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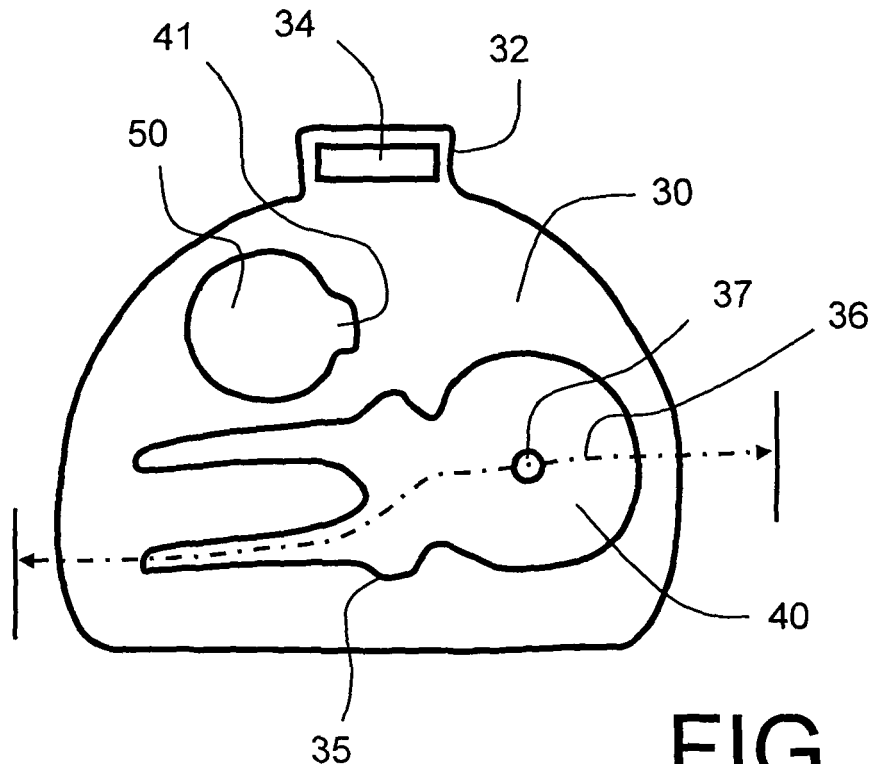
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(54) **Device of a pitchfork**

(57) There is described an apparatus for a green fork (10) for managing grass in regions impacted by falling golf balls, therein the green fork (10) comprises a holding portion (12) for gripping by fingers, and a trunk (12) with two or more prongs (16, 18) for servicing said grass, and

is distinguished by the green fork (10) being disposed to be permanently or releasably attached to a marker sheet (30) for golf equipment, in that the apparatus is disposable between an active user state, and a passive storage state in the marker sheet (30).



**FIG. 4**

## Description

### Field of the invention

**[0001]** The present invention relates to an apparatus in the form of a so-called "green fork" such as defined in the preamble of the following claim 1. The present invention has a resemblance to a fork-like instrument.

### Background of the invention

**[0002]** Golfing ranges are often specially constructed from an outset.

**[0003]** A green, for example a putting green, on a golf range is a region whereat grass is finely prepared. Each golf range's hole has such a putting green which encircles the hole on a slope.

**[0004]** The grass of the green is cut severely short, so that a ball is able to role several metres thereover. The hole is demarcated with a flag such that it can be seen from a given distance. When the ball lands of the green, the golf player proceeds to operate in a putting mode, namely the ball is knocked along the slope.

**[0005]** Contemporary golf balls weigh up to 46 grammes, have a diameter of substantially 43 millimetres and have a form resembling an ideal spherical form (information source: Wikipedia).

**[0006]** The aforementioned information suggests that a golf ball is a rather compact and heavy sphere. Thus, a golf ball, after receiving a strike, will fly through the air in a bowed trajectory and will meet the slope giving a powerful downward force when it contacts the grass there.

**[0007]** The blades of grass in the region of contact are bent downwards, and it can occur that the blades of grass can be broken and permanently bent. It has been shown that the grass in the region of contact can be damaged or even die. Such damage can therefore be permanent and relatively visible on a golfing range in the form of brown patches in the green.

**[0008]** Moreover, it has been shown that grass damage is less or completely diminished when the blades are lifted up from a bent position. There is therefore a rule during playing golf on golf ranges that an impact region should be "helped" to elevate itself again. Practice has shown that the damage is much less when grass is elevated in this manner.

