screw 6 in order to be rotationally fixed to the playing rod 3. The metal core part 5 has a part extending in the direction of the feet or the playing plane of the playing figure 2, and is in this case further provided with a thickening 7 in the playing plane. As a result, the centre of gravity lies in the playing plane 4 so that the playing

figure plays nicely.

[0034] The playing figure is further provided with two preferably plastic parts 8,9 which can be fastened to the metal core part. An upper part 8 extending up to the middle of a playing figure and a lower part 9 extending from the middle to the end in the playing plane have been selected in this case. The upper part can in this case be fastened to the metal core part 5 and the lower part can be slid onto the metal core part around the part extending to the playing part. In this case, the upper part 8 and the lower part 9 can be snapped onto each other.

[0035] Figure 4 is an exploded view of the playing figure 2. This represents how the lower part 9 can be slid over the downwardly extending part of the metal core part 5 and snaps securely around the thickened part 7 of the metal core part 5. The upper part 8 snaps securely around the metal core part 5 and snaps onto the lower part 9, by means of a snap connection (not shown in this figure). Alternatively, the playing figure can, as described hereinbefore, consist of a front part and a rear part which can be snapped around the metal core part and can be provided with snap parts allowing the parts to be snapped onto one another. Alternatively, provision can for example be made for a screw and bolt or a bolt and nut fastening with which the two parts are fastened to each other, revealing the metal core part.

[0036] Figures 5-7 show an alternative embodiment of the playing figure according to the invention. In this embodiment, a metal core part 5 is slid onto the playing rod 3. The metal core part 5 has a downwardly extending part extending to the playing part 4 with which the ball is usually played. An upwardly extending part 12 extends opposite the downwardly extending part. That part extends into the head 8 of the playing figure 2. The upwardly extending part 12 is in this case hollow in its embodiment as a tube part. Received in the upwardly extending part 12 of the metal core part is a screw 6 which, screwed into the playing rod 3, can be secured or fixed to the playing rod 3 around the metal core part 5. The metal core part 5 is thus easily detachable.

[0037] Playing figure parts 8 and 9, an upper part 8 and a lower part 9, are attached to the metal core part 5. Together, these parts form in this case the exterior of the playing figure 2.

[0038] The metal core part 5 is provided with a first core part snap part 10 and a second core part snap part 11. These snap parts have an abutment transversely to the longitudinal direction of the playing figure 2. The upper part 8 is provided with a first snap part which interacts with the first core part snap part 10 and produces an abutment with the abutment of the first core part snap part. This allows the upper part 8 to be snapped onto the core part 5. The upper part 8 is thus snapped onto the metal core part 5 so as to be blocked in the longitudinal direction.

[0039] The lower part 9 is provided with a second snap part which interacts with the second core part snap part 11 and provides an abutment with the second core part

snap part 11. This allows also the lower part 9 to be snapped onto the metal core part 5.

[0040] The respective parts can be snapped onto the metal core part 5 by means of the snap parts in the upper part 8 and the lower part 9 respectively of the playing figure 2. The parts are thus blocked in their longitudinal direction. The lower part 9 and upper part 8 are preferably made of a somewhat flexible plastic. This allows these parts to bend slightly outward and snap around the snap parts of the metal core part. Once attached, it is no longer readily possible to move the upper part 8 and lower part 9 in the longitudinal direction of the metal core part 5. The ends of the upper part 8 and lower part 9 past the snap parts must for this purpose be bent transversely to the longitudinal direction, in particular in the direction of the normal to a plane of the longitudinal direction and the longitudinal direction of the playing rod 3.

