(19) Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets

(11) **EP 4 098 334 A1**

(12) **EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION**
published in accordance with Art. 153(4) EPC

(43) Date of publication:
07.12.2022 Bulletin 2022/49

(21) Application number: **21757626.3**

(22) Date of filing: **19.01.2021**

(51) International Patent Classification (IPC):
A63B 49/00 *(2015.01)* ***A63B 102/04*** *(2015.01)*

(52) Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC):
A63B 49/00; A63B 2102/04

(86) International application number:
PCT/JP2021/001550

(87) International publication number:
WO 2021/166517 (26.08.2021 Gazette 2021/34)

(84) Designated Contracting States:
AL AT BE BG CH CY CZ DE DK EE ES FI FR GB GR HR HU IE IS IT LI LT LU LV MC MK MT NL NO PL PT RO RS SE SI SK SM TR
Designated Extension States:
BA ME
Designated Validation States:
KH MA MD TN

(30) Priority: **18.02.2020 JP 2020025154**

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(54) **BADMINTON RACKET**

(57) A badminton racket 2 includes a shaft 4, a frame 6, a grip 8, and a string 10. A flexural rigidity value EI(2) of the shaft 4 at a second measurement point located at a distance of 95 mm from the grip 8 is smaller than a flexural rigidity value EI(1) of the shaft 4 at a first measurement point located at a distance of 35 mm from the grip 8. A flexural rigidity value EI(3) of the shaft 4 at a third measurement point located at a distance of 155 mm from the grip 8 is smaller than the flexural rigidity value EI(2).

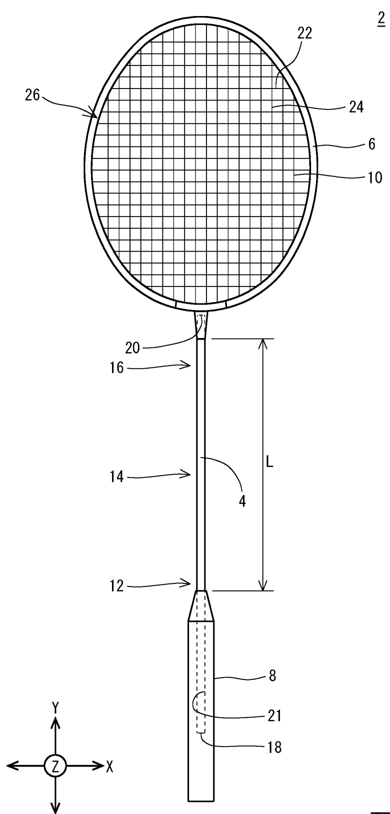

FIG. 1

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Description

Technical Field

[0001] The present invention relates to a badminton racket. In particular, the present invention relates to improvements to the shaft of the racket.

Background Art

[0002] A badminton racket includes a frame, a string, and a shaft. The player shots a shuttlecock with the racket. The shaft is deformed upon the shot.

[0003] Various attempts have been made to optimize the shaft deformation behavior. Chinese Patent Publication No. 108853971 discloses a racket including a shaft whose inner diameter changes stepwise.

Citation List

Patent Literature

[0004] PTL 1: Chinese Patent Publication No. 108853971

Summary of Invention

Technical Problem

[0005] In a badminton game, the player performs various types of shots. The player performs shots such as lob, smash, cut, and clear.

[0006] The lob is often hit from the vicinity of the net in the court of the player. The lob is a shot aimed at sending the shuttlecock deep to the back of the court of the opponent player. The shuttlecock flies along a high trajectory in the lob. The player is required to have the skill to allow the shuttlecock to fly at an intended height. When the player is one who frequently uses the lob, the player wants to stabilize the trajectory of the shuttlecock in the lob.

[0007] In the lob, the shaft is deflected mainly in the out-of-plane direction. The player wants to stabilize the trajectory of the shuttlecock also for shots which are other than the lob and in which the shaft is deflected in the out-of-plane direction.

[0008] An object of the present invention is to provide a badminton racket suitable for shots in which the shaft of the racket is deflected mainly in the out-of-plane direction.

Solution to Problem

[0009] A badminton racket according to the present invention includes:

a grip;
a shaft having a portion inserted into the grip, the inserted portion including a butt end of the shaft and a vicinity of the butt end; and
a frame attached to the shaft in a vicinity of a tip end of the shaft. A flexural rigidity value EI(2) of the shaft at a second measurement point located at a distance of 95 mm from the grip is smaller than a flexural rigidity value EI(1) of the shaft at a first measurement point located at a distance of 35 mm from the grip. A flexural rigidity value EI(3) of the shaft at a third measurement point located at a distance of 155 mm from the grip is smaller than the flexural rigidity value EI(2).

[0010] Preferably, a ratio (EI(2)/EI(1)) of the flexural rigidity value EI(2) to the flexural rigidity value EI(1) is not greater than 0.95.

[0011] Preferably, a ratio (EI(3)/EI(2)) of the flexural rigidity value EI(3) to the flexural rigidity value EI(2) is not greater than 0.90.

[0012] Preferably, a difference (EI(2) - EI(1)) between the flexural rigidity value EI(2) and the flexural rigidity value EI(1) is not greater than -0.30 Nm^2.

[0013] Preferably, a difference (EI(3) - EI(2)) between the flexural rigidity value EI(3) and the flexural rigidity value EI(2) is not greater than -0.5 Nm^2.

[0014] The shaft may have a hollow structure. Preferably, an inner diameter of the shaft is substantially constant from the first measurement point to the third measurement point.

[0015] Preferably, an outer diameter of the shaft is substantially constant from the first measurement point to the third measurement point.

[0016] Preferably, a ratio (W1/W2) of a weight W1 of the shaft in a zone from the first measurement point to the second measurement point to a weight W2 of the shaft in a zone from the second measurement point to the third measurement point is not less than 0.95 and not greater than 1.05.

[0017] Preferably, the shaft includes a fiber-reinforced layer. The fiber-reinforced layer is located in a zone including the first measurement point and not including the second and third measurement points in an axial direction of the shaft. The fiber-reinforced layer includes a plurality of reinforcing fibers oriented substantially in the axial direction.

[0018] Preferably, the shaft includes another fiber-reinforced layer. The fiber-reinforced layer is located in a zone including the first and second measurement points and not including the third measurement point in the axial direction of the shaft. The fiber-reinforced layer includes a plurality of reinforcing fibers oriented substantially in the axial direction.

Advantageous Effects of Invention

[0019] A player using the badminton racket according to the present invention can easily perform shots in which the shaft is deflected mainly in the out-of-plane direction. The racket can contribute to winning badminton games.

Brief Description of Drawings

[0020]

FIG. 1 is a front view showing a badminton racket according to one embodiment of the present invention.
FIG. 2 is a right side view showing the racket of FIG. 1.
FIG. 3 is an enlarged cross-sectional view showing a part of the shaft of the racket of FIG. 1.
FIG. 4 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken along the line IV-IV of FIG. 3.
FIG. 5 is a developed view showing prepregs for the shaft of the racket of FIG. 1.
FIG. 6 is a schematic diagram showing a method of measuring a flexural rigidity value EI of the shaft of the racket of FIG. 1.
FIG. 7 is a graph showing a flexural rigidity distribution of the shaft of the racket of FIG. 1.
FIG. 8 is a graph showing a flexural rigidity distribution of a shaft of a racket according to Comparative Example.
FIG. 9 is a graph showing a flexural rigidity distribution of a shaft of a racket according to Example 2 of the present invention.
FIG. 10 is a graph showing a flexural rigidity distribution of a shaft of a racket according to Example 3 of the present invention.

Description of Embodiments

[0021] The following will describe in detail the present invention based on preferred embodiments with appropriate reference to the drawings.

[0022] FIGS. 1 and 2 show a badminton racket 2. The racket 2 includes a shaft 4, a frame 6, a grip 8, and a string 10. In FIGS. 1 and 2, the arrow X represents the width direction, the arrow Y represents the axial direction, and the arrow Z represents the thickness direction.

[0023] The shaft 4 includes a butt portion 12, a middle portion 14, and a tip portion 16. The shaft 4 further includes a butt end 18 and a tip end 20. The shaft 4 is hollow. The shaft 4 is formed from a fiber-reinforced resin. The fiber-reinforced resin includes a resin matrix and a large number of reinforcing fibers. The shaft 4 includes a plurality of fiber-reinforced layers (which will be described in detail later).

[0024] Examples of the base resin of the shaft 4 include: thermosetting resins such as epoxy resin, bismaleimide resin, polyimide, and phenol resin; and thermoplastic resins such as polyether ether ketone, polyethersulfone, polyetherimide, polyphenylene sulfide, polyamide, and polypropylene. Epoxy resin is particularly suitable as the resin of the shaft 4.

[0025] Examples of the reinforcing fibers of the shaft 4 include carbon fibers, metal fibers, glass fibers, and aramid fibers. Carbon fibers are particularly suitable as the fibers of the shaft 4. Different kinds of fibers may be used in combination.

