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(54) **GOLF CHIPPING TARGET AND GAME**

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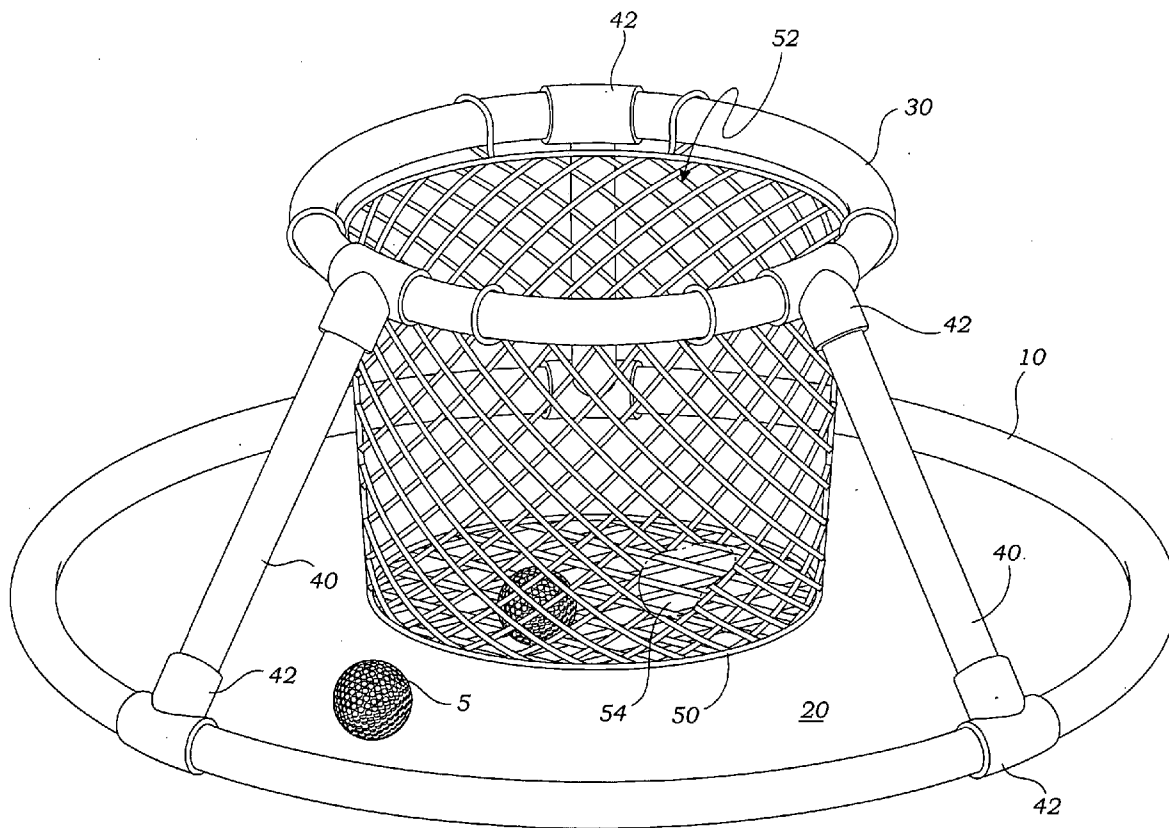
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A pair of targets are placed on a ground surface and spaced apart by about 40 feet. Each has a smaller upper circular hoop positioned above a larger lower hoop which rests on the ground surface. A net is suspended from each of the upper hoops. A net is suspended from each of the upper hoops. Players take turns chipping golf balls from one of the targets to the other and receive points for accurately chipping the balls into the nets or within the lower hoop.