**[0009]** It is therefore obligatory for golf players to personally carry with them an instrument which is useable for grass elevation. This instrument is known as a "green fork" as a term of art. It is also defined that this "green fork" is implemented with two linear prongs which extend from a stem. When the green fork is driven horizontally down in the grass, the grass blades pass between the prongs, and when one lifts the green fork up, individual grass stems are correspondingly lifted up to nearly a vertical disposition.

**[0010]** One can say that one thereby administers a

type of "first aid" which results in that the grass stems can be restored. In most cases, such first aid is successful, and no marks are left as a result of the balls impact upon the green.

### Summary of the invention

**[0011]** The present invention is concerned with a new solution for retaining a "green fork" for a user, so that it no longer needs to lie in a pocket in trousers or a jacket of the user, but can have a firm location in connection with the user's other golfing equipment.

**[0012]** The apparatus pursuant to the present invention is distinguished by features which are recited in a post-characterizing portion of presently pending claim 1. Preferred embodiments of the invention are defined in dependent claims 2 to 8.

### Description of the diagrams

**[0013]** The invention will now be described with reference to the following diagrams wherein:

Figure 1A is an illustration of a green fork in a typical disposition as seen directly from above;

Figure 1B is an illustration of the fork seen from a side view;

Figures 2a, 2b are illustrations of a ball marker which is used to mark an impact of a ball onto a green;

Figure 3 is an illustration of an example of a selection marker which is usually temporarily employed;

Figure 4 is an illustration of the present invention itself, namely a selection marker which comprises suitable depressions for positioning of the aforementioned ball marker and green fork; and

Figure 5 is an illustration of a cross-section of a marker sheet pursuant to the invention, the illustration being along a dotted line 36 included in Figure 4.

### Description of embodiments of the invention

**[0014]** The invention will be described with reference to Figure 1 which shows a green fork **10**. The fork **10** is a flat broad fork form including a head **12** (as a holding part), a trunk **14** and two extending prongs **16**, **18** which between them define a gap **20**. This instrument is used to lift up the grass on the green in a manner as elucidated in the foregoing.

[0015] Figure 2 is an illustration a typical marker in the form of a round block **22** which is used to mark where the golf ball falls to a standstill on the green. Often the ball is removed quickly for accommodating a next player, and there is laid down a marker on the grass to show a position to where the ball should be returned afterwards. The thickness of the green fork **10** and the ball marker is optionally in a range of 1 mm to 5 mm, all depending upon how large they are in horizontal cross-section.

[0016] Figure 3 is an illustration of a typical marker sheet **30** which is used in many situations for marking golf equipment, when they are placed in carry bags, suitcases or similar. The marker sheet **30** is a half-rounded form and shown here, but optionally can be rectangular, completely round or have other unique forms/appearances. Moreover, the marker sheet **30** optionally has a thickness in a range of 1 mm to 5 mm.

[0017] In the Figures, there is shown a tab **32** having a hole **34** wherethrough a strap or similar to a bag can pass, such that the marker sheet **30** is coupled to the golf player's bag, or other equipment which is used in a golfing range. Such marker sheets are also susceptible to being fastened permanently to an equipment bag with adhesive, or releasable with help of a Velcro® system.

[0018] Figure 4 is an illustration of the invention itself. The marker sheet is fabricated with a depression **40** into which the green fork **10** is susceptible to be being pressed and stored there until there is a need for it.

[0019] It is envisaged that the depression **40** has a similar contour as the green fork **10**. Figure 5 is an illustration of a cross-section along the line **36** in Figure 4 in order to illustrate the depression **40**. A green fork **10** is indicated using a dashed line.

[0020] Beneficially, the green fork **10** has a similar extent sideways in relation to the depression **40** extent sideways, so that the green fork **10** is susceptible to being pressed down by fingers for enabling it to be placed correspondingly into the depression **40**. In other words, there is used a press fit between the green fork **10** and the marker sheet **30**. In order that the golf player should be able to take the green fork **10** out, the green fork **10** is formed with some ear-shaped depressions **33** and **35** respectively, into which the user is able to put his/her fingertips in order to gain access to the marker sheet's edge and pull it up over the depression **40**. It is also possible that the marker sheet **30** comprises a small round through-penetrating finger hole **37** which is used to allow fingers to push up the green fork **10** from the depression **33**.

[0021] In Figure 6, there is shown an alternative to taking out the whole green fork **10** from the depression **33** and thereby separating it from the depression **33**, so that the head end **12** of the green fork **10** is susceptible to being hinged as denoted by **39** (see both Figures 5 and 6) from an inside of the depression **40**. The Figures 5 and 6 illustrate that the fork **10** is pushed up and is swung in an arc of the hinge **39**. The hinge **39** is susceptible to being formed by the end of the green fork **10** material

being thinner so that it forms a weakened part which is used as a bendable region between the parts of the fork parts and head part. They can therewith be more easily mutually bent via the thinner part.