[0026] The frame 6 is ring-shaped and hollow. The frame 6 is formed from a fiber-reinforced resin. Any of the resins as mentioned for the base resin of the shaft 4 can be used as the base resin of the fiber-reinforced resin. Any of the fibers as mentioned for the reinforcing fibers of the shaft 4 can be used as the reinforcing fibers of the fiber-reinforced resin. The frame 6 is firmly joined to the tip end 20 of the shaft 4.

[0027] The grip 8 includes a hole 21 extending in the axial direction (Y direction). The butt end 18 and its vicinity of the shaft 4 are inserted into the hole 21. The inner peripheral surface of the hole 21 and the outer peripheral surface of the shaft 4 are bonded with an adhesive.

[0028] The string 10 is strung on the frame 6. The string 10 is placed along the width direction X and the axial direction Y. The portions of the string 10 that extend along the width direction X are referred to as transverse threads 22. The portions of the string 10 that extend along the axial direction Y are referred to as longitudinal threads 24. The plurality of transverse threads 22 and the plurality of longitudinal threads 24 form a face 26. The face 26 extends generally along the X-Y plane.

[0029] In FIG. 1, the reference sign L represents the length of the exposed portion of the shaft 4. The length L is usually not less than 150 mm and not greater than 210 mm.

[0030] FIG. 3 is an enlarged cross-sectional view showing a part of the shaft 4 of the racket 2 of FIG. 1. FIG. 4 is an enlarged cross-sectional view taken along the line IV-IV of FIG. 3. As previously stated, the shaft 4 is hollow. As shown in FIG. 4, the cross-section of the shaft 4 is circular. In other words, the shaft 4 is in the shape of a cylindrical tube.

[0031] In FIGS. 3 and 4, the arrow Di represents the inner diameter of the shaft 4. The inner diameter Di is typically not less than 3 mm and not greater than 10 mm. In FIGS. 3 and 4, the arrow Do represents the outer diameter of the shaft 4. The outer diameter Do is typically not less than 5 mm and not greater than 15 mm.

[0032] As previously stated, the shaft 4 is formed from a fiber-reinforced resin. The shaft 4 can be produced by a sheet winding method. In the sheet winding method, a plurality of prepregs are wound on a mandrel. Each prepreg includes a plurality of fibers and a matrix resin. The matrix resin is uncured.

[0033] FIG. 5 is a developed view showing a prepreg arrangement for the shaft 4 of the racket 2 of FIG. 1. The prepreg arrangement includes eight prepregs (sheets). Specifically, the prepreg arrangement includes a first sheet S1, a second sheet S2, a third sheet S3, a fourth sheet S4, a fifth sheet S5, a sixth sheet S6, a seventh sheet S7, and an eighth sheet S8. A plurality of fiber-reinforced layers are formed from the prepregs by a method described later. Specifically, a first fiber-reinforced layer is formed from the first sheet S1, a second fiber-reinforced layer is formed from the second sheet S2, a third fiber-reinforced layer is formed from the third sheet S3, a fourth fiber-reinforced layer is formed from the fourth sheet S4, a fifth fiber-reinforced layer is formed from the fifth sheet S5, a sixth fiber-reinforced layer is formed from the sixth sheet S6, a seventh fiber-reinforced layer is formed from the seventh sheet S7, and an eighth fiber-reinforced layer is formed from the eighth sheet S8.

[0034] The left-right direction in FIG. 5 is the axial direction of the shaft 4. In FIG. 5, the locations of the butt end 18 and tip end 20 are indicated by arrows. In FIG. 5, the locations of three measurement points P1, P2, and P3 described later are also indicated by arrows. In FIG. 5, the reduction scale in the left-right direction (axial direction) is not equal to the reduction scale in the up-down direction.

[0035] The first sheet S1 extends over the entirety of the shaft 4. The first sheet S1 is generally rectangular. The first sheet S1 includes a plurality of carbon fibers arranged in parallel. The direction in which each of the carbon fibers extends is inclined with respect to the axial direction. The direction in which each carbon fiber extends forms an angle of not less than 30° and not greater than 60° with the axial direction. In the present embodiment, the angle is 45°. The first sheet S1 is 100 mm wide and 340 mm long.

[0036] The second sheet S2 extends over the entirety of the shaft 4. The second sheet S2 is generally rectangular. The second sheet S2 includes a plurality of carbon fibers arranged in parallel. The direction in which each of the carbon fibers extends is inclined with respect to the axial direction. The direction in which each carbon fiber extends forms an angle of not less than -60° and not greater than -30° with the axial direction. In the present embodiment, the angle is -45°. The second sheet S2 is 100 mm wide and 340 mm long.

[0037] The direction of the inclination of the carbon fibers in the second sheet S2 is opposite to the direction of the inclination of the carbon fibers in the first sheet S1. Thus, the direction of the inclination of the carbon fibers in the second fiber-reinforced layer is opposite to the direction of the inclination of the carbon fibers in the first fiber-reinforced layer. In the shaft 4, a bias structure is achieved by the first and second fiber-reinforced layers. The first and second fiber-reinforced layers contribute to the flexural rigidity and torsional rigidity of the shaft 4. The first and second fiber-reinforced layers particularly contribute to the torsional rigidity of the shaft 4.

[0038] The third sheet S3 is localized towards the tip end 20 of the shaft 4. The third sheet S3 is generally trapezoidal. The third sheet S3 includes a plurality of carbon fibers arranged in parallel. The direction in which each of the carbon fibers extends is inclined with respect to the axial direction. The direction in which each carbon fiber extends forms an angle of not less than 30° and not greater than 60° with the axial direction. In the present embodiment, the angle is 45°. The third sheet S3 is 40 mm wide, 185 mm long on the upper base, and 195 mm long on the lower base.

[0039] The fourth sheet S4 is localized towards the tip end 20 of the shaft 4. In the axial direction, the location of the fourth sheet S4 is the same as the location of the third sheet S3. The fourth sheet S4 is generally trapezoidal. The fourth sheet S4 includes a plurality of carbon fibers arranged in parallel. The direction in which each of the carbon fibers extends is inclined with respect to the axial direction. The direction in which each carbon fiber extends forms an angle of not less than -60° and not greater than -30° with the axial direction. In the present embodiment, the angle is -45°. The fourth sheet S4 is 40 mm wide, 185 mm long on the upper base, and 195 mm long on the lower base.

[0040] The direction of the inclination of the carbon fibers in the fourth sheet S4 is opposite to the direction of the inclination of the carbon fibers in the third sheet S3. Thus, the direction of the inclination of the carbon fibers in the fourth fiber-reinforced layer is opposite to the direction of the inclination of the carbon fibers in the third fiber-reinforced layer. In the shaft 4, a bias structure is achieved by the third and fourth fiber-reinforced layers. The third and fourth fiber-reinforced layers contribute to the flexural rigidity and torsional rigidity of the middle portion 14 and tip portion 16. The third and fourth fiber-reinforced layers particularly contribute to the torsional rigidity of the middle portion 14 and tip portion 16.

[0041] The fifth sheet S5 is localized towards the butt end 18 of the shaft 4. The fifth sheet S5 is generally trapezoidal. The fifth sheet S5 includes a plurality of carbon fibers arranged in parallel. The direction in which each of the carbon fibers extends is the same as the axial direction. In other words, the direction in which each carbon fiber extends forms an angle of substantially 0° with the axial direction. The fifth sheet S5 is 80 mm wide, 145 mm long on the upper base, and 155 mm long on the lower base.

[0042] As stated above, the carbon fibers contained in the fifth sheet S5 are oriented substantially in the axial direction. Thus, the carbon fibers are oriented substantially in the axial direction also in the fifth fiber-reinforced layer. The structure in which the carbon fibers are oriented substantially in the axial direction is herein referred to as a "straight structure". The fifth fiber-reinforced layer has a straight structure. Upon deflection of the shaft 4, the carbon fibers are subjected to a strong tension. The tension acts to prevent further deflection of the shaft 4. In other words, the carbon fibers contribute to the flexural rigidity of the shaft 4. As shown in FIG. 5, the fifth sheet S5 is located in a zone including the first measurement point P1 and not including the second and third measurement points P2 and P3 in the axial direction. Thus, the fifth fiber-reinforced layer is also located in the zone including the first measurement point P1 and not including the second and third measurement points P2 and P3 in the axial direction. The fifth fiber-reinforced layer particularly contributes to the flexural rigidity of the butt portion 12.

[0043] The sixth sheet S6 is localized towards the tip end 20 of the shaft 4. The sixth sheet S6 is generally trapezoidal. The sixth sheet S6 includes a plurality of carbon fibers arranged in parallel. The direction in which each of the carbon fibers extends is inclined with respect to the axial direction. The direction in which each carbon fiber extends forms an angle of not less than 30° and not greater than 60° with the axial direction. In the present embodiment, the angle is 45°. The sixth sheet S6 is 20 mm wide, 95 mm long on the upper base, and 105 mm long on the lower base.