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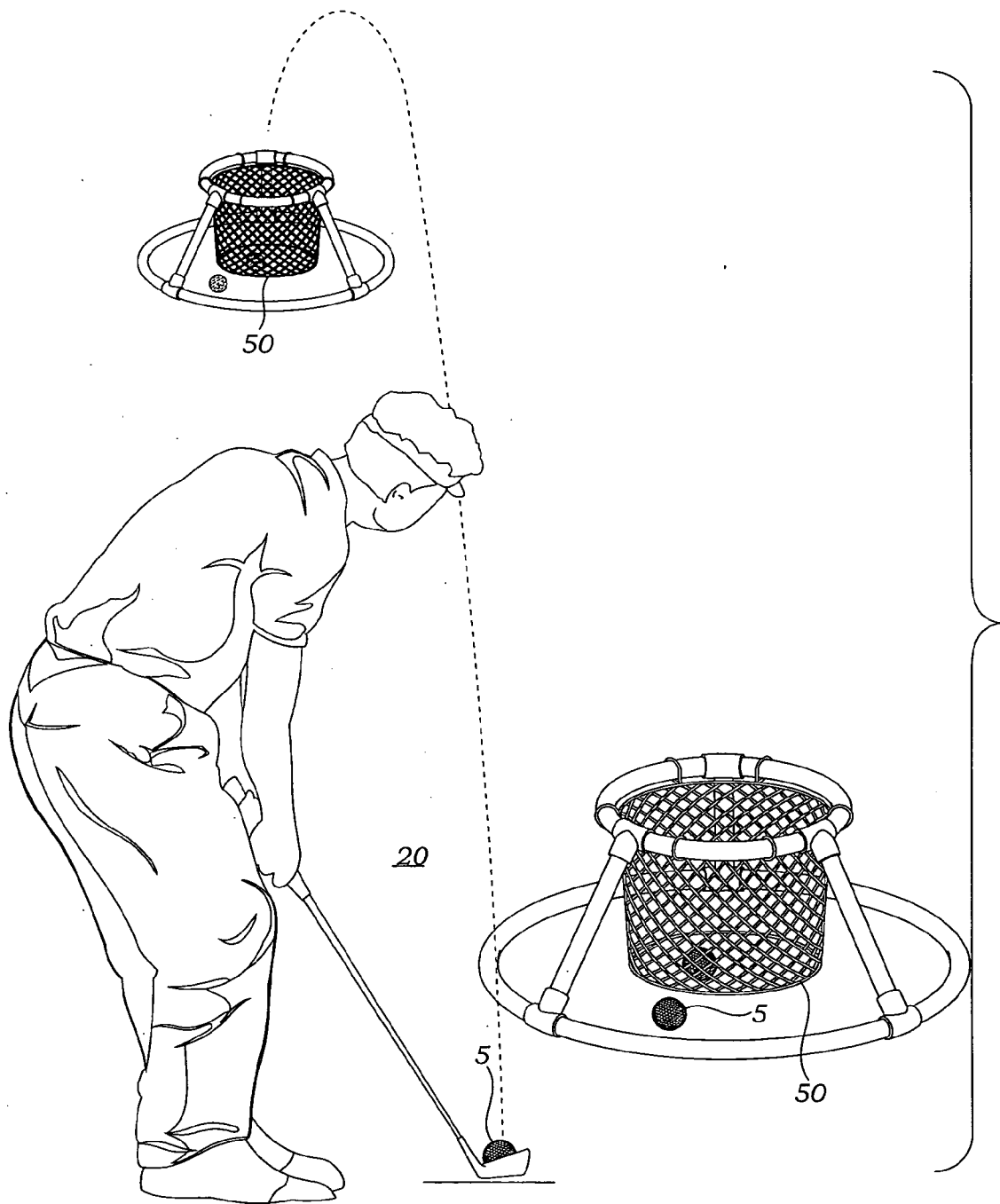


Fig. 2

GOLF CHIPPING TARGET AND GAME

RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application is a Continuation In Part Application of a prior filed application having Ser. No. _____ and filing date of _____ and entitled: _____.

INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

[0002] Applicant(s) hereby incorporate herein by reference, any and all U.S. patents, U.S. patent applications, and other documents and printed matter cited or referred to in this application.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] 1. Field of the Invention

[0004] This invention relates generally to golf targets and games that may be played with such targets, and more particularly to a golf target resembling a basket and a game that may be played by two or more golfers by chipping golf balls into the target.

[0005] 2. Description of Related Art

[0006] The following art defines the present state of this field:

[0007] Streich, U.S. Pat. No. 2,121,270 describes a hole structure for a putting game comprising a cup-shaped body portion, the bottom of which is adapted to rest on a playing surface, an annular rim in connection with the upper peripheral edge of said cup-shaped body, said rim being inclined downwardly into contact with the playing surface to form an annular pathway for directing a moving ball from the playing surface up into the cup-shaped body, the bottom of said cup-shaped body having a central projection formed with a hole in its tip, and there being auxiliary openings in said bottom surrounding said projection into one of which a ball is adapted to be directed, said auxiliary openings having different values for scoring purposes, a stake extending through said hole in the tip of the projection and into the playing surface to removably anchor the structure in position, said central projection being formed with sloping sides to direct the ball away from the stake and into one of the auxiliary openings, the upper end of said anchoring stake projecting substantially above the cup, and a marking flag carried by the upper end of said anchoring stake.

