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(54) **Food packaging**

(57) A food packaging (10) is disclosed which has a base area (12) and a handle (14). In use the packaging can be folded to protect a pizza or the like and when the pizza etc. is to be cooked, the handle is unfolded to act as a handle for placing the pizza in an oven. The pack-

aging can be heat resistant and left in the oven during cooking, or the packaging can be used simply to place the pizza in the oven. Complementary portions (16/20) of the packaging can be used on opposing sides of the packaging to hold the pizza in place prior to cooking. The packaging may include apertures.

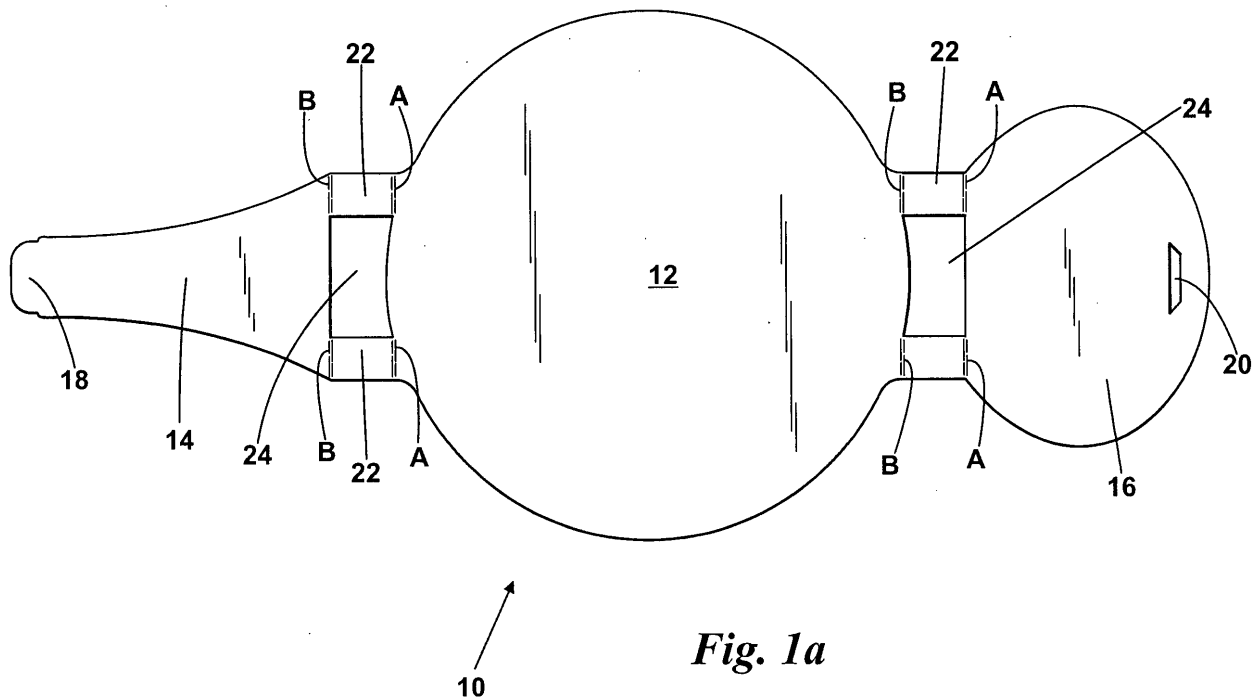


Fig. 1a

EP 2 116 483 A1

Description

[0001] This invention relates to food packaging of the type that can be used for more than one purpose. In particular, but not exclusively the invention relates to packaging which can be used as a tool for putting food into or taking food out of an oven.

[0002] Food products which need to be heated in an oven are conventionally removed from their packaging and placed on a dish or tray ready for placing in an oven. This requires time and the dish or tray needs to be cleaned after use. When the food product is cooked, it is necessary to remove the hot dish or tray with some kind of oven glove, but there is always a risk of the user burning their hands.