[0044] The seventh sheet S7 is localized towards the tip end 20 of the shaft 4. In the axial direction, the location of the seventh sheet S7 is the same as the location of the sixth sheet S6. The seventh sheet S7 is generally trapezoidal. The seventh sheet S7 includes a plurality of carbon fibers arranged in parallel. The direction in which each of the carbon fibers extends is inclined with respect to the axial direction. The direction in which each carbon fiber extends forms an angle of not less than -60° and not greater than -30° with the axial direction. In the present embodiment, the angle is -45°. The seventh sheet S7 is 20 mm wide, 95 mm long on the upper base, and 105 mm long on the lower base.

[0045] The direction of the inclination of the carbon fibers in the seventh sheet S7 is opposite to the direction of the inclination of the carbon fibers in the sixth sheet S6. Thus, the direction of the inclination of the carbon fibers in the seventh fiber-reinforced layer is opposite to the direction of the inclination of the carbon fibers in the sixth fiber-reinforced layer. In the shaft 4, a bias structure is achieved by the sixth and seventh fiber-reinforced layers. The sixth and seventh fiber-reinforced layers contribute to the flexural rigidity and torsional rigidity of the tip portion 12. The sixth and seventh fiber-reinforced layers particularly contribute to the torsional rigidity of the tip portion 12.

[0046] The eighth sheet S8 is localized towards the butt end 18 of the shaft 4. The eighth sheet S8 is generally trapezoidal. The eighth sheet S8 includes a plurality of carbon fibers arranged in parallel. The direction in which each of the carbon fibers extends is the same as the axial direction. In other words, the direction in which each carbon fiber extends forms an angle of substantially 0° with the axial direction. The eighth sheet S8 is 40 mm wide, 235 mm long on the upper base, and 245 mm long on the lower base.

[0047] As stated above, the carbon fibers contained in the eighth sheet S8 are oriented substantially in the axial direction. Thus, the carbon fibers are oriented substantially in the axial direction also in the eighth fiber-reinforced layer. The eighth fiber-reinforced layer has a straight structure. Upon deflection of the shaft 4, the carbon fibers are subjected to a strong tension. The tension acts to prevent further deflection of the shaft 4. In other words, the carbon fibers contribute to the flexural rigidity of the shaft 4. As shown in FIG. 5, the eighth sheet S8 is located in a zone including the first and second measurement points P1 and P2 and not including the third measurement point P3 in the axial direction. Thus, the eighth fiber-reinforced layer is also located in the zone including the first and second measurement points P1 and P2 and not including the third measurement point P3 in the axial direction. The eighth fiber-reinforced layer particularly contributes to the flexural rigidity of the butt portion 12 and middle portion 14.

[0048] In the shaft 4, the first and second fiber-reinforced layers extend from the butt end 18 to the tip end 20. These fiber-reinforced layers can contribute to the durability of the shaft 4.

[0049] In production of the shaft 4, the sheets shown in FIG. 5 are sequentially wound on a mandrel. A stack of the first and second sheets S1 and S2 may be wound on the mandrel. A stack of the third and fourth sheets S3 and S4 may be wound on the mandrel. A stack of the sixth and seventh sheets S6 and S7 may be wound on the mandrel. In addition to these sheets, another sheet may be wound on the mandrel. An example of the other sheet is a sheet containing glass fibers.

[0050] A wrapping tape is further wound on the above sheets. The mandrel, prepregs (sheets S1 to S8), and wrapping tape are heated by means such as an oven. The heating fluidizes the matrix resin. Further heating induces a curing reaction of the resin, as a result of which a shaped product is obtained. The shaped product is subjected to various processes such as end face machining, polishing, and painting, and thus the shaft 4 is completed.

[0051] FIG. 6 is a schematic diagram showing a method of measuring a flexural rigidity value EI of the shaft 4 of the racket 2 of FIG. 1. FIG. 6 shows the measurement at a measurement point P located at a distance L1 from the grip 8. In this measurement, the shaft 4 is supported from below at first and second support points 28 and 30. The distance from the measurement point P to the first support point 28 is 30 mm. The distance from the measurement point P to the second support point 30 is 30 mm. The measurement is performed using a universal testing machine (manufactured by INTESCO Co., Ltd. under the product name "2020"). The testing machine includes an indenter 32. The indenter 32 is in the shape of a hemisphere. The radius of curvature of the hemisphere is 20 mm. The indenter 32 gradually descends at a speed of 2 mm/min. The indenter 32 comes into contact with the measurement point P and presses the shaft 4. The pressing causes gradual deflection of the shaft 4. The amount of deflection B (m) of the shaft 4 is measured at the moment when the load applied to the shaft 4 by the indenter 32 reaches 100 N. The amount of deflection B is substituted into the following equation to calculate the flexural rigidity value EI (Nm^2).

$$EI = F \cdot L2^3/(48 \cdot B)$$

[0052] In this equation, F is the load (N), L2 is the distance (m) between the two support points, and B is the amount of deflection (m). In the present embodiment, the load F is 100 N, and the distance L2 is 0.06 m. The flexural rigidity value EI of the shaft 4 may be measured in the absence of the grip 8 and frame 6.

[0053] In the present embodiment, the flexural rigidity values EI are measured at the first, second, and third measurement points P1, P2, and P3. The distance L1 from the grip 8 to each measurement point is as follows.

First measurement point P1: 35 mm
Second measurement point P2: 95 mm
Third measurement point P3: 155 mm

[0054] In the shaft 4 having the prepreg arrangement shown in FIG. 5, the flexural rigidity value EI(1) at the first measurement point P1 is 4.97 Nm^2, the flexural rigidity value EI(2) at the second measurement point P2 is 3.56 Nm^2, and the flexural rigidity value EI(3) at the third measurement point P3 is 2.06 Nm^2. The flexural rigidity distribution of the shaft 4 is shown in the graph of FIG. 7.

[0055] In the shaft 4, the flexural rigidity value EI(2) at the second measurement point P2 is smaller than the flexural rigidity value EI(1) at the first measurement point P1. Furthermore, in the shaft 4, the flexural rigidity value EI(3) at the third measurement point P3 is smaller than the flexural rigidity value EI(2) at the second measurement point P2. As shown in FIG. 7, the shaft 4 has a flexural rigidity distribution with a downward-sloping profile.

[0056] As previously stated, the fifth fiber-reinforced layer is located in a zone including the first measurement point P1 and not including the second and third measurement points P2 and P3 in the axial direction. The eighth fiber-reinforced layer is located in a zone including the first and second measurement points P1 and P2 and not including the third measurement point P3 in the axial direction. There is no fiber-reinforced layer having a straight structure and located in a zone not including the first measurement point P1 but including the second and third measurement points P2 and P3. There is no fiber-reinforced layer having a straight structure and located in a zone not including the first and second measurement points P1 and P2 but including the third measurement point P3. This layer structure can attain a flexural rigidity distribution with a downward-sloping profile.

[0057] Another layer structure can also attain a flexural rigidity distribution with a downward-sloping profile. Local presence of a fiber-reinforced layer having a straight structure in the butt portion 12 can result in a flexural rigidity distribution with a downward-sloping profile.

[0058] According to the findings obtained by the present inventors, the shaft 4 having a flexural rigidity distribution with a downward-sloping profile is suitable for the lob. The player who performs the lob using the racket 2 can easily achieve an intended trajectory of the shuttlecock. With the use of the racket 2, the variation in the height of the trajectory of the shuttlecock in the lob is small.

[0059] The reason why the racket 2 according to the present invention is suitable for the lob is that the flexural rigidity distribution shown in FIG. 7 matches the deformation behavior of the shaft 4 in the lob. In the lob, the shaft 4 is deflected mainly in the out-of-plane direction (Z direction). The racket 2 according to the present invention is suitable also for shots which are other than the lob and in which the shaft 4 is deflected mainly in the out-of-plane direction.

[0060] The flexural rigidity distribution can be adjusted by changing the location of the prepregs, the number of the prepregs, the width of the prepregs, the length of the prepregs, the angle of the fibers, the weight per unit area of the fibers, and the elastic modulus of the fibers.

[0061] From the viewpoint of the stability of the trajectory, the ratio (EI(2)/EI(1)) of the flexural rigidity value EI(2) to the flexural rigidity value EI(1) is preferably not greater than 0.95, more preferably not greater than 0.87, and particularly preferably not greater than 0.82. From the viewpoint of ease of production of the shaft 4, the ratio is preferably not less than 0.30.

[0062] From the viewpoint of the stability of the trajectory, the ratio (EI(3)/EI(2)) of the flexural rigidity value EI(3) to the flexural rigidity value EI(2) is preferably not greater than 0.90, more preferably not greater than 0.77, and particularly preferably not greater than 0.70. From the viewpoint of ease of production of the shaft 4, the ratio is preferably not less than 0.25.