[0008] Furnari et al., U.S. Pat. No. 3,652,095 describes A lawn golf game playable with ordinary golf clubs and bans or wiffle balls on any reasonable size lawn area in leisure time by individuals or competitive teams requiring all the skill of conventional golf. Receptacles are located in a predetermined pattern or course above ground for receiving the golf ball. Each receptacle is cylindrically shaped and includes one closed end, one open end for receiving a ball, a lip extension for facilitating the entry of a ball into the receptacle, a conical projection adjacent the open end for anchoring the receptacle in place, and a post at the closed end for supporting an identifying flag and anchoring the receptacle in place.

[0009] Zawacki, U.S. Pat. No. 3,727,918 describes A portable golf game comprises a) a base including a flat center panel, a rim surrounding the back and sides of the center panel; three rows of depressed pockets in the center

panel for receiving a golf ball, and a channel wall joining the rim to the center panel, and b) a synthetic grass strip secured to and overlying the center panel, and having a plurality of openings aligned with the depressed pockets of the center panel. The grass strip extends past the front of the center panel to provide a longitudinal putting surface. The first, second and third rows of pockets include one, two and three holes, respectively. The pockets in the first and second rows are offset from each other and have equal diameters, which are less than the diameters of the pockets in the third row, which latter pockets are offset from the pockets in the second row. The bottom walls of all the depressed pockets are provided with scoring indicia, which makes the degree of difficulty of a succeeding shot depend upon the success of the immediately preceding shot.

[0010] Fokusek, U.S. Pat. No. 3,797,833 describes an indoor-outdoor golf game device having a golf cup portion of the type having upwardly and inwardly inclining surface portions for guiding balls into its main opening, the cup being shaped for nesting with like cups for ease of storage in the home when not in use. A flag and flag post assembly adapted to fit through the cup portion and an adapter receivable in a recess in the cup portion for securing the flag post thereto when the device is used indoors.

[0011] Reck, U.S. Pat. No. 4,171,134 describes a simple, inexpensive and yet totally enjoyable golf game for use outdoors. The game comprises a golf flag assembly insertable into a natural ground surface and at a distance spaced from a tee area. A first annulus is positioned on the ground around the golf flag assembly and defines a first target area within its inner periphery. A second annulus, having a diameter greater than the first annulus is in turn positioned on the ground surface and around the first annulus and defines a second target area between the first and second annulus. A hollow and perforated practice golf ball is then struck with a standard golf club from the tee area and towards the golf flag assembly. The player's score is determined by the number of strokes necessary to hit the practice golf ball into either the first or second target area plus a predetermined number of strokes for the target area into which the practice ball lands. This predetermined number of strokes is larger for the second target area than for the first. Each annulus is constructed from one or more pieces of tubing, the ends of which may be detachably joined by a resilient double C-shaped clamp. Centrally of the first annulus, a putting cup is staked to the ground by a flag assembly.

[0012] Schlueter et al., U.S. Pat. No. 4,256,308 describes a game using minimum equipment for playing a sport remotely comparable to golf, the game including nine inverted U-shaped, wire bands for being stuck in the ground so to form bridges under which a player kicks a golf ball with a foot so to score, the game also including break away tees from which a ball is teed off. A vertical leg is integrally connected to each inverted U-shaped band and the leg extends through a base member into the ground. A horizontal pointer is connected to the leg and co-acts with indicia on the base member to indicate the extent of movement of the wire bands for scoring purposes

[0013] Krumlauf, U.S. Pat. No. 4,336,939 describes a golf chip and putt target formed of flexible sheet material that is pocketed to form a center pocket, pairs of longitudinal and lateral pockets each sharing a common wall with the center

pocket and corner pockets diagonally arranged with respect to the center pocket. The square target includes a border flange, which rests upon and is attached to a level frame supported by front and rear pairs of U-legs. These legs mount sleeves of a flexible back stop having side and rear walls and being open at the front to form a ball collection and return trough around the sides and rear of the target. An inclined approach ramp at the front of the target leads to a putting green surface having ball site markings thereon. A teeing mat with ball locator markings is provided at the forward end of the putting green surface. An electrical score-keeping embodiment having an automatic ball return is disclosed.

