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(54) **GOLF COURSE AND METHOD OF PLAYING GOLF**

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

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(57)

ABSTRACT

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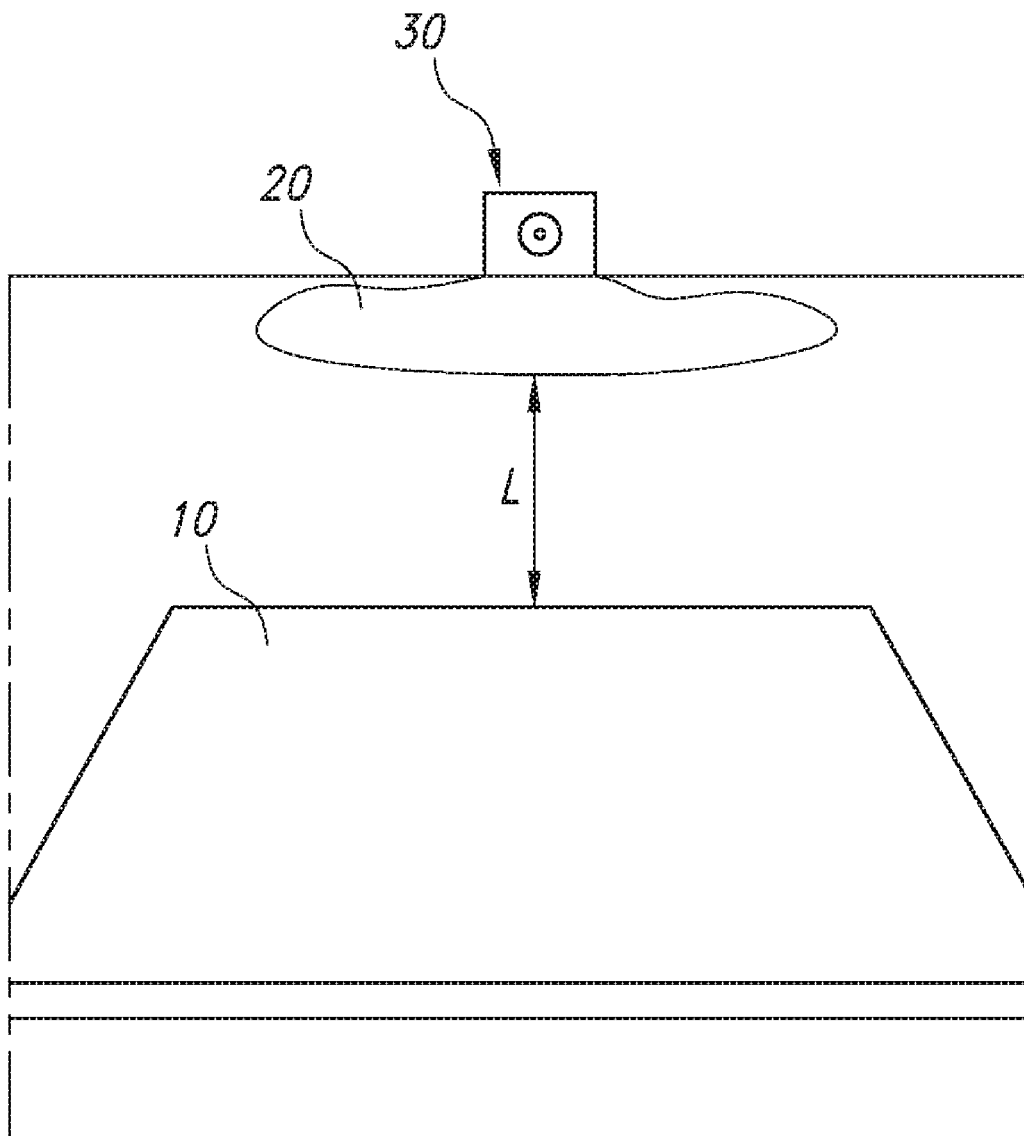
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A golf course and method of play wherein players start by using a shooting device to shoot a ball from a tee area towards a target area located near a putting green. Once the ball lands the player proceeds to the landing spot to complete the hole by hitting the ball into a cup on the putting green using conventional golf clubs. The target area includes a ricochet wall and a target that has a bullseye. If the player hits the target the player's score is credited but if the player misses the target area entirely the player's score is penalized.