[0003] Flat food products, like pizzas are usually placed on large metal trays to be cooked. Such large trays need to be cleaned after use but often these cannot fit into dish-washers so there is a reluctance to use them. Pizzas tend to have toppings which melt and coat their supporting surfaces with baked-on food which is difficult to clean. If a cooking tray is not used the pizza may be supported on the wire frame shelf of the oven, so such toppings often leak onto the oven floor.

[0004] Foods like pizzas, for promotional reasons should be viewable when on sale. Conventional cardboard boxes cannot readily achieve this. Wrapping a pizza in cellophane or the like can provide a viewable food product, but no support for the food is then provided.

[0005] Embodiments of the present invention address some or all of the problems mentioned above.

[0006] According to a first aspect of the invention, there is provided a food product packaging formed from a generally planar sheet material, the packaging having a food supporting area for supporting the food product and at least one handle portion for manipulating in use said food supported on said area, wherein, in a first configuration, the handle is folded or foldable to extend over said area thereby to cover only a portion of said food on said area when said food is offered for sale, and wherein, in a second configuration, the handle is positionable to extend away from said area, thereby providing a handle which allows said food to be carried on said area.

[0007] Thus, a pizza or the like can have supportive packaging on its base and over only a part of its top face to allow viewing when displayed for sale. When cooking is required the packaging can be used to place the pizza into a hot oven and to remove the pizza when it is cooked, in the manner of a pizza spatula or paddle tool.

[0008] Optionally, the packaging can act as a cooking tray during cooking if it is manufactured from appropriate heat resistant materials. In that case the handle can be left in its folded condition, or partly folded, in the oven, and extended substantially fully when it is desired to remove the food from the oven carried by the handle.

[0009] According to a second aspect of the invention there is provided a food product packaging formed or formable from a heat resistant generally planar sheet ma-

terial, the packaging having a food supporting area for supporting said food product during oven cooking and at least one handle formed integrally from the same sheet material, wherein, in a first configuration the handle is foldable to extend over the supporting area thereby to cover only a portion of said food on said area and wherein, in a second configuration, the handle is positionable to extend away from said area, thereby providing a handle allowing carrying of the food supported on the area.

[0010] Thus the packaging provides a cooking surface, which can be disposable, and which also provides a handle for placing and/or removing the pizza into and/or out of an oven or the like before or after cooking.

[0011] In an embodiment, the packaging according to either the first or the second aspects is cut from one piece of the sheet material. Preferably the outer periphery of the packaging as well as apertures in the packaging are cut at the same time.

[0012] Preferably the supporting area includes a plurality of said apertures in use for allowing vapour to escape from the packaging.

[0013] Preferably said handle is bifurcated such that it is connected to said base in two places by forked sections of the handle.

[0014] Preferably, when folded, the forked sections of the handle are substantially perpendicular to said area and thereby act to inhibit sliding of said food in a plane parallel to said area, and preferably the remainder of the handle is folded to be substantially parallel to said area, to inhibit lifting of said food away from said base.

[0015] More preferably the packaging includes a further portion in a position generally opposed to said handle portion, having the same or similar features to the handle portion described above.

[0016] In an embodiment, said handle portion and said further portion include complementary formations which engage to hold said two portions substantially in their folded positions.

[0017] The invention extends to any novel combination of the features mentioned above or described herein.

[0018] By way by example, various embodiments of the invention are described below with reference to the drawings, wherein:

Figures 1a and 1b show plan views of one embodiment of the invention arranged in unfolded and folded positions respectively.

Figures 2, 3 & 4 show plan views of unfolded embodiments of the invention.

[0019] Referring to Figure 1 a there is shown a food packaging blank 10 which is die-cut from a sheet material such as cardboard or PET plastics. The packaging 10 is in the form of a pizza tray and has a food supporting base area 12 onto which is placed a pizza (not shown) or other food product. The packaging includes also two portions 14 and 16 which extend from the base area 12.