[0014] Johnson, U.S. Pat. No. 4,726,591 describes a recreational game device, which may be used indoor or outdoor for use with playing several skill games. Targets are located on the game device and are used for playing various games.

[0015] Gubany, U.S. Pat. No. 4,878,671 describes a game apparatus including a device for forming a simulated hole for a golf-type game in which players strike a ball to propel it into the hole. The device comprises a generally circular cup sized to receive the game ball, the cup having an opening generally in the center, and a generally frustoconical resilient flange surrounding the cup, the flange sloping downwardly and radially outwardly from the rim of the cup, the lower lip of the flange extending below the bottom of the cup in its uncompressed state. A flagpole for anchoring the apparatus is adapted to extend through the opening in the cup and embed in the ground below the cup. The flagpole includes a plug or other suitable structure for engaging the bottom of the cup to hold the cup down and compress the resilient flange to hold the lip of the flange against the ground.

[0016] Nelson, U.S. Pat. No. 5,016,891 describes a game target useable with a palm held projectile that is tossed at a target. The projectiles being lightweight provide safe use by almost all ages. Also, younger players can be skilled enough to compete with adults. The target is mounted to tube sections, which are loosely spaced on a circular formed tube but snug enough to hold position until the projectile lands. This fit in addition to the generally shaped frustum projectile and an inclined target provide the means for the target to capture the projectile landing squarely on the target-landing surface. The game apparatus can be used for various games or scoring methods such as horseshoe type scoring, a horse method similar to the basketball game of Horse, use for a hole in one contest or layout of several targets for a short course golf type scoring procedure. The apparatus also can provide exercise for those who prefer activity rather than routine calisthenics. The apparatus can be used indoors with some care and discretion.

[0017] Mauch, U.S. Pat. No. 5,087,046 describes a novelty golf game including a combination instructional card and golf hole for use in a game in which a ball is selectively stroked with respect to the hole. The hole includes an instructional card formed as a foldable board having a base and two raised surface portions joined at a raised apex and the base and one of the two raised surface portions have holes therein forming an opening through which a golf ball can be stroked.

[0018] Dona, U.S. Pat. No. 5,090,704 describes a portable golf game to be played with conventional golf balls and golf

clubs comprising nine targets adapted to be randomly positioned on an ordinary lawn to thereby provide the player with targets for putting or chipping a golf ball. The targets define a ring-shaped opening adapted to permit a ball to pass there through. A single support rod extends perpendicularly from each target and is adapted for insertion into the ground. A sign having a first side and a second side is rigidly attached to each target. The first sides of the signs are consecutively numbered from one to nine while the second sides are consecutively numbered from ten to eighteen. Each sign is numbered so that the sum of the numbers on its first side and its second side equals nineteen. To play the game, the player places a golf ball on either side of the target having the number six affixed thereto and thereafter hits the golf ball toward the target numbered one in an attempt to hit it through the target. Prior to hitting the ball, the player rotates the target so that the opening therein always faces the ball. Play continues in this manner until all of the targets numbered one through eighteen are traversed in order. The player with the least amount of strokes after traversing all eighteen targets wins the game.

[0019] Schultz, et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,383,665 describes a new and improved golf chipping game apparatus including a ball-hitting assembly and a target assembly. The target assembly includes a first target region, which has a first surface area, and a second target region, which has a second surface area. The second surface area is less than the first surface area. The ball-hitting assembly and the target assembly are laid out flat on a ground or floor surface in a playing mode. A connection assembly is provided for connecting the ball-hitting assembly to the target assembly in a storage mode. The connection assembly also includes a hinge assembly connected between an edge portion of the ball-hitting assembly and an edge portion of the target assembly. The target assembly includes a layer of cushion material, which comprises the first target region and the second target region. A first ring of cushion material is placed on the layer of cushion material and defines a boundary between the first target region and the second target region. A second ring of cushion material is placed on the layer of cushion material and defines an outer boundary of the first target region. A first handle assembly is connected to the ball-hitting assembly, and a second handle assembly is connected to the target assembly. The first handle assembly and the second handle assembly are placed in registration when the ball-hitting assembly and the target assembly are connected together in the storage mode.