[0041] Furthermore, the upper part 8 and lower part 9 are provided with mutually interacting transverse engagement parts, generally denoted by numeral 13. These transverse engagement parts are configured to provide engagement transversely to the longitudinal direction. For this purpose, both parts are in this case provided with abutments 17, 15 in the mounted state which are at an angle with respect to a plane perpendicular to the playing rod 3. Simple is an angle transverse to that perpendicular plane, that is to say, substantially parallel to the playing rod. Alternatively, one of the parts 8, 9 is provided with an undercut groove 16, 17, the direction of the groove being substantially longitudinal. The other part is provided with an extending part 14, the width of which corresponds approximately to the width of the groove including the undercut. This extending part is undercut on both sides, thus producing substantially parallel rails (the rail 15 is shown on one side) which fit in the undercut. This holds the parts 8, 9 on each other in place in the transverse direction of the playing figure.

[0042] The mounting takes place as follows. First, the metal core part 5 is slid onto the playing rod 3 and screwed tight to the playing rod 3 by means of the screw 6. Afterwards, the lower part 9 is slid onto the metal core part 3 so that the snap part snaps around the snap part 11 of the metal core part 5. The snap part is in this case the upper side of the back of the playing figure 2. The lower part 9 is now blocked against movement in the longitudinal direction. Afterwards, the upper part 8 is slid onto the upwardly protruding part of the metal core part 5, the snap part in the stomach part snapping around the snap part 10. As a result, the upper part 8 is also blocked against movement in the longitudinal direction. At the same time, the transverse engagement parts 13 of the upper part 8 and lower part 9 at the neck of the playing figure 2 also slide together. This blocks movement of the ends transversely to the playing rod direction. The parts of the playing figure can now be separated from one another only by bending the stomach part of the upper part 8 forward so that the snap part of the upper part 8 can pass the snap part 10 of the metal core part 5. The various

snap parts in this way ensure secure fastening which can withstand the in some cases rough playing, but wherein the playing figures can nevertheless be exchanged or be replaced.

Claims

1. Playing figure (2) for a table football game (1), provided with a core part (5) which can be fastened to a playing rod (3) of a table football game, and two substantially plastic playing figure parts (8, 9) which can be fastened to the core part (5) and jointly form the playing figure, wherein the core part (5) extends within the playing figure parts (8, 9) up to or in the part (4) with which the ball is usually played, that is to say, the part at the feet.

2. Playing figure according to Claim 1, wherein the playing figure parts comprise a plastic upper playing figure part (8) extending to or past a middle of the playing figure and comprise a plastic lower playing figure part (9) which substantially forms the playing figure with the upper playing figure part and comprises the playing part (4) with which in use the ball is played.

3. Playing figure according to Claim 2, wherein the playing figure parts can be snapped onto one another.

4. Playing figure according to one of the preceding claims, wherein the core part is made of metal.

5. Playing figure according to Claim 2, 3 or 4, wherein the core part comprises a first core part snap part (10) and the upper playing figure part comprises a snap part which interacts with the first core part snap part and with which the upper playing figure part can be snapped onto the core part in the longitudinal direction.

6. Playing figure according to one of Claims 2-5, wherein the core part comprises a second core part snap part (11) and the lower playing figure part comprises a snap part which interacts with the second core part snap part and with which the lower playing figure part can be snapped onto the core part (5) in the longitudinal direction.

7. Playing figure according to one of the preceding Claims 2-6, wherein the lower playing figure part (9) comprises an upper transverse engagement part (16, 17) and the upper playing figure part (8) comprises a lower transverse engagement part (14, 15) interacting with the upper transverse engagement part, which transverse engagement parts engage with each other on mounting of the playing figure parts for interlocking substantially transversely to the playing figure, in particular transversely to a plane

parallel to the playing rod direction and the longitudinal direction of the playing figure.

8. Playing figure according to Claim 7, wherein the transverse engagement parts (13, 14, 15, 16, 17) are attached at the neck on the back of the playing figure (2).

9. Playing figure according to one of the preceding claims, wherein the core part comprises a screw part (6) with which the core part can be fastened to a playing rod.

10. Playing figure according to one of the preceding claims, wherein the core part extends within the plastic casing up to or in the part opposing the part with which the ball is usually played (12), that is to say, in the head.

11. Upper playing figure part for a playing figure according to one of the preceding claims, comprising a head with a cavity for receiving a part (12) of the core part, and a chest part provided with a snap part on the inside.