[0022] The ball marking ears **22** shown in plan view and side view in Figures 2a and 2b are susceptible in a corresponding manner to being provided for depression **50** as shown in Figure 4. Moreover, this depression **50** has a depression ear **41** which is used for setting fingers down into and flicking up the sheet-formed ball marker **22**.

[0023] An advantageous alternative is shown in Figure 7 wherein there is shown that the bottom has a yet deeper depression on its left end, namely immediately underneath the leg **16** of the green fork **10**. When the green fork **10** is deployed in position, there is an "empty volume" **62** under the underside of the green fork **10** and down to the bottom of the depression **60**. By way of example, in order to grip onto the legs **16** of the green fork **10** using one's fingers, the head **12** is flipped up in an arc and the user grabs the head **12** and takes the green fork **10** out of the marker sheet **30**.

[0024] The marker sheet **30** is susceptible to stay accessibly attached and is operable to be separated when the green fork **10** is to be used. The marker sheet **30** optionally, moreover, has a freely selected form. It can be round, oval, triangular, rectilinear and all other alternative plan forms. The thickness of the marker sheet **30** is beneficially in a range of about 3 mm to 5 mm. The depression has a depth down from the sheet's upper side with the same thickness as the green fork **10** which can be of a size in an order of 1 mm to 3 mm, depending upon the thickness of the sheet **30**.

[0025] As an alternative to the solution where the back of the tag is adapted for the piece **30** by press adaptation, there can be provided a magnetic arrangement at the bottom of the depression and in the underside of the green fork **10**. In such a case, the bottom of the depression comprises a magnet, the green fork **10**, or at least a part thereof, is fabricated from magnetic material, such as a thin magnetic steel material such as a steel piece. The green fork **10** is susceptible, moreover, to being fabricated from any suitable material, metal, plastics material, wood or composite material. The green fork **10** can thereby be clicked into place in the depression and is easy to remove again. It is therefore and itself not necessary for there to be a precise pressure fit retention thetetebetween.

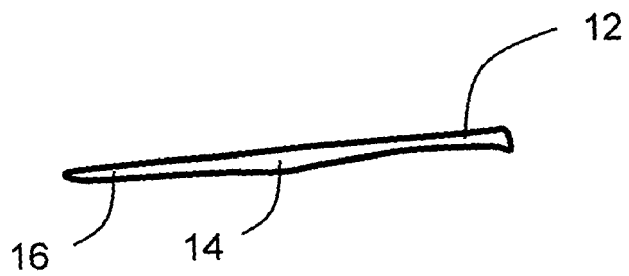
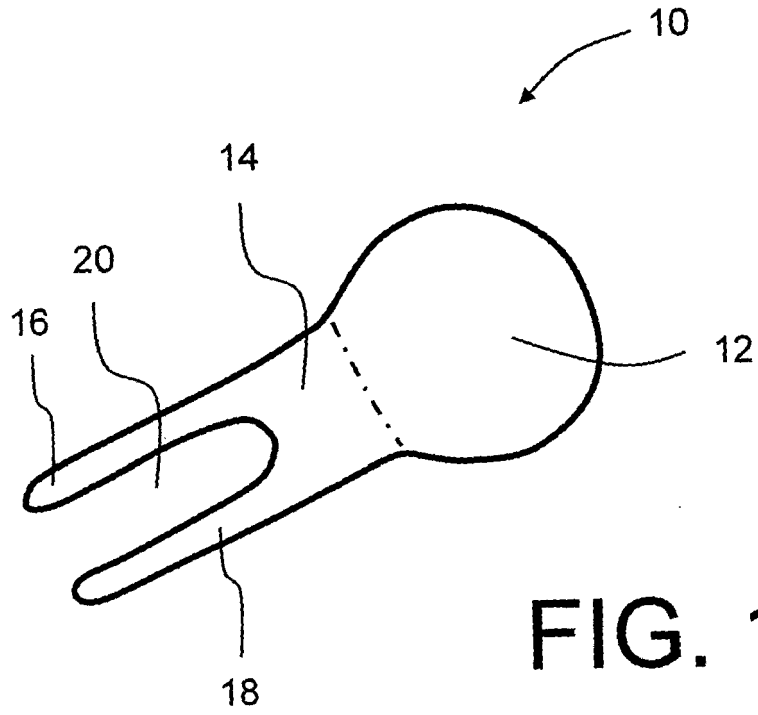
## Claims

1. An apparatus for a green fork for management of grass in a region impacted by falling golf balls, wherein the green fork comprises a head portion adapted for being held by fingers, and a stem with two or more prongs for servicing said grass, **characterized in that**

the green fork is adapted to permanent or releasable retention in a marker sheet for golf equipment, **in that** the green fork is deployable between an active user state and a passive storage state in the marker sheet.