[0020] McLain, U.S. Pat. No. 5,516,115 describes a portable practice target, for propelled balls, including a lightweight plastic tubing and fittings framework that supports a front and a rear panel in an essentially vertical position. Three edges of the panels are attached together so that the panels fit over the vertical support like a sock or pillow case. The front panel can have a central pocket and the rear panel can have a central opening so that when the panels are positioned over the vertical support, the front panel pocket can be threaded through the rear panel opening. Adjustable strips can be used as a target area and means for adjusting the size of the pocket opening. The framework vertical support can be held in place by angled or adjustable couplings that permit the angle between the horizontal plane and the panels to be adjusted. The panels can be made resilient and elastic to rebound any ball that does not enter the pocket.

[0021] Dineen et al., U.S. Pat. No. 5,575,483 describes a transportable and inexpensive golf toss game including colored tossing bags, golf hole cups, flag sticks, markers and a scoring sheet. The game is played by tossing a small bag at receptacles simulating golf holes on a playing course planned and set up by the players in a yard, park or outdoor area to resemble a golf course. The course can be conveniently set up at almost any location and may include obstacles such as trees, shrubs or water. The golf toss game is challenging yet easy to learn and fun to play.

[0022] Kaulfuerst, U.S. Pat. No. 5,655,776 describes a goal assembly for receiving and retaining a game ball, such as a soccer ball. The goal assembly has a base for placement on a playing surface and is ramped downwardly toward the playing surface for receiving an incoming rolling game ball thereover. The goal assembly also has a side assembly flexibly attached to the base and extending upwardly. The side assembly has a target opening at an upper end of the side assembly and allows the incoming rolling game ball to compress one side of the upwardly extending side assembly and cause the remaining portion of the side assembly to contract in a direction opposite of the incoming game ball, thereby trapping the game ball within the goal assembly. The goal assembly is particularly desirable in pairs for playing various games. In the preferred embodiment, the goal assembly is sized for receiving a soccer ball, and is very useful as a soccer practice goal. However, the goal assembly can readily be sized for other game balls, such as for play with golf balls.

[0023] Lewis, U.S. Pat. No. 5,799,938 describes a game structure for use on a horizontal or substantially horizontal surface, the structure comprising a shaft one or more loop members, the shaft including two support members extending from each end of the shaft for supporting the shaft in a horizontal or substantially horizontal position above the surface; and each loop member occupying a respective plane and being rotatably connected or connectable to the shaft at the loop periphery so that when the loop member is disposed below the shaft and in contact with or in close proximity to said surface, the loop member may rotate about a vertical or substantially vertical axis which extends through the respective plane. Game structure including different combinations of additional components, and games playable on a horizontal or substantially horizontal surface comprised of game structure of this invention in combination with other game components to permit ball rolling games, ring toss games, games which require a suspended net, and combinations thereof.

[0024] Nixey, U.S. Pat. No. 5,954,590 describes a golf putting aid for use on a playing surface including a plurality of polygon-shaped faces forming a hollow polyhedron with at least two of the polygon-shaped faces each having a plurality of openings therethrough for receipt therethrough of a putted golf ball. Each of the at least two polygon-shaped faces may be placed flat against the playing surface such that an opening in an adjacent one of the polygon-shaped faces is exposed for receipt therethrough of a putted golf ball.

[0025] Cho, U.S. Pat. No. 6,135,894 describes a self-erecting collapsible net for stopping the flight of projectiles such as a golf ball, the collapsible net comprising: (a) a closed loop resilient coilable member having a perimeter; (b) a fabric portion attached to at least a portion of the

perimeter of the coilable member to stop a projectile impelled thereon; and (c) support means comprising at least one support member extending from a portion of the perimeter of the coilable member, the support member including a stake bore protruding therein, the stake bore being sized and shaped to receive a stake capable of being placed in a stake pocket in a substantially horizontal surface. The collapsible net can be expanded and disposed on said surface with one end of the stake introduced into the stake bore in the support member, and another end of the stake introduced into a stake pocket in said surface, thereby erecting the collapsible net in a substantially upright position such that the plane of the fabric is substantially transverse to said surface.

[0026] Our prior art search with abstracts described above teaches: a golf game, an indoor-outdoor golf game device, a portable golf game, a golf game apparatus, a putting game, golf game targets, a golf chip and putt practice device and game, a multiple type target game, a yard golf game apparatus, a projectile-target game apparatus, a novelty golf game, a golf chipping game apparatus, a portable ball practice target, a golf toss game, a game ball goal assembly, a ball and ring games and game structures, a golf putting aid or game, and a collapsible golf net, but does not teach a horizontal net apparatus and a competitive chipping game related thereto. The present invention fulfills these needs and provides further related advantages as described in the following summary.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0027] The present invention teaches certain benefits in construction and use which give rise to the objectives described below.