[0063] From the viewpoint of the stability of the trajectory, the ratio (EI(3)/EI(1)) of the flexural rigidity value EI(3) to the flexural rigidity value EI(1) is preferably not greater than 0.80, more preferably not greater than 0.60, and particularly preferably not greater than 0.50. From the viewpoint of ease of production of the shaft 4, the ratio is preferably not less than 0.20.

[0064] From the viewpoint of the stability of the trajectory, the difference (EI(2) - EI(1)) between the flexural rigidity value EI(2) and the flexural rigidity value EI(1) is preferably not greater than -0.30 Nm^2, more preferably not greater than -0.62 Nm^2, and particularly preferably not greater than -0.80 Nm^2. From the viewpoint of ease of production of the shaft 4, the difference is preferably not less than -3.00 Nm^2.

[0065] From the viewpoint of the stability of the trajectory, the difference (EI(3) - EI(2)) between the flexural rigidity value EI(3) and the flexural rigidity value EI(2) is preferably not greater than -0.50 Nm^2, more preferably not greater than -0.93 Nm^2, and particularly preferably not greater than -1.10 Nm^2. From the viewpoint of ease of production of the shaft 4, the difference is preferably not less than -3.00 Nm^2.

[0066] From the viewpoint of the stability of the trajectory, the difference (EI(3) - EI(1)) between the flexural rigidity value EI(3) and the flexural rigidity value EI(1) is preferably not greater than -0.80 Nm^2, more preferably not greater than -1.50 Nm^2, and particularly preferably not greater than -1.80 Nm^2. From the viewpoint of ease of production of the shaft 4, the difference is preferably not less than -6.00 Nm^2.

[0067] Preferred ranges of the flexural rigidity values EI are as follows.

EI(1): Not less than 3 Nm^2 and not greater than 7 Nm^2
EI(2): Not less than 2 Nm^2 and not greater than 6 Nm^2
EI(3): Not less than 1 Nm^2 and not greater than 5 Nm^2

[0068] FIG. 3 shows the first, second, and third measurement points P1, P2, and P3. As is clear from FIG. 3, the inner diameter Di of the shaft 4 is substantially constant from the first measurement point P1 to the third measurement point P3. The shaft 4 can be produced using a mandrel having a simple shape. In the production of the shaft 4, the winding of the prepregs is easy. The shaft 4 may have a slight variation in the inner diameter Di due to, for example, production error. The ratio (Di1/Di2) of the maximum inner diameter Di1 to the minimum inner diameter Di2 in the zone from the first measurement point P1 to the third measurement point P3 is preferably not greater than 1.10, more preferably not greater than 1.05, and particularly preferably not greater than 1.03. The ratio (Di1/Di2) is ideally 1.00.

[0069] As is clear from FIG. 3, the outer diameter Do of the shaft 4 is substantially constant from the first measurement point P1 to the third measurement point P3. The shaft 4 can be produced using a mandrel having a simple shape. In the production of the shaft 4, the winding of the prepregs is easy. The shaft 4 may have a slight variation in the outer diameter Do due to, for example, production error. The ratio (Do1/Do2) of the maximum outer diameter Do1 to the minimum outer diameter Do2 in the zone from the first measurement point P1 to the third measurement point P3 is preferably not greater than 1.10, more preferably not greater than 1.05, and particularly preferably not greater than 1.03. The ratio (Do1/Di2) is ideally 1.00.

[0070] The ratio (W1/W2) of the weight W1 of the shaft 4 in the zone from the first measurement point P1 to the second measurement point P2 to the weight W2 of the shaft 4 in the zone from the second measurement point P2 to the third measurement point P3 is preferably not less than 0.95 and not greater than 1.05. The shaft 4 in which the ratio is not less than 0.95 and not greater than 1.05 is free from a significant local increase in weight. The player can swing the racket 2 including the shaft 4 without feeling discomfort. From this viewpoint, the ratio (W1/W2) is more preferably not less than 0.97 and not greater than 1.03 and particularly preferably not less than 0.98 and not greater than 1.02.

Examples

[0071] Hereinafter, the effect of the present invention will be demonstrated by examples. The present invention should not be restrictively interpreted based on the description of the examples.

[Example 1]

[0072] A badminton racket as shown in FIGS. 1 to 6 was produced. The flexural rigidity values EI of the racket are shown in Table 1 below and in FIG. 7.

[Examples 2 and 3 and Comparative Example]

[0073] Badminton rackets of Examples 2 and 3 and Comparative Example were obtained in the same manner as the badminton racket of Example 1, except for changing the prepreg arrangement. The flexural rigidity values EI of the rackets are shown in Table 1 below and in FIGS. 8 to 10.

[Practical Test]

[0074] A shuttlecock was launched by a launching machine. A player was caused to perform lob on the shuttlecock, and a video image of the trajectory of the shuttlecock was captured. The image was analyzed to measure the height at which the shuttlecock passed above the net. The measurement was conducted six times, and an average height Hav, a maximum height Hmax, and a minimum height Hmin were determined. The results are shown in Table 1 below.

[Table 1]

[0075]

Table 1 Evaluation Results

	Comparative Example	Example 2	Example 1	Example 3
Flexural rigidity distribution	FIG. 8	FIG. 9	FIG. 7	FIG. 10
EI(1) (Nm^2)	4.36	4.65	4.97	5.17
EI(2) (Nm^2)	4.42	4.03	3.56	3.12
EI(3) (Nm^2)	4.08	3.10	2.06	1.63
EI(2)/EI(1)	1.01	0.87	0.72	0.60
EI(3)/EI(2)	0.92	0.77	0.58	0.52
EI(2) - EI(1) (Nm^2)	0.06	-0.62	-1.41	-2.05
EI(3) - EI(2) (Nm^2)	-0.34	-0.93	-1.50	-1.49
Hav (m)	1.72	1.71	1.70	1.70
Hmax (m)	1.85	1.81	1.74	1.72
Hmin (m)	1.56	1.63	1.67	1.68
Hmax - Hmin (m)	0.29	0.18	0.07	0.04

[0076] As is clear from Table 1, the trajectory of the shuttlecock in the lob is stable when any of the badminton rackets of Examples is used. The evaluation results demonstrate the superiority of the present invention.

Industrial Applicability

[0077] The badminton racket according to the present invention is suitable for players who play in a style involving frequent use of lob. The racket is suitable also for players who play in other styles.

Reference Signs List

[0078]

2 badminton racket

4 shaft

6 frame

8 grip

10 string

12 butt portion

14 middle portion

16 tip portion

18 butt end

20 tip end

26 face

S1 first sheet

S2 second sheet

S3 third sheet

S4 fourth sheet

S5 fifth sheet

S6 sixth sheet

S7 seventh sheet

S8 eighth sheet

Claims

1. A badminton racket comprising:

a grip;
a shaft having a portion inserted into the grip, the inserted portion including a butt end of the shaft and a vicinity of the butt end; and
a frame attached to the shaft in a vicinity of a tip end of the shaft, wherein
a flexural rigidity value EI(2) of the shaft at a second measurement point located at a distance of 95 mm from the grip is smaller than a flexural rigidity value EI(1) of the shaft at a first measurement point located at a distance of 35 mm from the grip, and
a flexural rigidity value EI(3) of the shaft at a third measurement point located at a distance of 155 mm from the grip is smaller than the flexural rigidity value EI(2).

2. The racket according to claim 1, wherein a ratio (EI(2)/EI(1)) of the flexural rigidity value EI(2) to the flexural rigidity value EI(1) is not greater than 0.95.

3. The racket according to claim 1 or 2, wherein a ratio (EI(3)/EI(2)) of the flexural rigidity value EI(3) to the flexural rigidity value EI(2) is not greater than 0.90.

4. The racket according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein a difference (EI(2) - EI(1)) between the flexural rigidity value EI(2) and the flexural rigidity value EI(1) is not greater than -0.30 Nm^2.

5. The racket according to any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein a difference (EI(3) - EI(2)) between the flexural rigidity value EI(3) and the flexural rigidity value EI(2) is not greater than -0.5 Nm^2.

6. The racket according to any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein

the shaft has a hollow structure, and
an inner diameter of the shaft is substantially constant from the first measurement point to the third measurement point.

7. The racket according to any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein an outer diameter of the shaft is substantially constant from the first measurement point to the third measurement point.

8. The racket according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein a ratio (W1/W2) of a weight W1 of the shaft in a zone from the first measurement point to the second measurement point to a weight W2 of the shaft in a zone from the second measurement point to the third measurement point is not less than 0.95 and not greater than 1.05.

9. The racket according to any one of claims 1 to 8, wherein

the shaft includes a fiber-reinforced layer located in a zone including the first measurement point and not including the second and third measurement points in an axial direction of the shaft, and
the fiber-reinforced layer includes a plurality of reinforcing fibers oriented substantially in the axial direction.

10. The racket according to any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein

the shaft includes a fiber-reinforced layer located in a zone including the first and second measurement points and not including the third measurement point in an axial direction of the shaft, and
the fiber-reinforced layer includes a plurality of reinforcing fibers oriented substantially in the axial direction.