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2. An apparatus according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the green fork is adapted to be secured into a depression in the marker sheet which has a profile which substantially matches a profile of the green fork. 10
3. An apparatus according to claim 2, **characterized in that** the depression and the profile of the green fork/circumference is disposed so that the green fork is securable within the depression by way of a press fit. 15
4. An apparatus according to claim 3, **characterized in that** the depression in the marker sheet comprises a number of depression ears (33, 35), into which a user of the apparatus is able to put his/her fingertips in order to access a corner of the marker sheet and pull the green fork out of the depression (40). 20  
25
5. An apparatus according to claim 3, **characterized in that** a bottom of the marker sheet (30) comprises a penetrating hole (37) such that a user's finger is able to flip the pressure fit adapted green fork (10) out of the depression. 30
6. An apparatus according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the green fork is fastened into the depression by assistance of a magnetic element. 35
7. An apparatus according to claim 1, **characterized in that** the green fork is securely fastened to the marker sheet via a hinge element (39, Figs. 5 & 6) to the inside of the depression (40), whereby the green fork (10) is operable to swing about the hinge element (39) in an arc from a passive storage position and up for a deployed position. 40
8. An apparatus according to claim 1, **characterized in that** a bottom of the depression has a yet deeper depression in its left-hand end, namely directly beneath the prongs (16) of the green fork (10), when the green fork is disposed in position with an empty region (62) under an underside of the green fork and down to the bottom of the depression (60), whereby the prongs (16) of the green fork are operable for the head (12) to be flipped up by finger force, and the user is then able to grip the head and remove the green fork (10) out of the marker sheet (30). 45  
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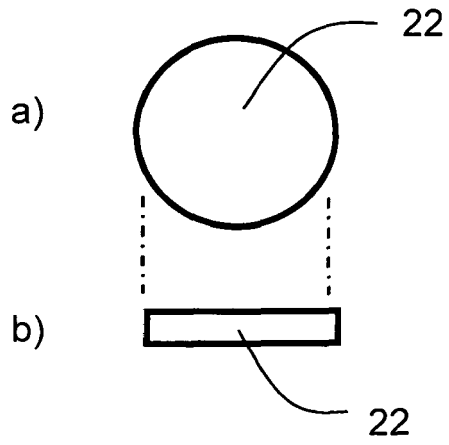