[0028] A pair of targets are placed on a ground surface and spaced apart by about 40 feet. Each has a smaller, upper, circular, horizontal hoop positioned above and centered on a larger, lower, horizontal hoop, which rests on the ground surface. A net is suspended from each of the upper hoops. Players take turns chipping golf balls from one of the targets to the other and receive points for accurately chipping the balls into the nets or within the lower hoop. The invention enables a golfer to hone the chipping skills in a manner that is superior to chipping at a driving range or merely chipping without a specific target. The competitive nature of the game provides the motivation to improve ones skills.

[0029] A primary objective of the present invention is to provide an apparatus and method of use of such apparatus that yields advantages not taught by the prior art.

[0030] Another objective is to provide such an invention capable of providing golf chipping practice to improve golf players' skills.

[0031] A further objective is to provide such an invention capable of providing a competitive golf-chipping pastime.

[0032] A still further objective is to provide such an invention capable of being disassembled for compact storage.

[0033] Other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following more detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which illustrate, by way of example, the principles of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0034] The accompanying drawings illustrate the present invention. In such drawings:

[0035] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a target of the invention; and

[0036] FIG. 2 is perspective view of a method of play of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0037] The above-described drawing figures illustrate the invention in at least one of its preferred embodiments, which is further defined in detail in the following description. Those having ordinary skill in the art may be able to make alterations and modifications in the present invention without departing from its spirit and scope. Therefore, it must be understood that the illustrated embodiments have been set forth only for the purposes of example and that they should not be taken as limiting the invention as defined in the following.

[0038] The present invention includes a golf game apparatus and a method of play using the apparatus. The apparatus comprises a lower circular horizontal hoop **10** resting on a ground surface **20**, and an upper circular horizontal hoop **30** centered on and positioned above the lower hoop **10**. The upper hoop **30** is of a smaller diameter relative to the lower hoop **10** as shown in FIG. 1. At least one rigid brace **40**, and preferably plural rigid braces **40**, are engaged between the lower **10** and the upper **30** hoops and thereby maintain relative positions therebetween. A net **50** is suspended from the upper hoop **30** as shown, the net **50** providing an open top **52** and a closed bottom **54**, the closed bottom positioned adjacent the ground surface **20**.

[0039] Preferably the hoops **10**, **30** are made of a rigid tubular material such as rubber hose. The lower hoop **10** preferably has a tube diameter of between 1 and 2 inches, while the upper tube **30** has a diameter of between $\frac{3}{4}$ and $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. These diameters are somewhat critical in that the lower hoop **10** acts as a fence or barrier to keep a golf ball **5** that lands within the lower hoop **10**, but not in the net **50**, from rolling outside the lower hoop **10** so as to account for game points as will be described presently.

[0040] Preferably, the lower hoop **10** is between 3 and 5 feet in diameter and the upper hoop **30** is between 1 and 3 feet in diameter. These diameters are somewhat critical in that it has been discovered that such sizes are most appropriate for sharpening the chipping skills of golf players when the target is placed about 30 to 50 feet away from the chipping position of the player. The average or typical position for a chip shoot in the game of golf is about 40 feet. These distances are critical to the successful use of the apparatus and are considered inventive in that significantly different distances are not functional in the apparatus.

[0041] Preferably, the braces **40** are removably engaged with the lower **10** and upper **30** hoops so as to facilitate disassembly for compact storage of the apparatus. Such assembly and disassembly of the hoops **10**, **30** is enabled by the use of plastic tees **42** (FIG. 1) as are well known in the art.

[0042] The above described apparatus is ideal for playing a competitive golf chipping game wherein the target described above is used in pairs (FIG. 2) that are placed on a playing field **20** at an appropriate spacing as stated. Clearly, one such target may be used by one or more players for simply practicing chipping shots. Such chipping shots are made using any, so called, Iron golf club including a sand wedge, a "chipper" or any approach club, but not a Wood or a Metal Wood club.