12. Lower playing figure part for a playing figure according to one of Claims 1-10, comprising legs with a cavity extending therein for receiving an extending part of the core part, and a back part, provided at the upper back part on the inside with a snap part.

Fig 1

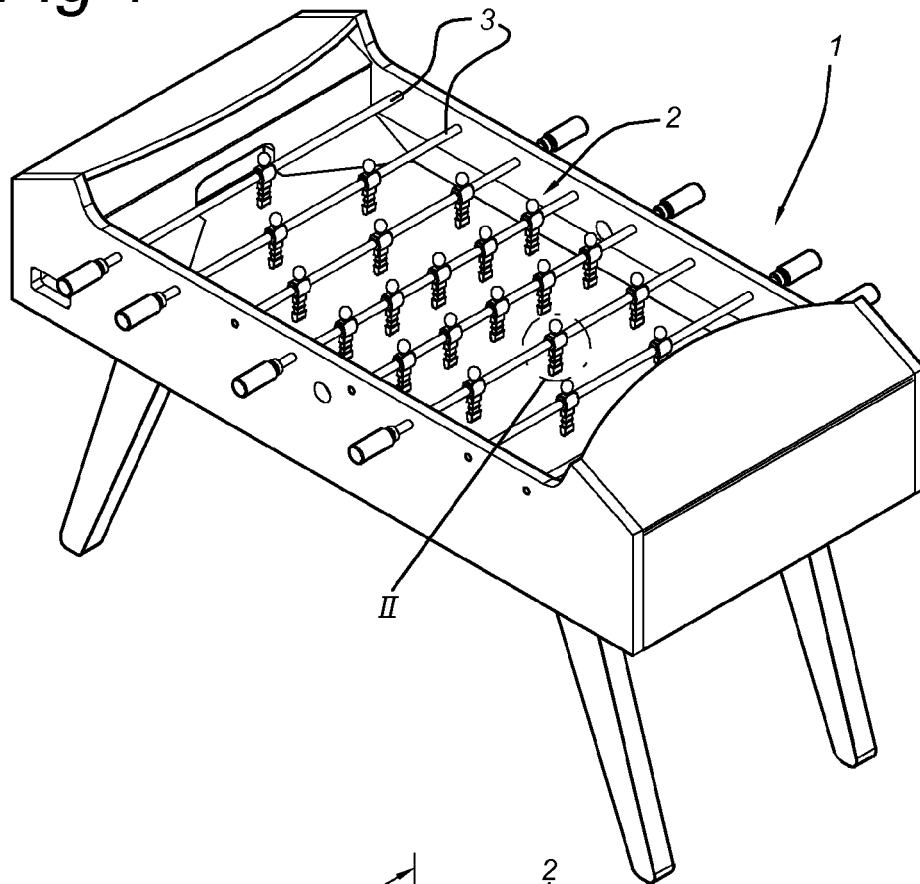


Fig 2

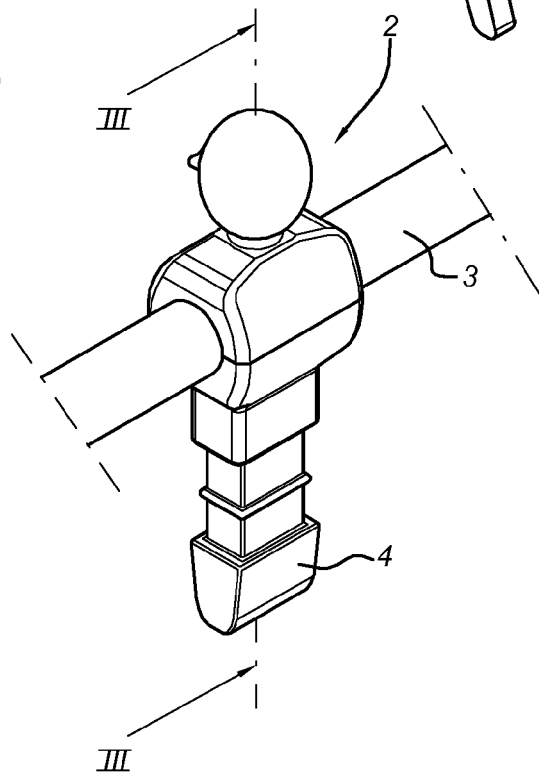


Fig 3

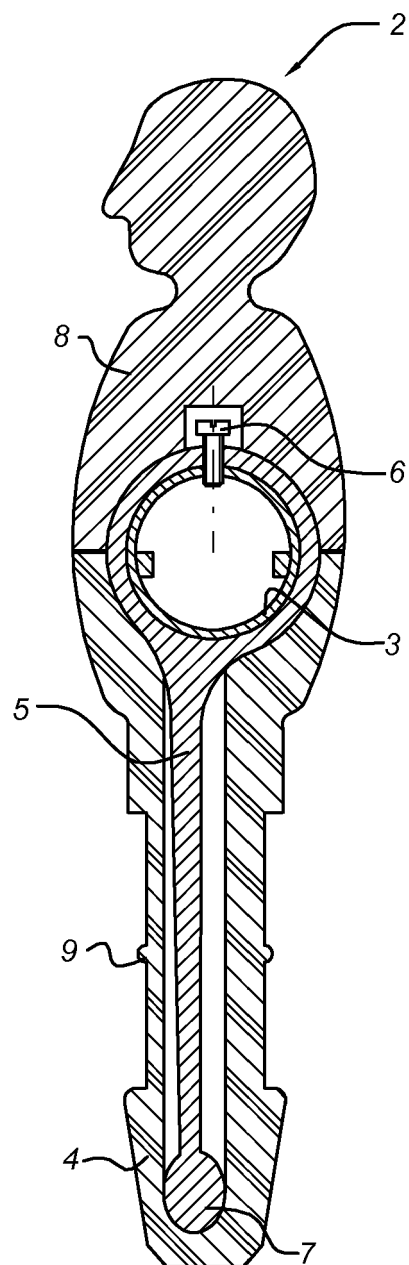


Fig 4

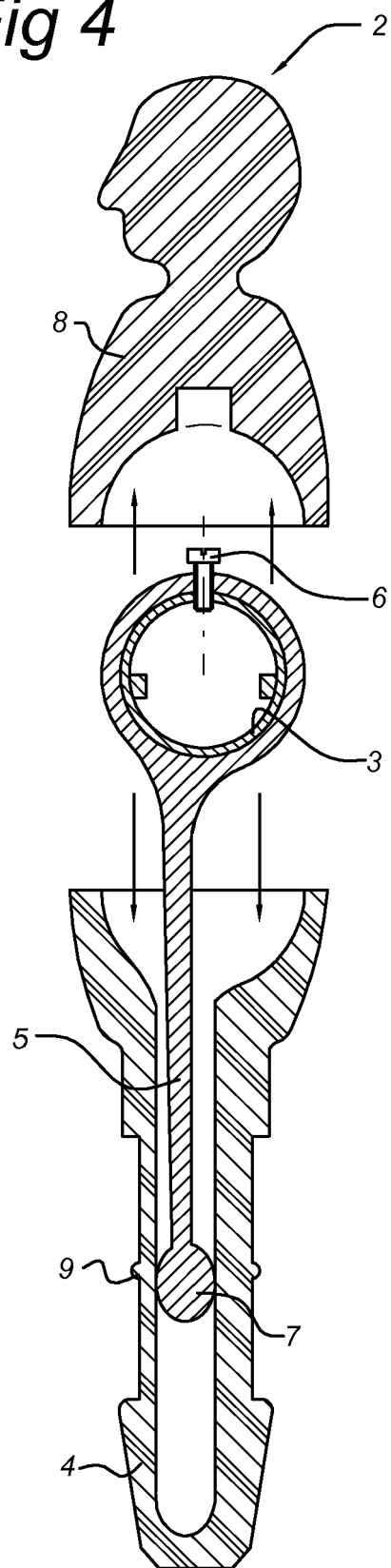


Fig 5

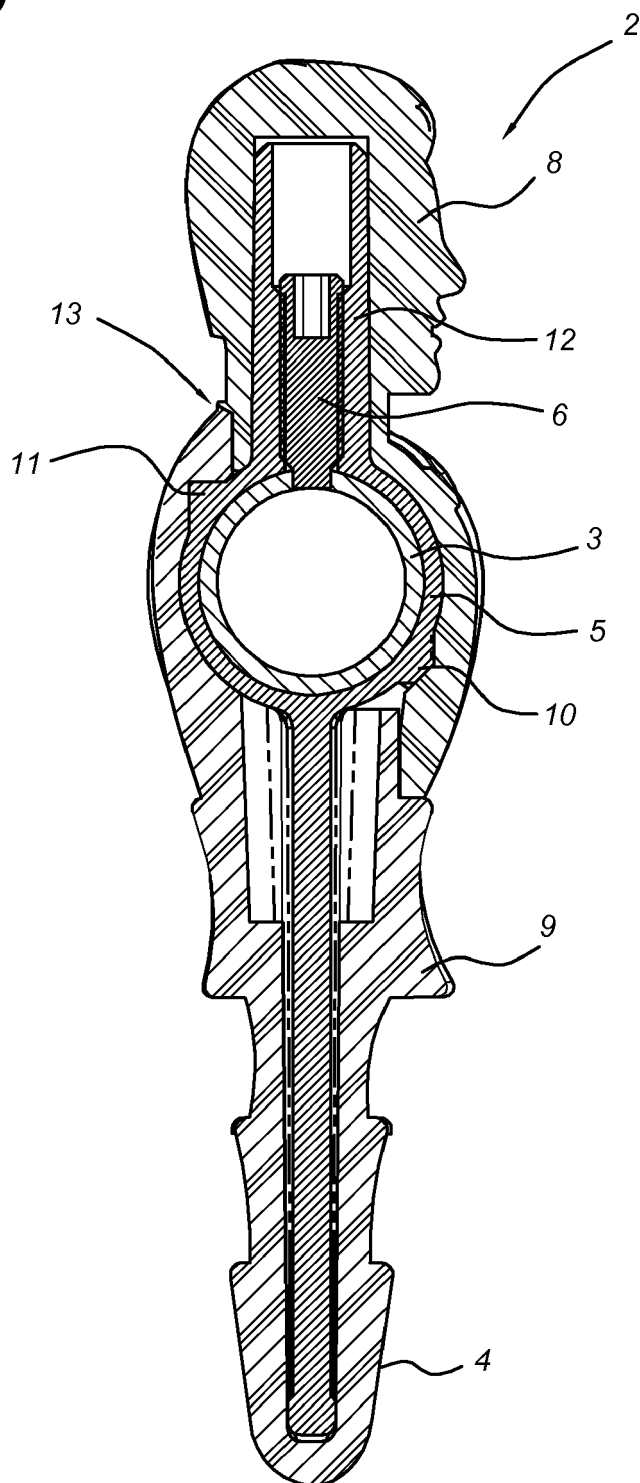


Fig 6