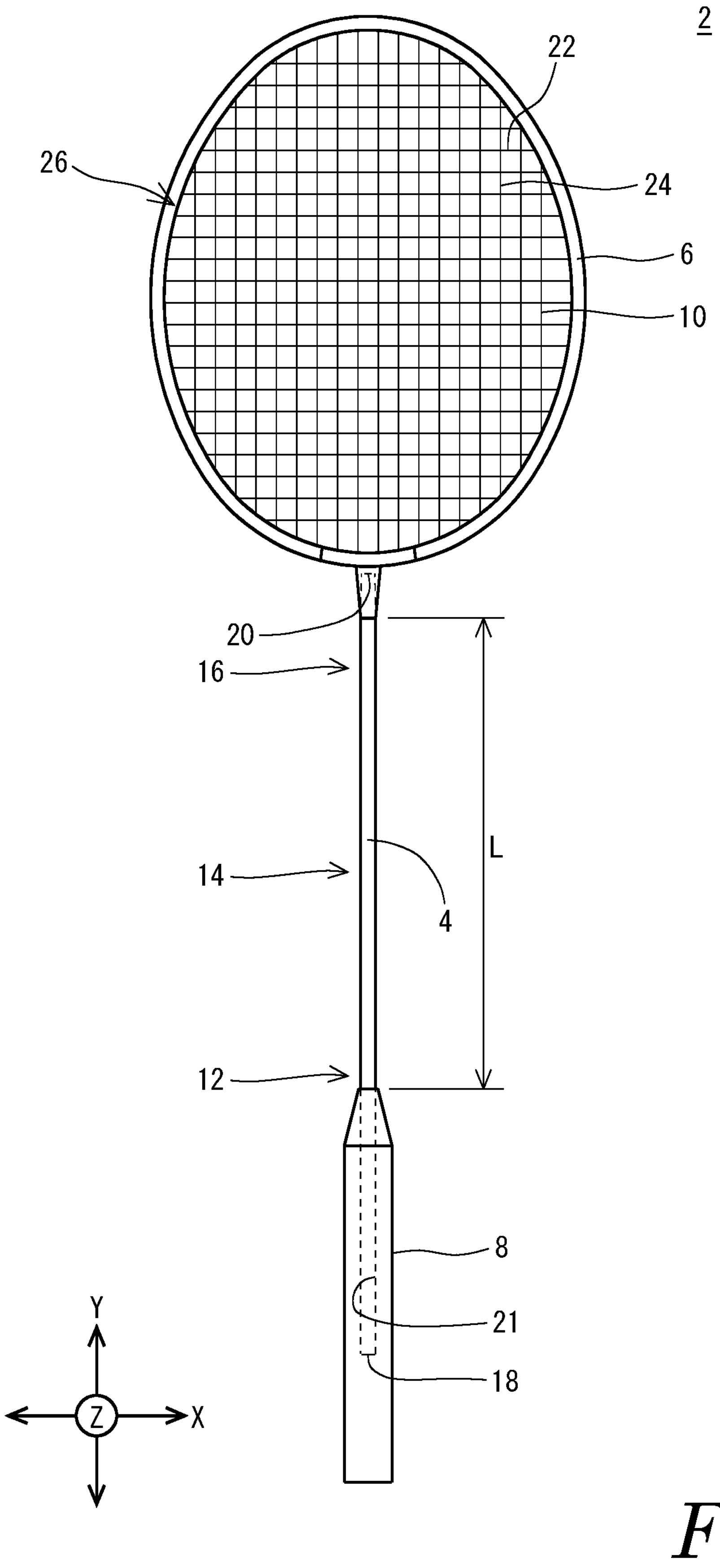

FIG. 1

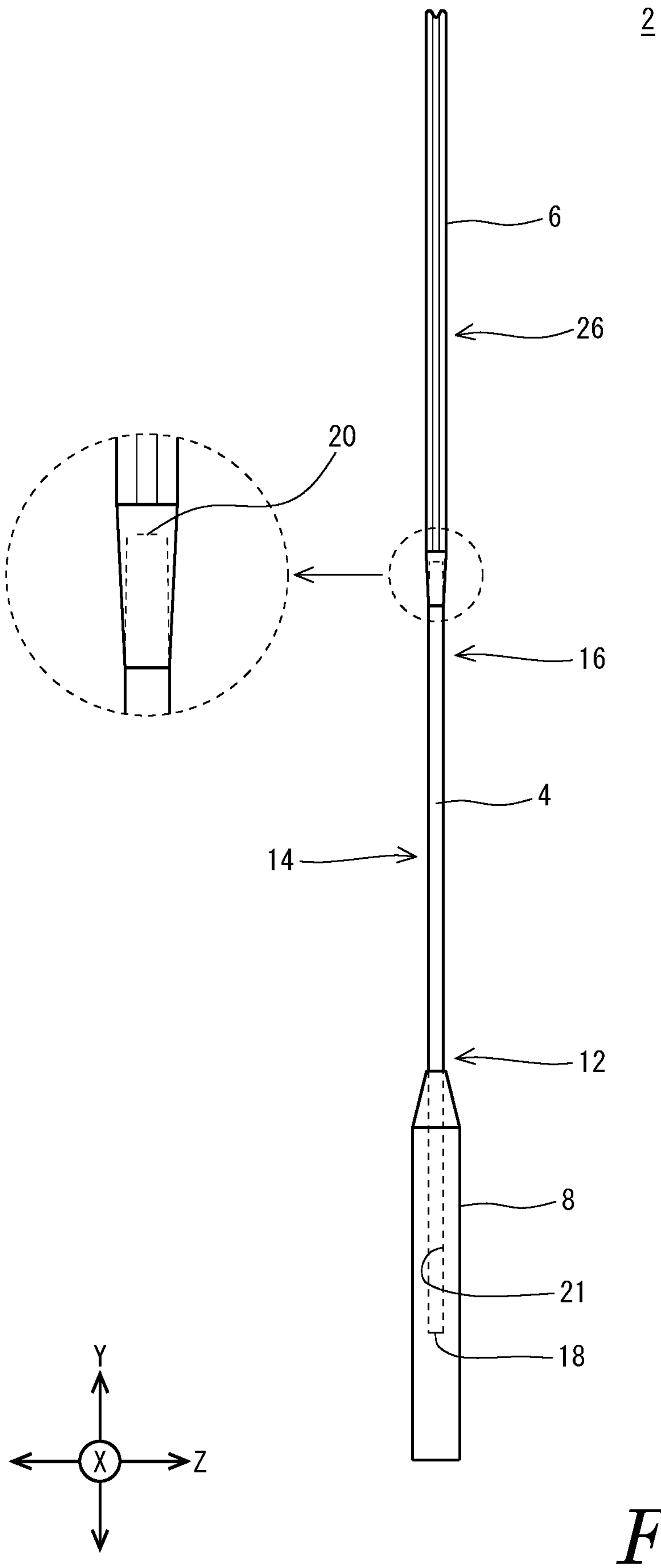

FIG. 2

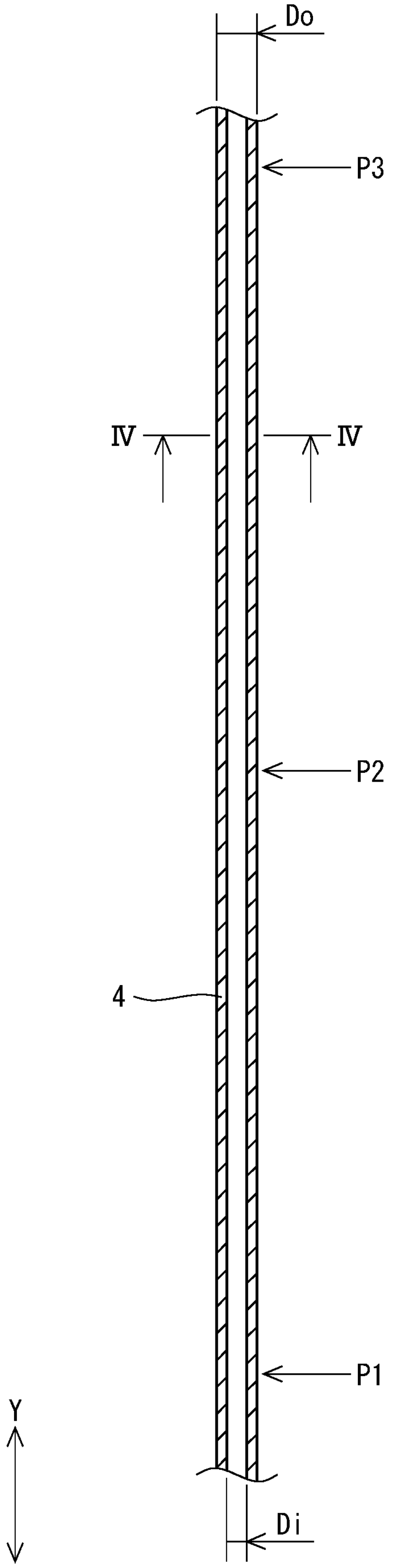

FIG. 3

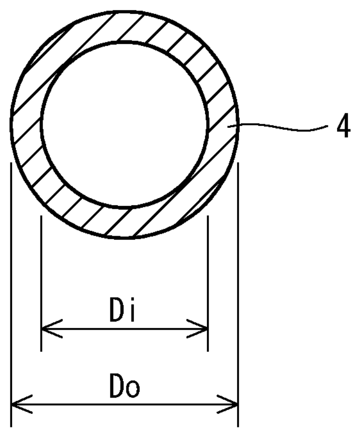

FIG. 4

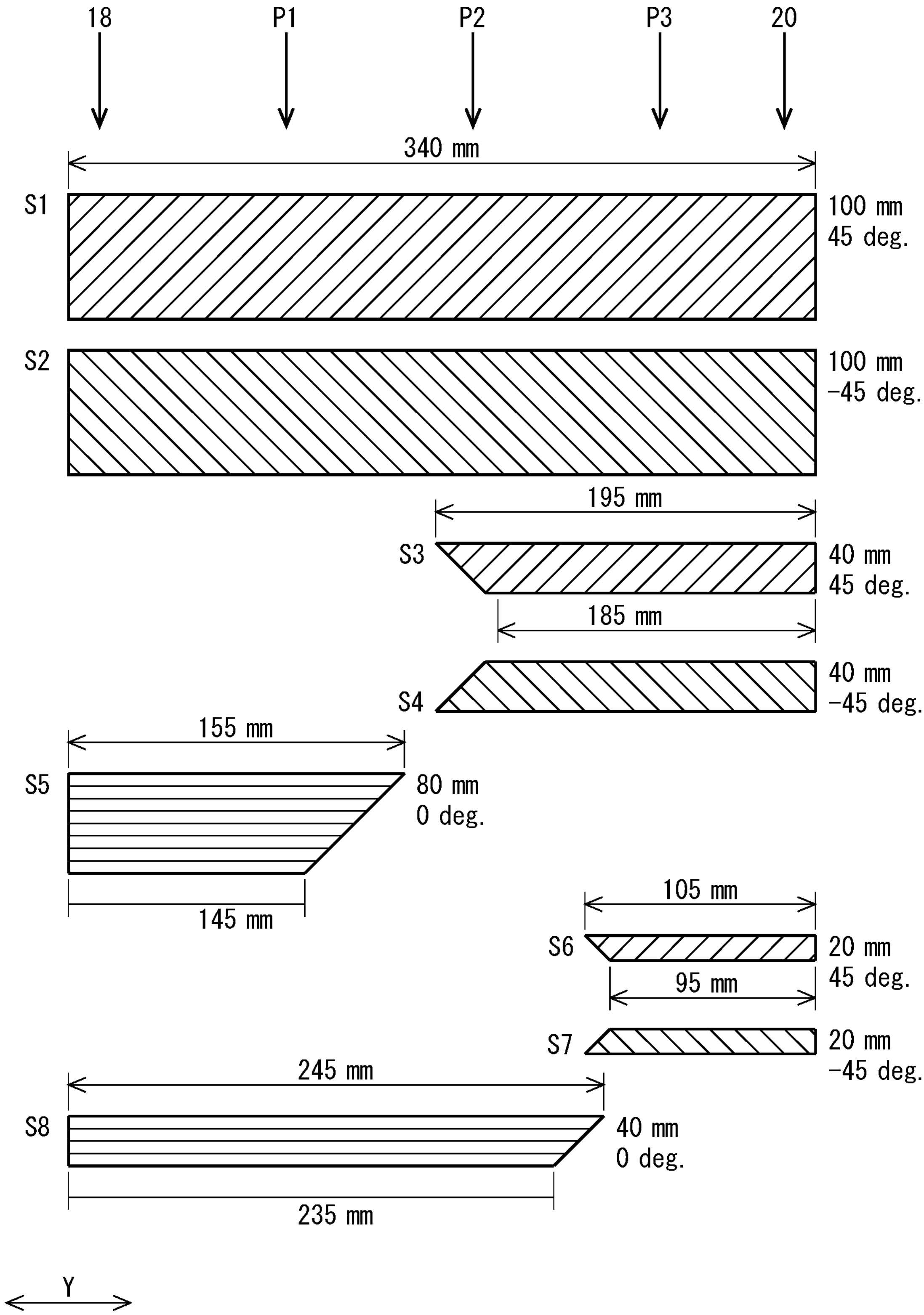
18
P1
P2
P3
20
340 mm
S1
100 mm
45 deg.
S2
100 mm
-45 deg.
195 mm
S3
40 mm
45 deg.
185 mm
S4
40 mm
-45 deg.
155 mm
S5
80 mm
0 deg.
145 mm
105 mm
S6
20 mm
45 deg.
95 mm
S7
20 mm
-45 deg.
245 mm
S8
40 mm
0 deg.
235 mm
Y