[0043] The preferred method of golf game play of the present invention comprising the steps of placing targets, as described above, at opposing ends of the field of play, and then taking turns chipping golf balls **5** from each one of the targets to the other in an attempt to deposit the golf balls **5** into the opposing nets **50**. Such play may preferably take place in a manner similar to the well known game of pitching horseshoes where competing players stand near one of the targets and chip golf balls **5**, in turn, toward the other of the nets **50**. The positions at which the golf balls **5** come to rest are counted for points in a summation game where a set number of points, say **21** for instance, is the goal of the game and the first player to reach that number is declared the game's winner. In other words, a game point scheme is devised to competitively determine a game winner and such scheme and accounting of points may be selected at random and is not limited to one such scheme or another.

[0044] In one such scheme, when golf balls **5** come to rest within one of the target nets **50** a predetermined number of game points is given to the golfer making that shot and this number of points is higher than the number of points given for merely placing the ball **5** within the opposing lower hoop **10** with the ball **5** resting on the playing surface **20** but not in the net **50**. As for instance, a ball **5** in the net **50** may account for 3 points while a ball **5** merely in the lower hoop **10**, but not in the net **50**, may account for only 1 point. As stated above, the targets are preferably spaced apart by from 30 to 50 feet and most preferably by 40 feet. This spacing gives the golfer the ability to practice the chipping game and to hone this skill in a superior manner that is not possible using prior art devices and methods.

[0045] The words used in this specification to describe the invention and its various embodiments are to be understood not only in the sense of their commonly defined meanings, but to include by special definition in this specification: structure, material or acts beyond the scope of the commonly defined meanings. Thus if an element can be understood in the context of this specification as including more than one meaning, then its use must be understood as being generic to all possible meanings supported by the specification and by the word or words describing the element.

[0046] The definitions of the words or elements of this described invention and its various embodiments are, therefore, defined in this specification to include not only the combination of elements which are literally set forth, but all equivalent structure, material or acts for performing substantially the same function in substantially the same way to obtain substantially the same result. In this sense it is therefore contemplated that an equivalent substitution of two or more elements may be made for any one of the elements in the invention and its various embodiments below or that a single element may be substituted for two or more elements in a claim.

[0047] Changes from the claimed subject matter as viewed by a person with ordinary skill in the art, now known or later devised, are expressly contemplated as being equivalents within the scope of the invention and its various embodiments. Therefore, obvious substitutions now or later known to one with ordinary skill in the art are defined to be within the scope of the defined elements. The invention and its various embodiments are thus to be understood to include what is specifically illustrated and described above, what is conceptually equivalent, what can be obviously substituted, and also what essentially incorporates the essential idea of the invention.

[0048] While the invention has been described with reference to at least one preferred embodiment, it is to be clearly understood by those skilled in the art that the invention is not limited thereto. Rather, the scope of the invention is to be interpreted only in conjunction with the appended claims and it is made clear, here, that the inventor(s) believe that the claimed subject matter is the invention.

1. A golf game apparatus comprising: a lower circular hoop of between 3 and 5 feet in diameter for resting on a ground surface; an upper circular hoop of between 1 and 3 feet in diameter positioned above the lower hoop; and at least one rigid brace having tees at terminal ends thereof engaging the lower and the upper hoops and thereby maintaining relative positions therebetween; a net suspended from the upper hoop, the net providing an open top and a closed bottom, the closed bottom positioned adjacent the ground surface; wherein the lower hoop is made of a rigid

tubular material having a tube diameter of between 1 and 2 inches and the upper hoop is made of the rigid tubular material having a tube diameter of between ¾ and 1½ inches, and wherein, the at least one brace is removably engaged with the lower and upper hoops using the tees at the terminal ends thereof: whereby assembly and disassembly is facilitated.

2-12. (canceled)

13. A method of golf game play comprising the steps of: placing target nets at opposing ends of a field of play, the nets suspended from an upper hoop rigidly braced above a lower hoop resting on a ground surface of the field of play; chipping golf balls from each one of the targets to the other in an attempt to deposit the golf balls into the opposing nets; and counting golf ball positions in and around the nets in a game point scheme to competitively determine a game winner.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein golf balls coming to rest within one of the target nets is scored at a higher point level than golf balls coming to rest on the playing surface within the lower hoop.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein golf balls coming to rest within the nets are scored at 3 points and golf balls coming to rest within the lower hoop are scored at 1 point.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein the target nets are spaced apart by from 30 to 50 feet.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the target nets are spaced apart by approximately 40 feet.

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