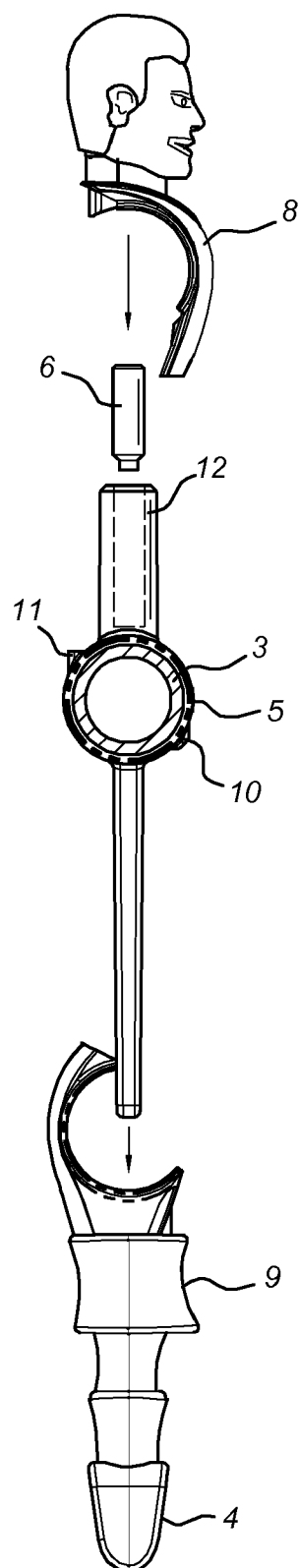
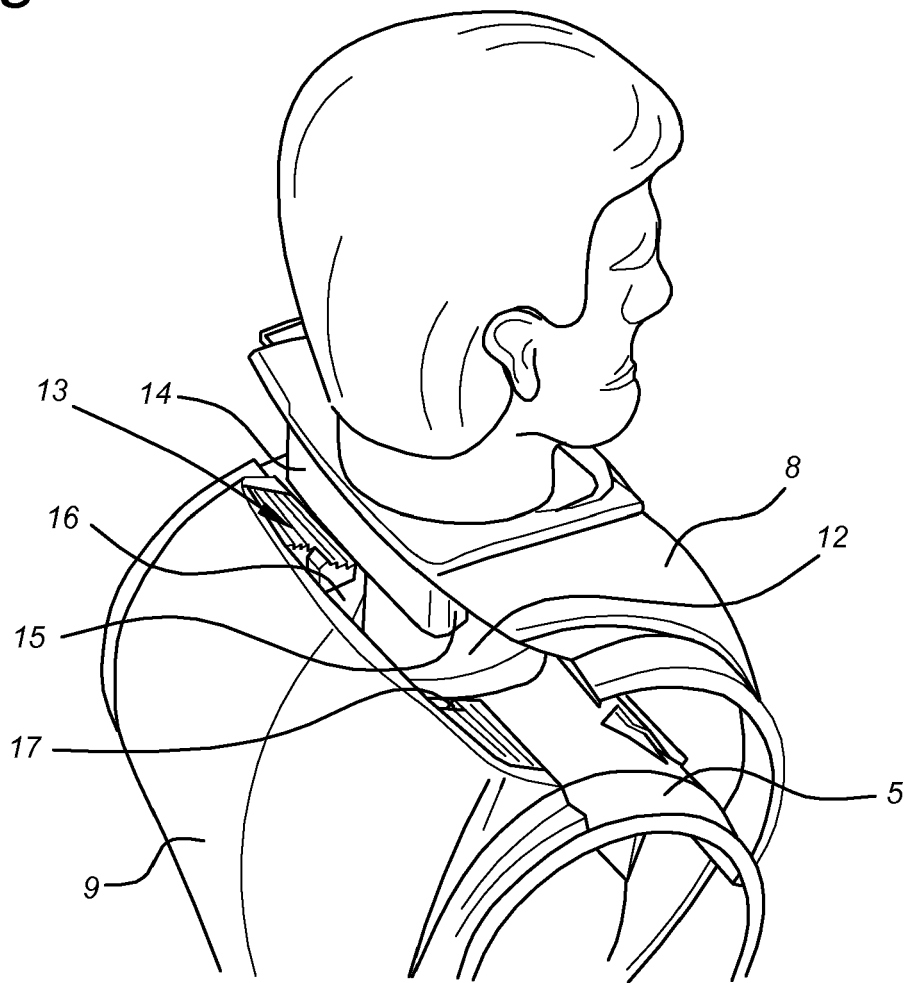


Fig 7





EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 08 16 6265

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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 9 December 2008	Examiner Schut, Timen
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EPO FORM 1503 03.82 (P04C01)

**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. The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on
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