FIG. 2

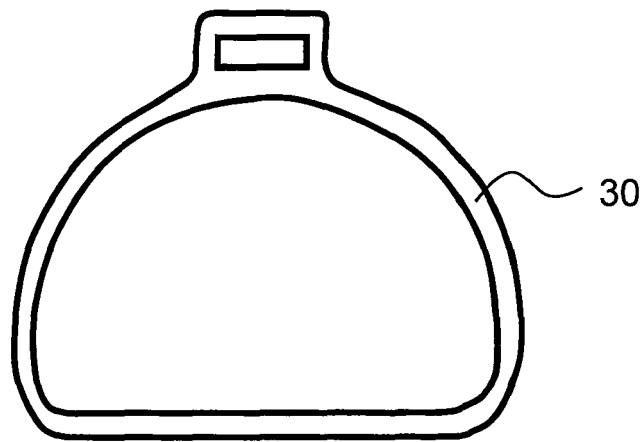


FIG. 3

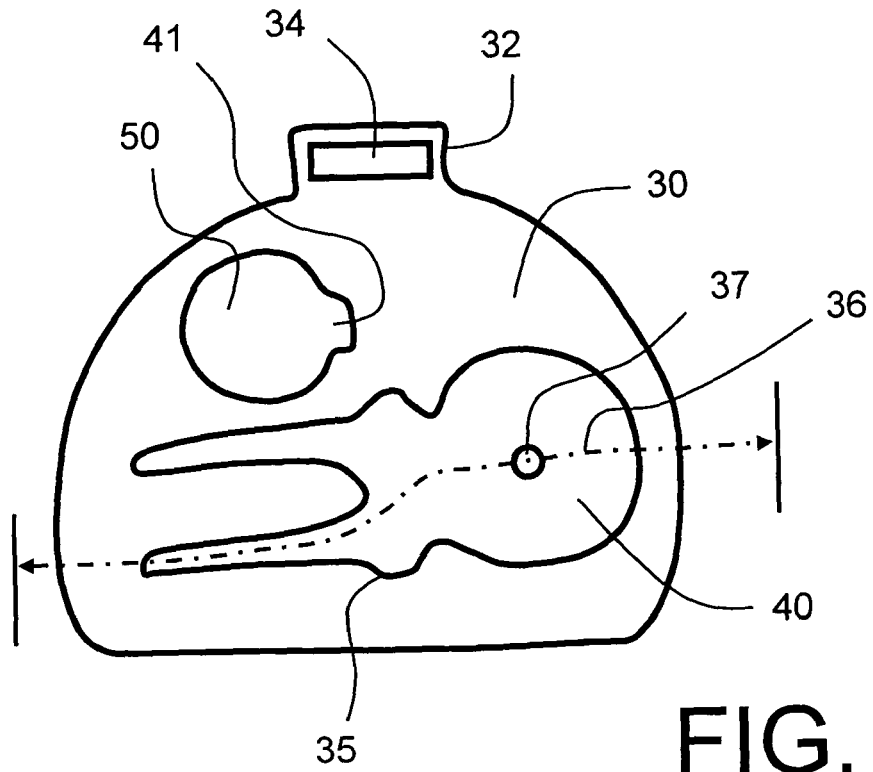


FIG. 4

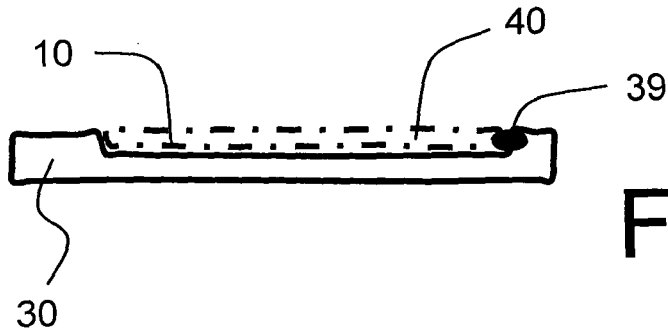


FIG. 5

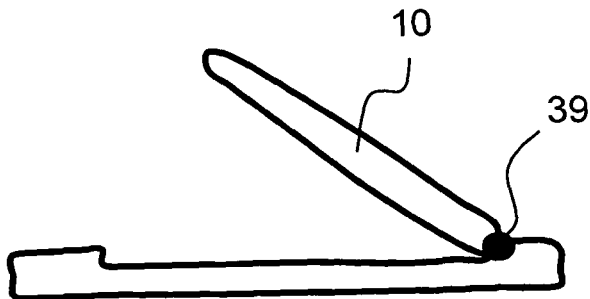


FIG. 6

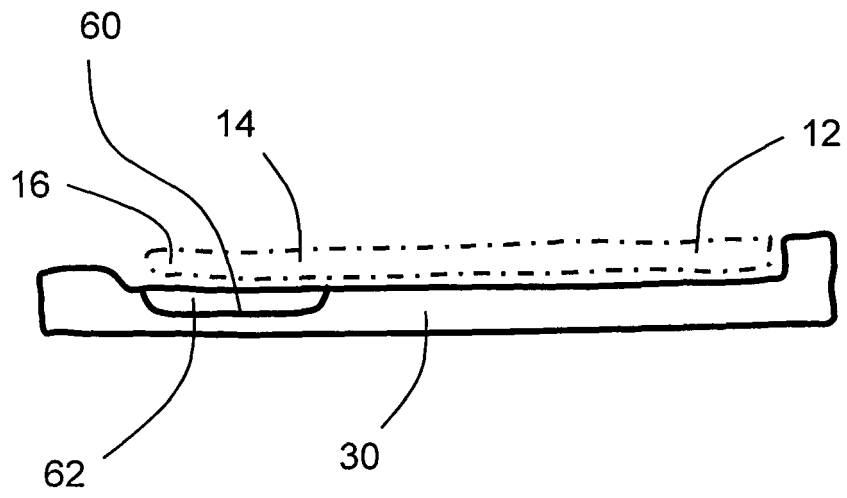


FIG. 7





EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number  
EP 08 01 8864

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The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (IPC) A63B
2	Place of search Munich	Date of completion of the search 27 October 2009	Examiner Lundblad, Hampus
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		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)

**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT  
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