[0020] The portions 14 and 16 are each connected to

the base area 12 by two sections 22. Portion 14 can act as a handle in use. The portions 14 and 16 have complementary formations 18 and 20. When the pizza is placed on the base the sections 22 are folded upwardly at fold lines A, at approximately 90° relative to the plane of the paper on which they are illustrated. Then the remainder of portions 14 and 16, are folded at fold lines B so as to be substantially parallel with the base 12, so that sections 22 are upright, and so that the complementary formations 18 and 20 are brought together such that they are engaged and hold the portions in their folded positions.

[0021] The then folded blank 10' is arranged as shown in Figure 1b. The folded package 10' holds the pizza in place on the base 12, but allows viewing of the pizza when it is on retail display. Apertures 24 (Figure 1a) allow a part of the pizza to project therethrough when the packaging 10 is folded, preventing the pizza sliding off the base.

[0022] When the pizza is to be cooked, the packaging can be opened and the pizza can be slid into the hot oven using the unfolded handle portion 14 which then acts as a handle. Forming the handle 14 into a slightly curved form, such that the radius of curvature extends approximately perpendicular to the general length of the handle, provides a more rigid handle.

[0023] The packaging can be left in the oven with the pizza thereon until it is cooked, or the packaging may be removed prior to cooking. When cooked the pizza can be removed from the oven, using the handle 14 if the packaging was left in place, or sliding the packaging under the pizza and using the handle 14, if the packaging was initially removed.

[0024] The packaging can then be recycled.

[0025] Similar embodiments are shown in Figures 2,3 and 4 where like features have like reference numerals preceded by the numeral 2,3 or 4.

[0026] In the embodiments shown in Figures 3 and 4, vent holes 336 and 436 are illustrated, which aid cooking of the pizza when the packaging is left in the oven, supporting the pizza.

[0027] In Figure 3 a longer handle 314 is achieved by reducing the length of the opposing portion 316. In Figures 3 and 4 joining of portions 314 and 316, and 414 and 416 is achieved by gluing together respective formations 318 and 320, and 418 and 420.

[0028] Embodiments only of the invention have been described. It will be apparent to the skilled addressee that modifications, alternatives, and variants could be made without departing from the scope of the invention. For example packaging having two portions extending from a base area have been described and illustrated. However, other shapes could be employed, for example, a single portion extending from the base area could be used. The base area is illustrated as being circular, but other shapes could be used, for example, square, or hexagonal shapes could be employed with equal merit. The preferred material for manufacturing the packaging is

cardboard, but other materials could be used, for example PET or metal such as aluminium.

5 Claims

1. A food product packaging formed from a generally planar sheet material (10), the packaging having a food supporting area (12) for supporting the food product and at least one handle portion (14) for manipulating in use said food supported on said area (12), **characterised in that** in a first configuration, the handle (14) is folded or foldable to extend over said area (12) thereby to cover only a portion of said food on said area (12) when said food is offered for sale, and **in that**, in a second configuration, the handle (14) is positionable to extend away from said area, thereby providing a handle which allows said food to be carried on said area (12).
2. A food product packaging as claimed in claim 1 suitable for acting as a cooking tray during cooking, and manufactured from heat resistant material or materials.
3. A food product packaging (10) formed or formable from a heat resistant generally planar sheet material, the packaging having a food supporting area (12) for supporting said food product during oven cooking and at least one handle (14) formed integrally from the same sheet material, **characterised in that** in a first configuration the handle is foldable to extend over the supporting area (12) thereby to cover only a portion of said food on said area (12) and **in that**, in a second configuration, the handle (14) is positionable to extend away from said area, thereby providing a handle allowing carrying of the food supported on the area (12).
4. A food product packaging according to any one of the preceding claims, cut from one piece of the sheet material.
5. A food product packaging as claimed in claim 4, wherein the supporting area (12) includes a plurality of apertures (336).
6. A food product packaging as claimed in claim 5 wherein, the outer periphery of the packaging as well as the apertures in the packaging are cut at the same time.
7. A food product packaging as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein said handle is bifurcated such that it is connected to said base in two places by forked sections (22) of the handle (14).
8. A food product packaging as claimed in claim 7,

wherein, when folded, the forked sections (22) of the handle (14) are substantially perpendicular to said area (12) and thereby act to inhibit sliding of said food in a plane parallel to said area, and preferably the remainder of the handle is folded to be substantially parallel to said area, to inhibit lifting of said food away from said base. 5