FIG. 5

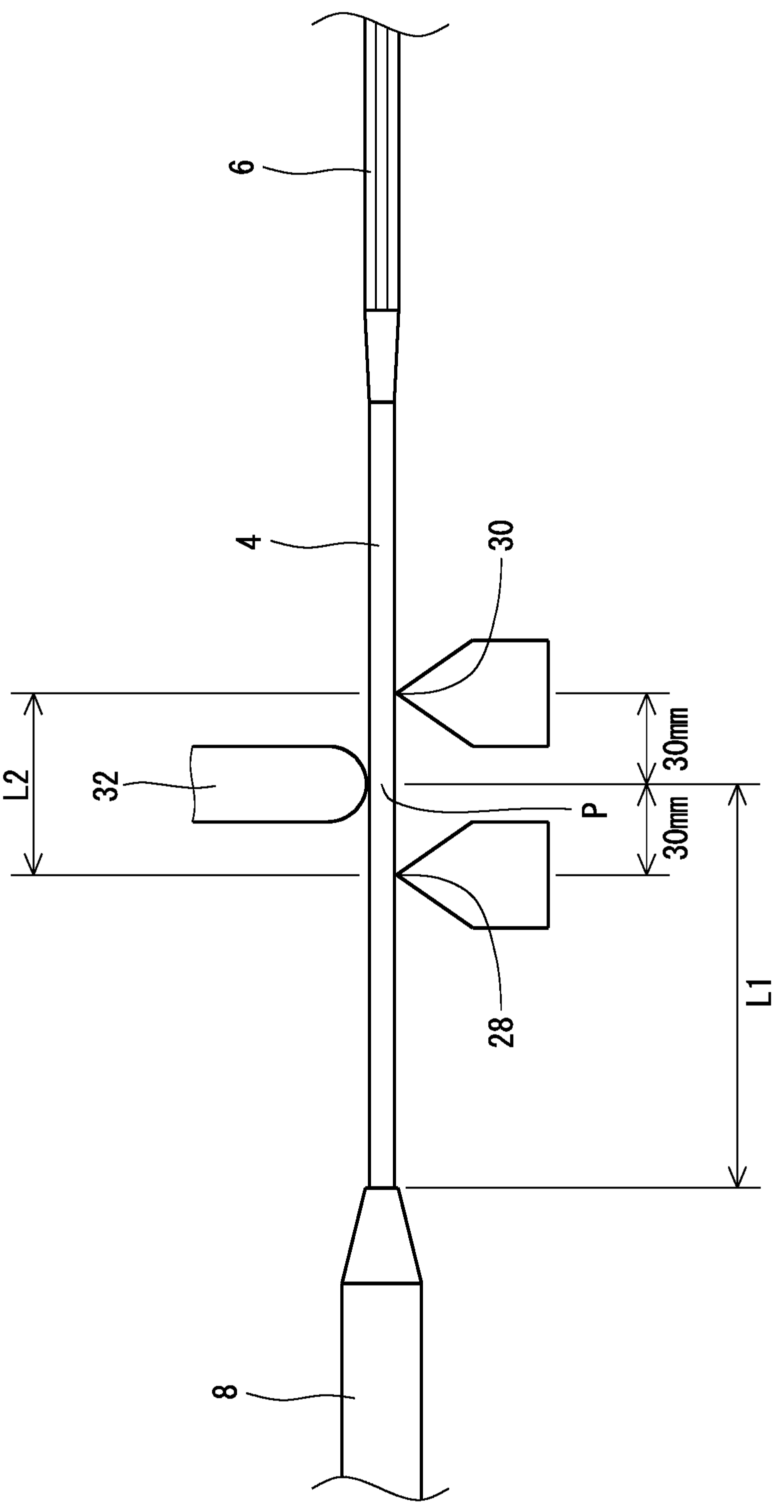

FIG. 6

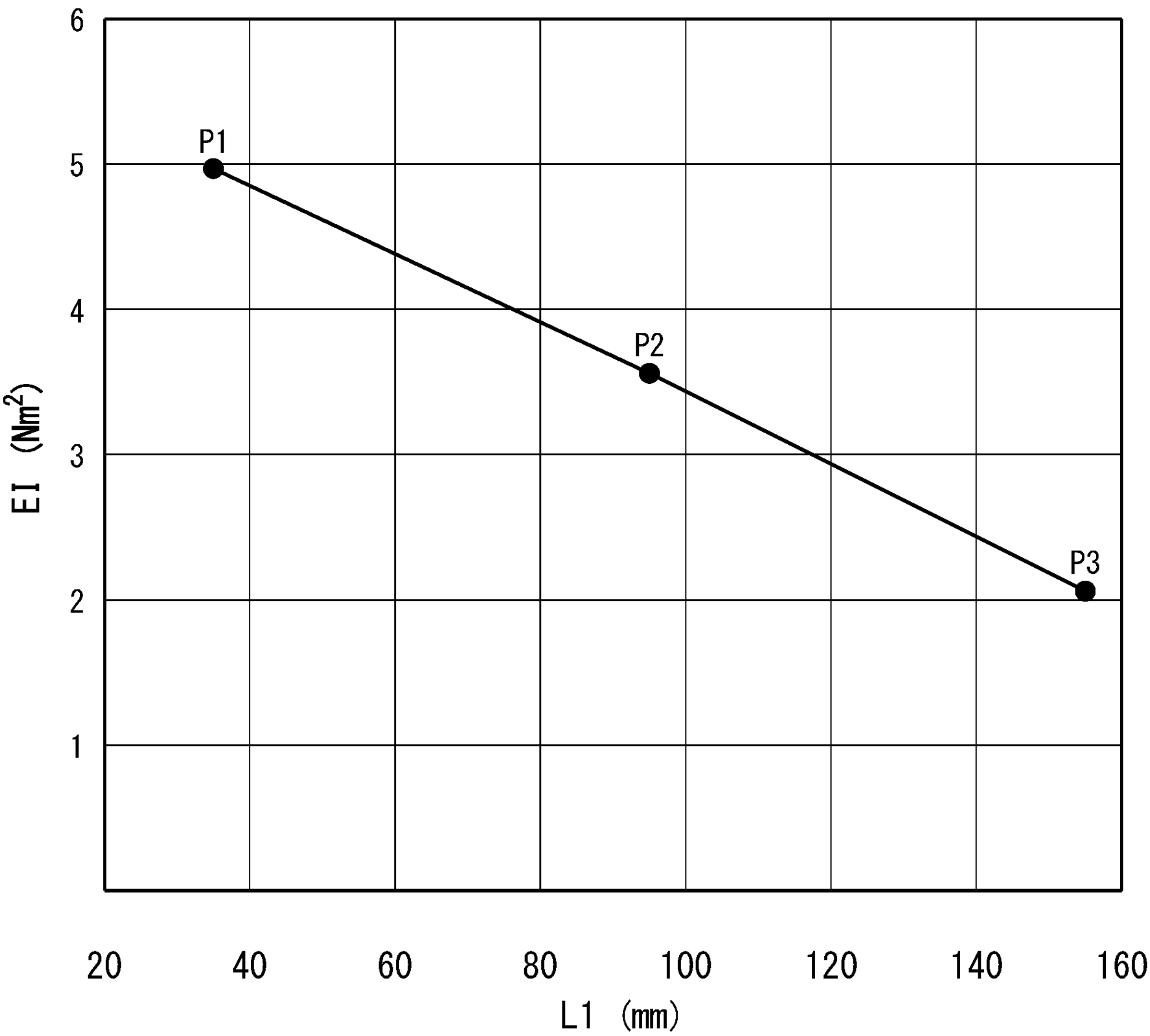

FIG. 7

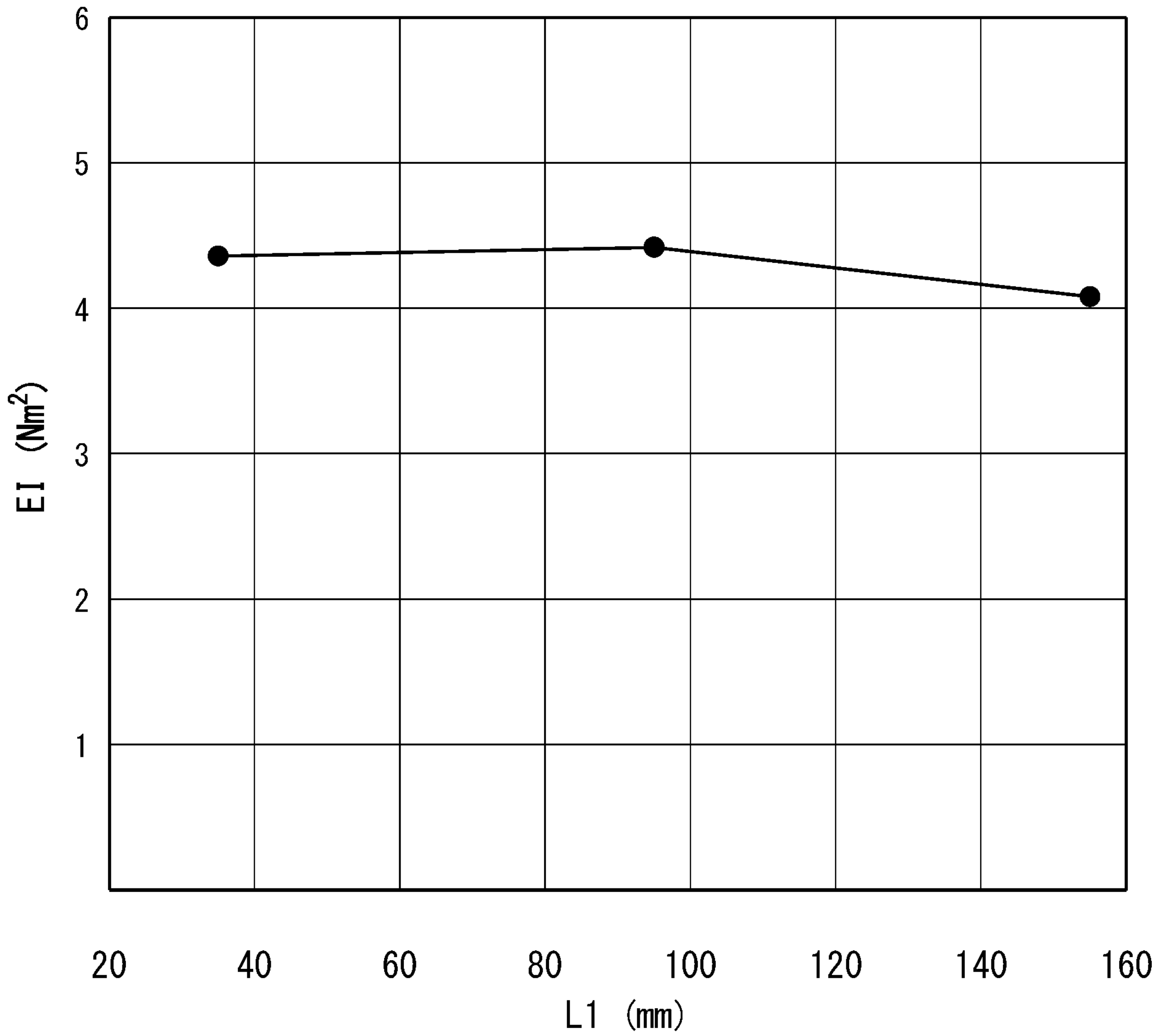

FIG. 8

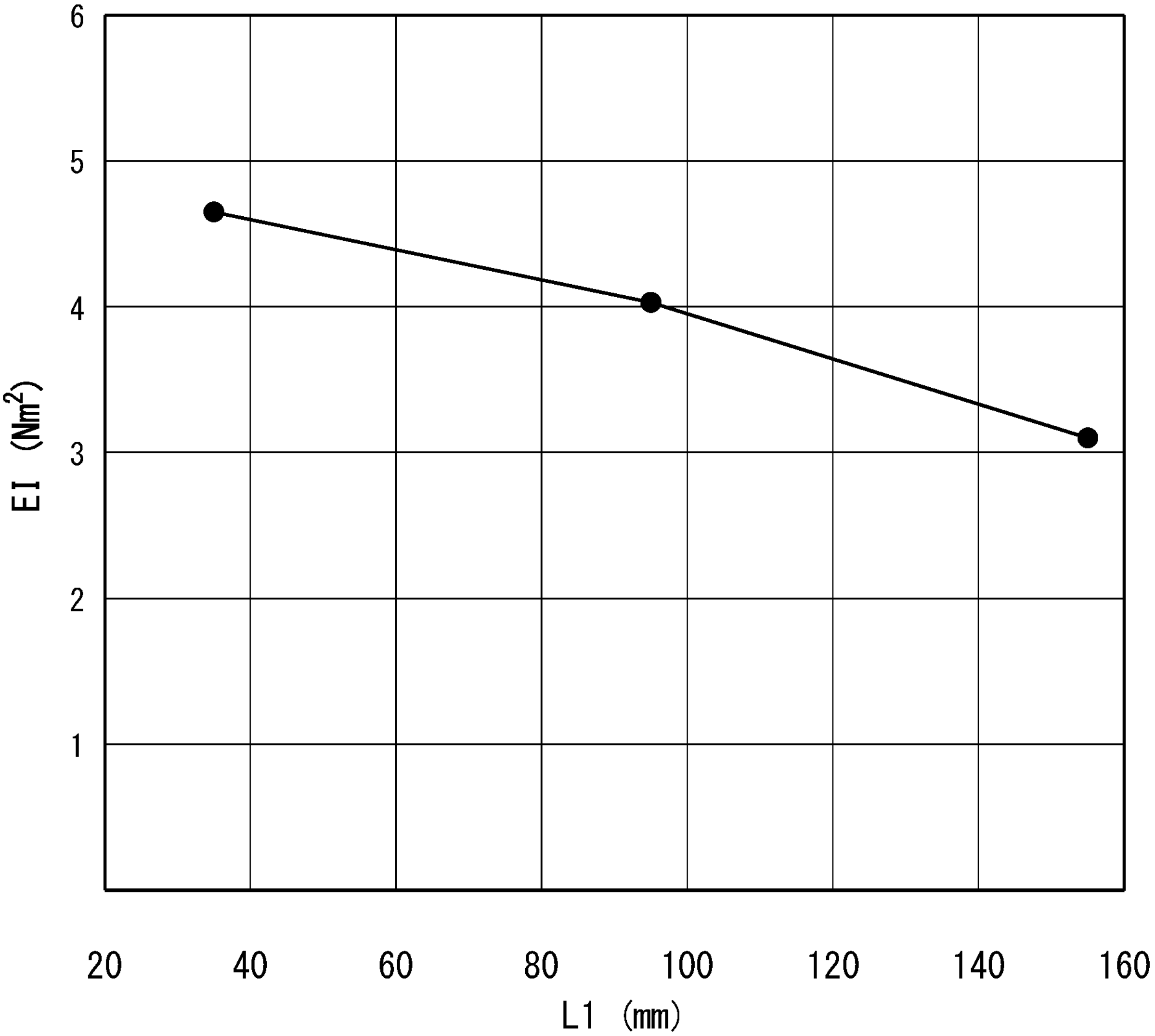

FIG. 9

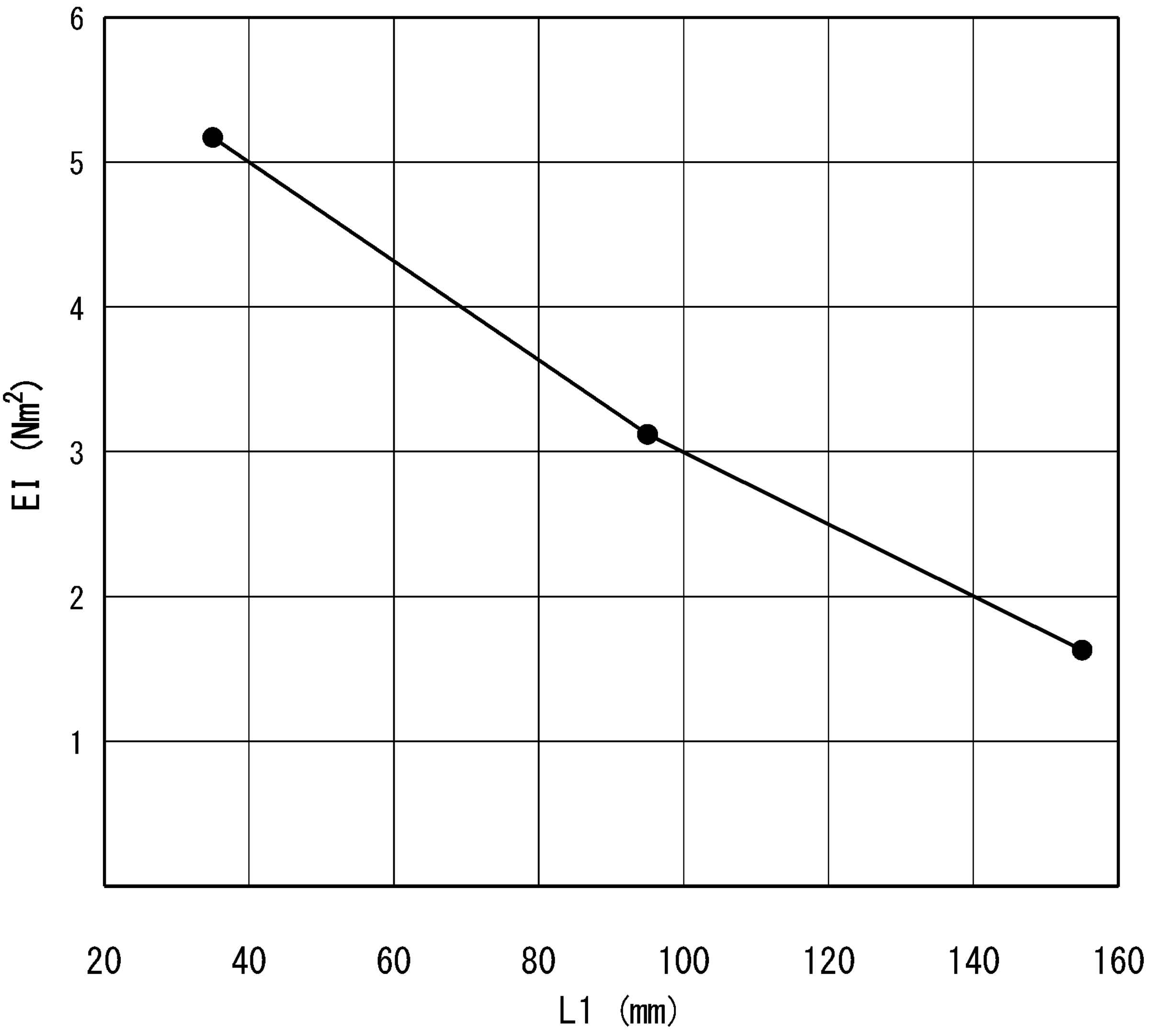

FIG. 10

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/JP2021/001550

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
Int.Cl. A63B49/00(2015.01)i, A63B102/04(2015.01)n
FI: A63B49/00, A63B102:04

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
Int.Cl. A63B49/00-A63B51/16, A63B55/00-A63B60/64, A63B102/04

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Published examined utility model applications of Japan	1922-1996
Published unexamined utility model applications of Japan	1971-2021
Registered utility model specifications of Japan	1996-2021
Published registered utility model applications of Japan	1994-2021

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X Y	JP 2014-45947 A (GLOBERIDE INC.) 17 March 2014 (2014-03-17), paragraphs [0010]-[0036], [0042]-[0053], fig. 3, 4	1-10 9-10
X A	JP 10-179811 A (BRIDGESTONE SPORTS CO., LTD.) 07 July 1998 (1998-07-07), paragraphs [0005]-[0023], fig. 1	1-5 6-10
X Y A	CN 208465113 U (NANJING VICTOR SPORTS GOODS INDUSTRY CO., LTD.) 05 February 2019 (2019-02-05), paragraphs [0015], [0042]-[0097], fig. 1, 2, 5, 6	1-5, 7 9-10 6, 8
A	JP 2000-93559 A (DAIWA SEIKO INC.) 04 April 2000 (2000-04-04), entire text, all drawings	1-10
A	JP 11-262545 A (MIZUNO CORP.) 28 September 1999 (1999-09-28), entire text, all drawings	1-10