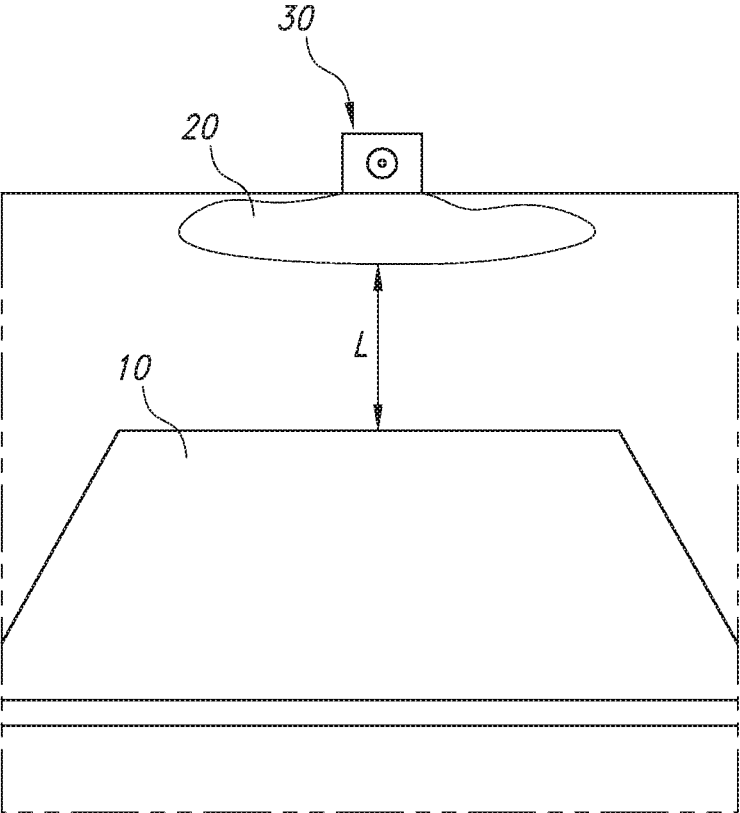


FIG. 1