9. A food product packaging as claimed in any one of the preceding claims, wherein the packaging includes a further portion (16) in a position generally opposed to said handle portion (14), preferably having the same or similar features to the handle portion claimed in the preceding claims. 10

10. A food product packaging as claimed in claim 9, wherein said handle portion and said further portion include complementary formations (18, 20) which engage to hold said two portions (14,16) substantially in their folded positions. 15 20

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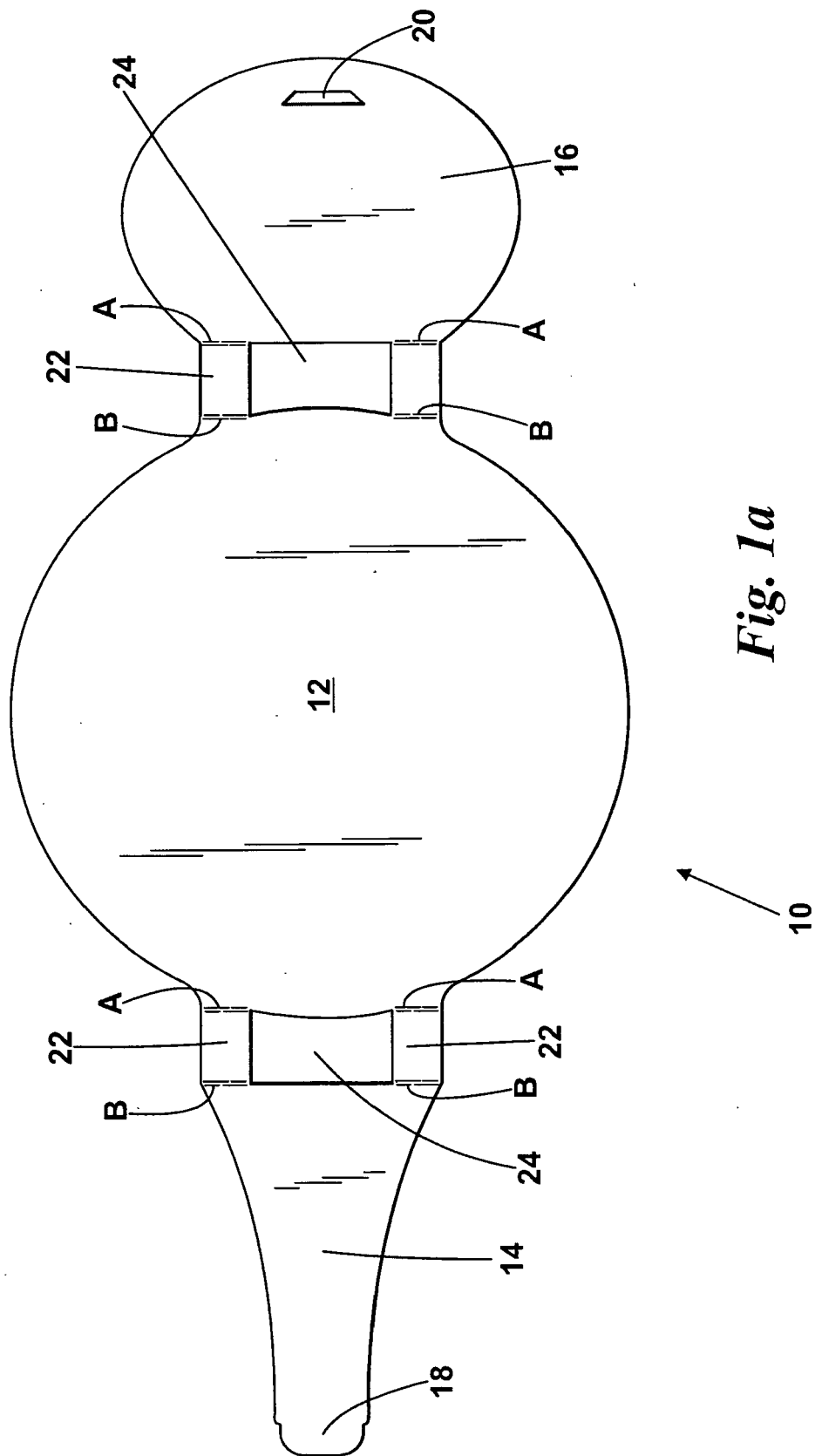