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C. ☒ See patent family annex.

* Special categories of cited documents:
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"&" document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search	Date of mailing of the international search report
09 March 2021	23 March 2021

Name and mailing address of the ISA/	Authorized officer
Japan Patent Office 3-4-3, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8915, Japan	Telephone No.

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/JP2021/001550

C (Continuation). DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	CN 108310736 A (WU, H. L.) 24 July 2018 (2018-07-24), entire text, all drawings	1-10
E, X E, A	JP 2021-23724 A (SUMITOMO RUBBER INDUSTRIES, LTD.) 22 February 2021 (2021-02-22), paragraphs [0025]-[0032], fig. 7	1, 7 2-6, 8-10

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT
Information on patent family members

International application No.
PCT/JP2021/001550

JP 2014-45947 A	17 March 2014	(Family: none)
JP 10-179811 A	07 July 1998	(Family: none)
CN 208465113 U	05 February 2019	(Family: none)
JP 2000-93559 A	04 April 2000	EP 974379 A2 EP 1459788 A1
JP 11-262545 A	28 September 1999	(Family: none)
CN 108310736 A	24 July 2018	(Family: none)
JP 2021-23724 A	22 February 2021	(Family: none)

Form PCT/ISA/210 (patent family annex) (January 2015)

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- CN 108853971 **[0003] [0004]**