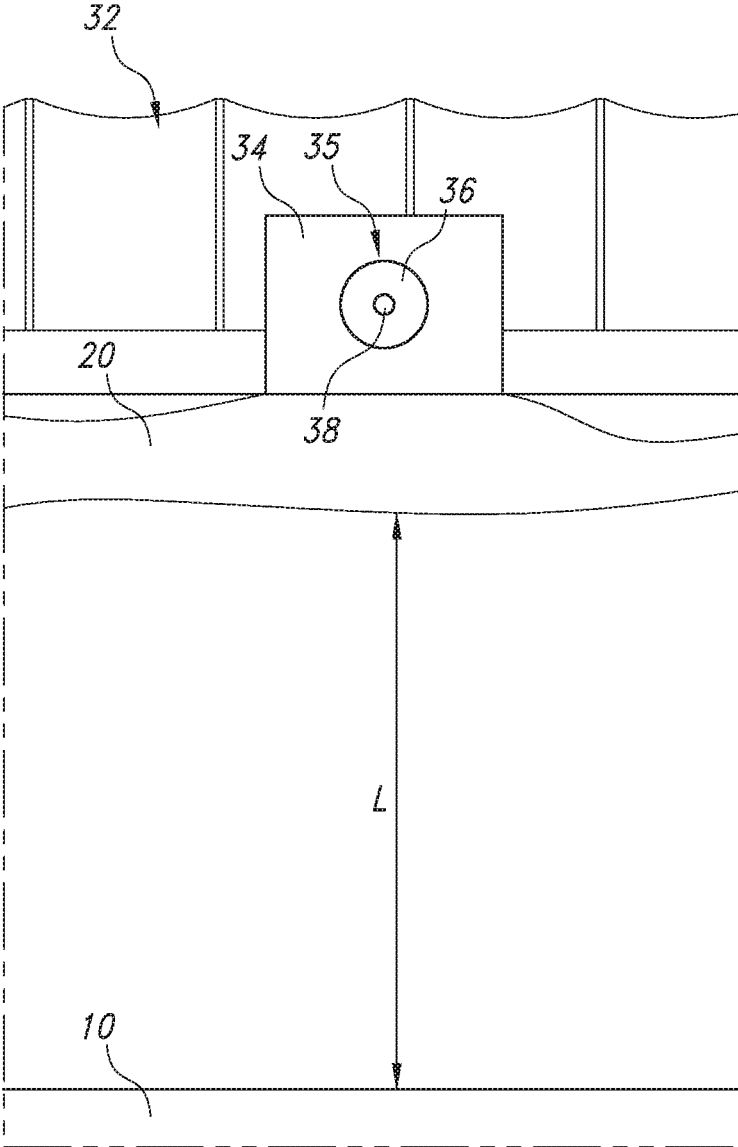


FIG. 2

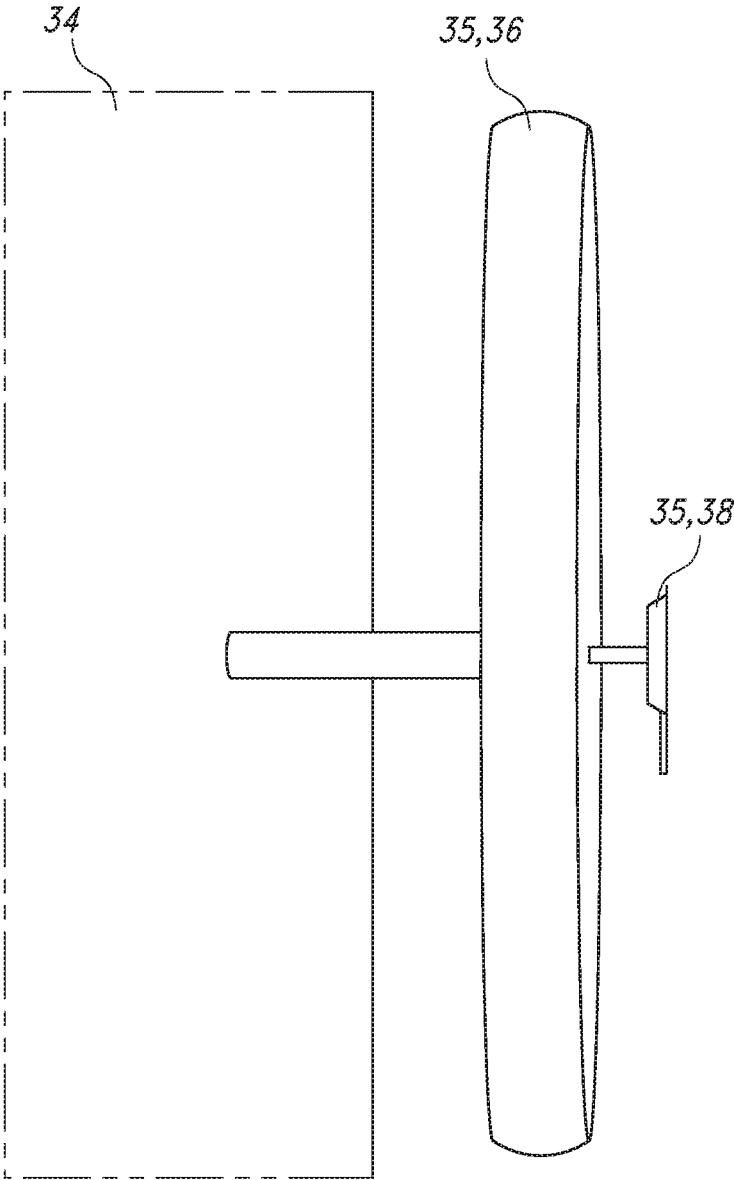