Fig. 1a

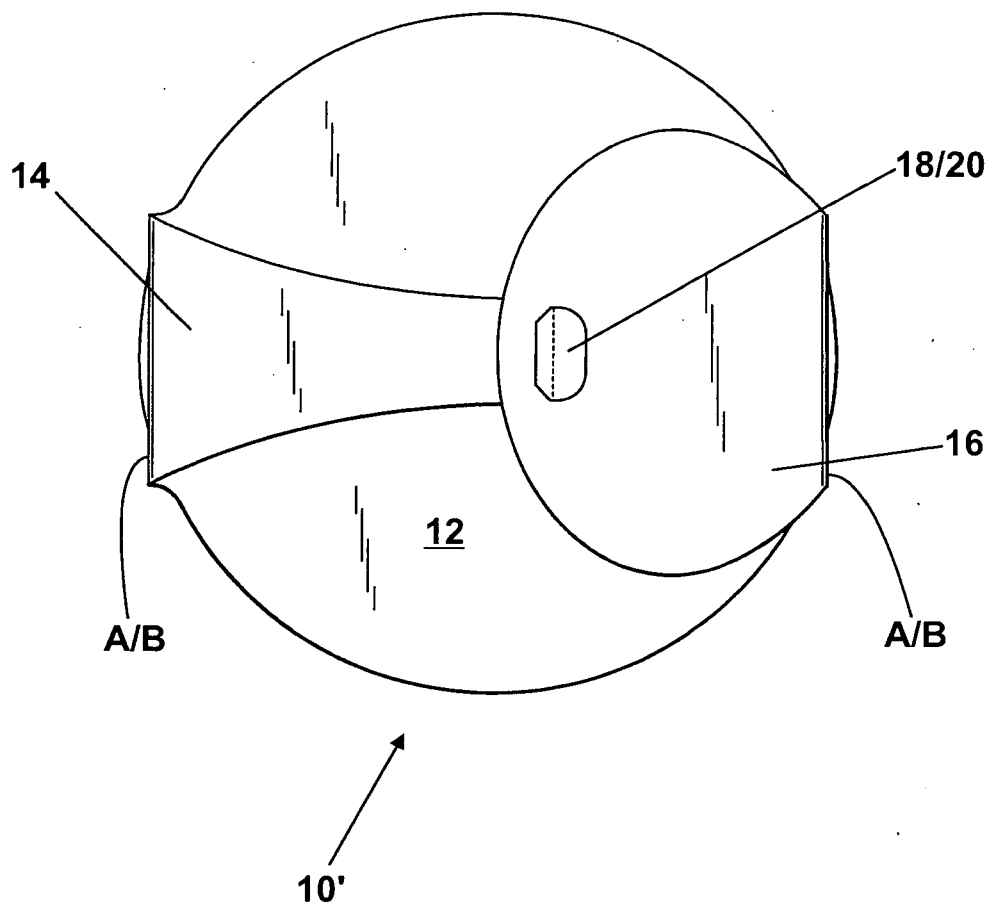


Fig. 1b

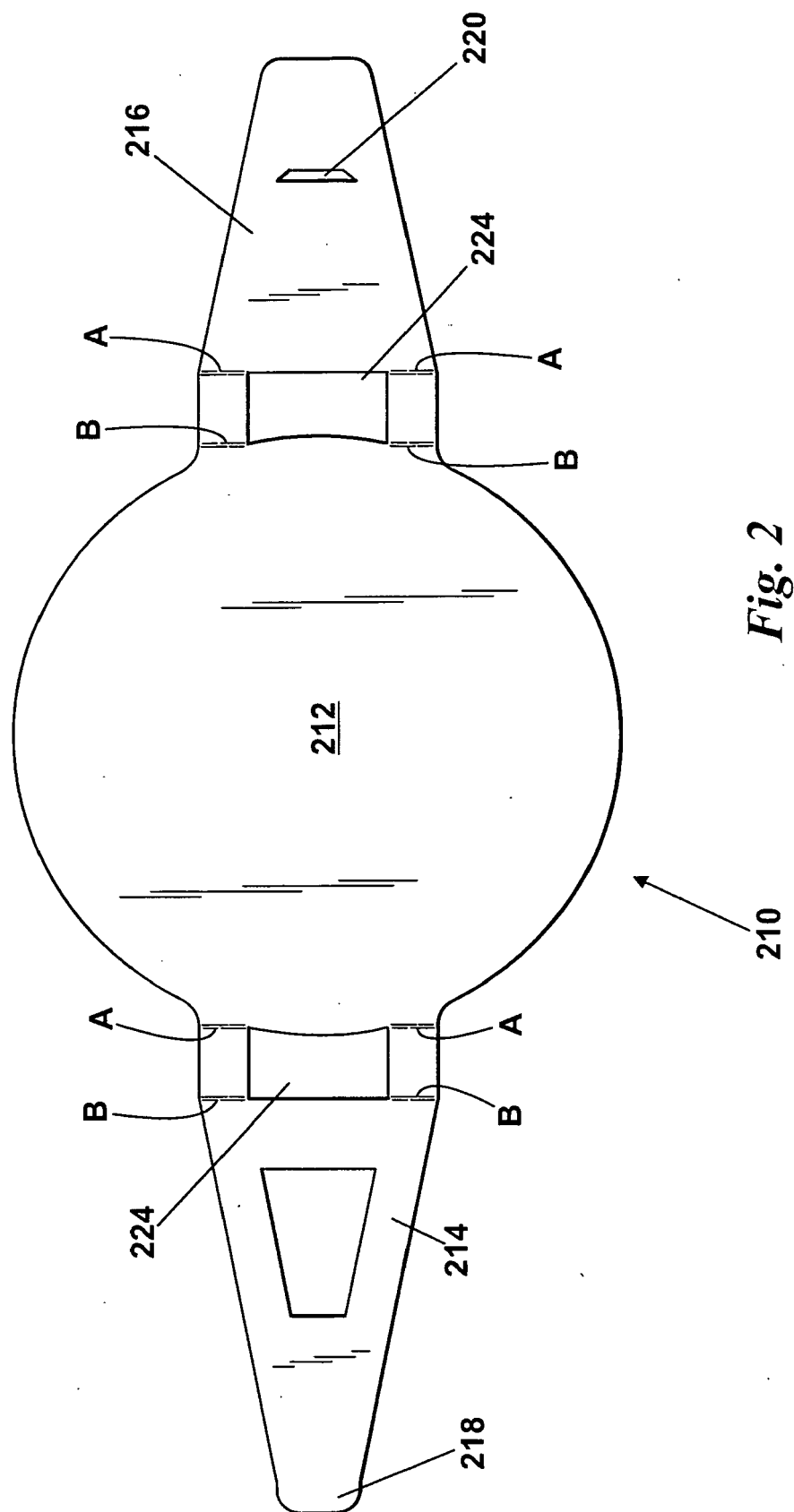


Fig. 2

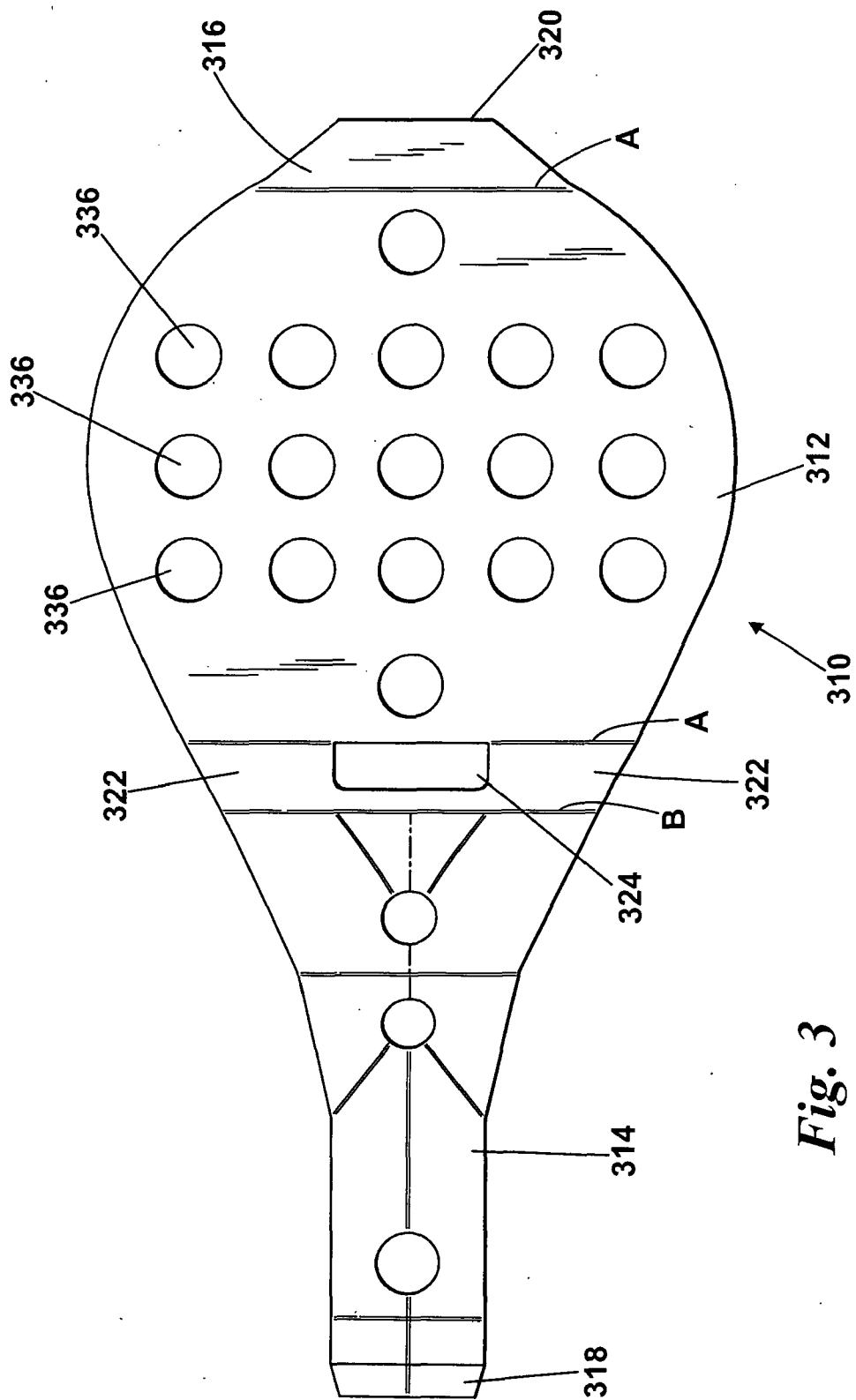
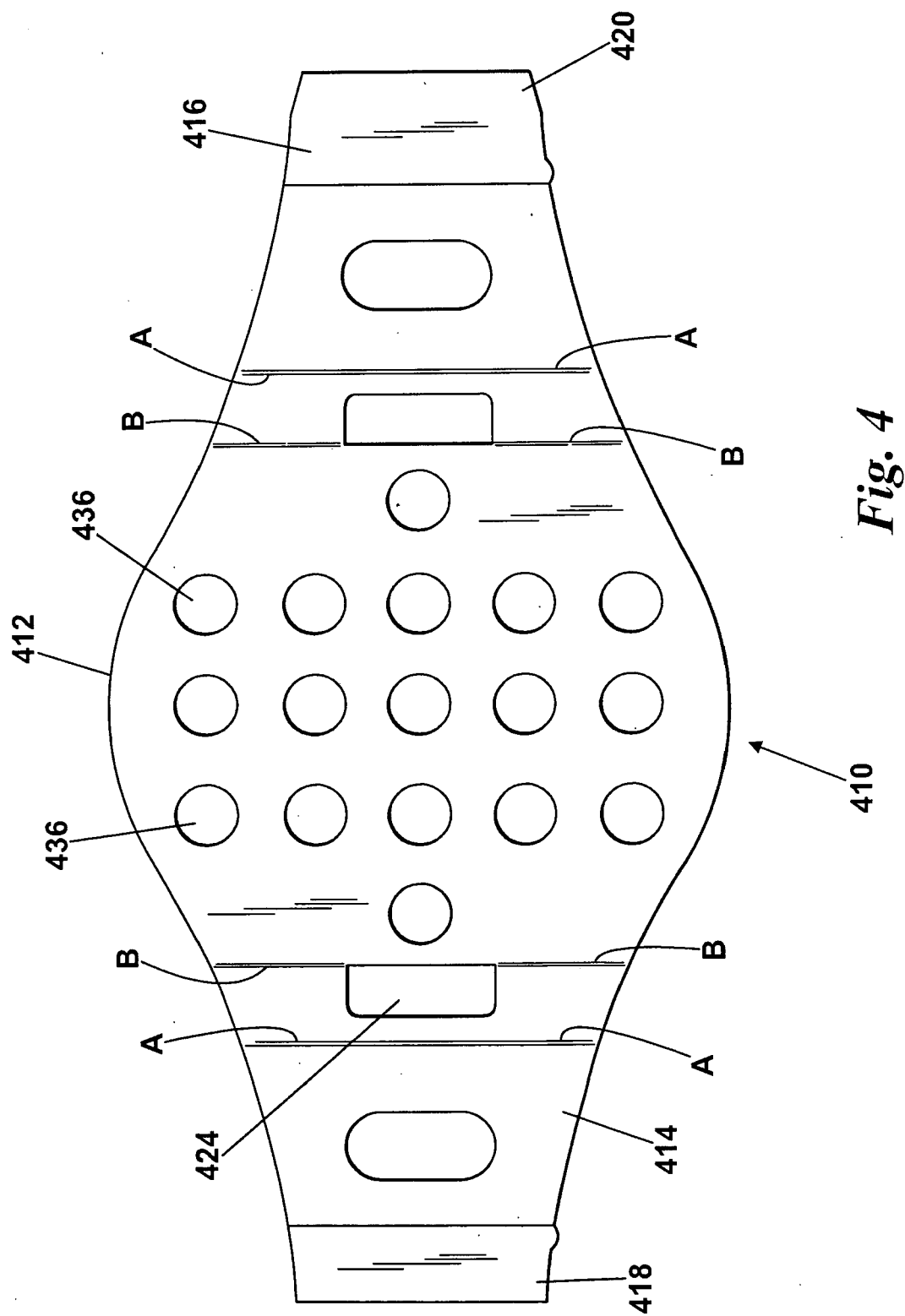


Fig. 3





EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 09 00 6339

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (IPC)
X	US 3 003 207 A (CLELL POWERS) 10 October 1961 (1961-10-10)	1-4,9,10	INV. B65D81/34
Y	* the whole document *	5	

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Y	* figures 1/6,2/6,6/6 *	5	

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Y	* page 4 - page 5 *	5	
	* figures 1-3 *		

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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 20 July 2009	Examiner Fitterer, Johann
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 03.82 (P04C01)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 09 00 6339

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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20-07-2009

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