FIG. 3

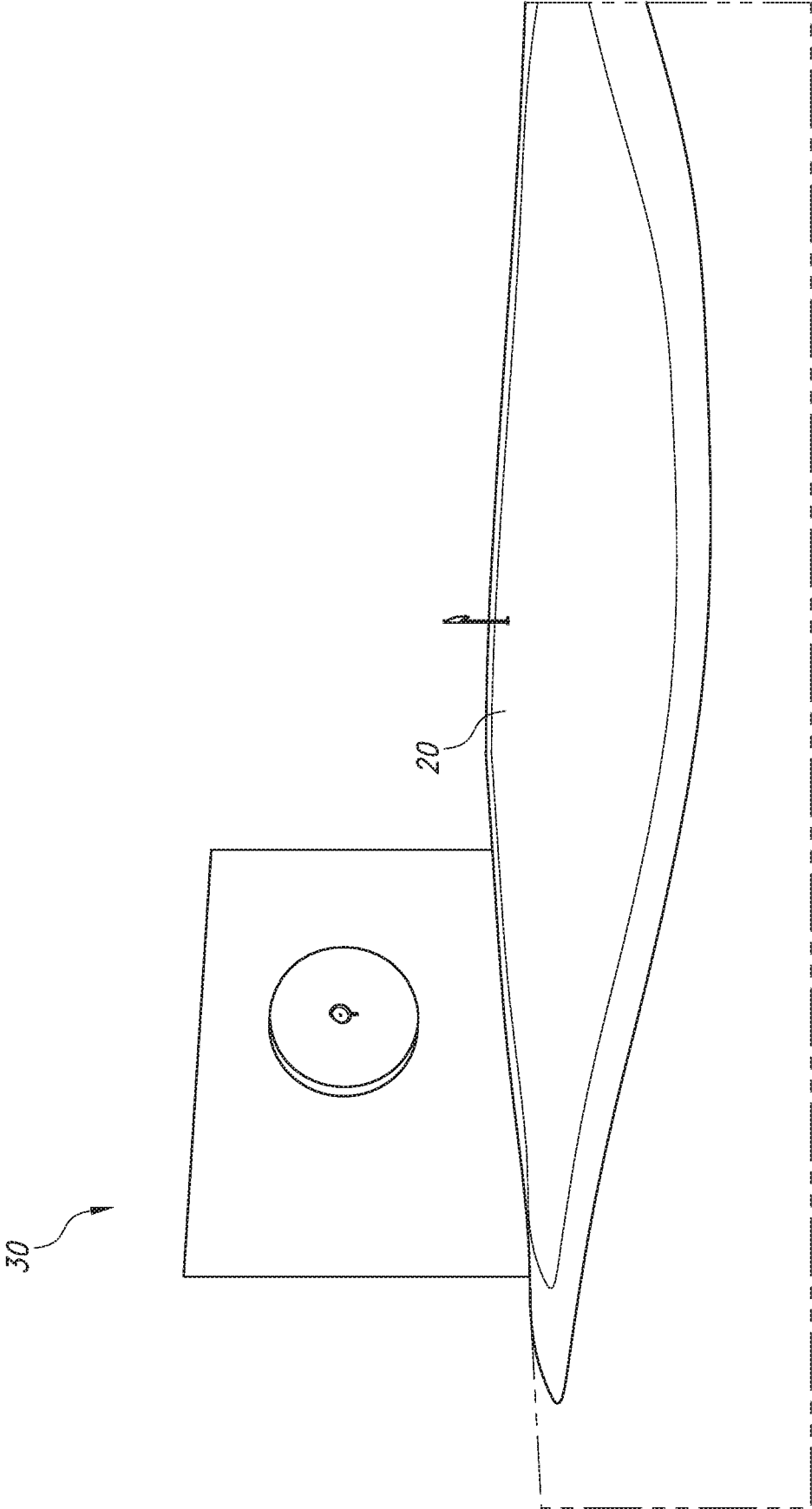


FIG. 4

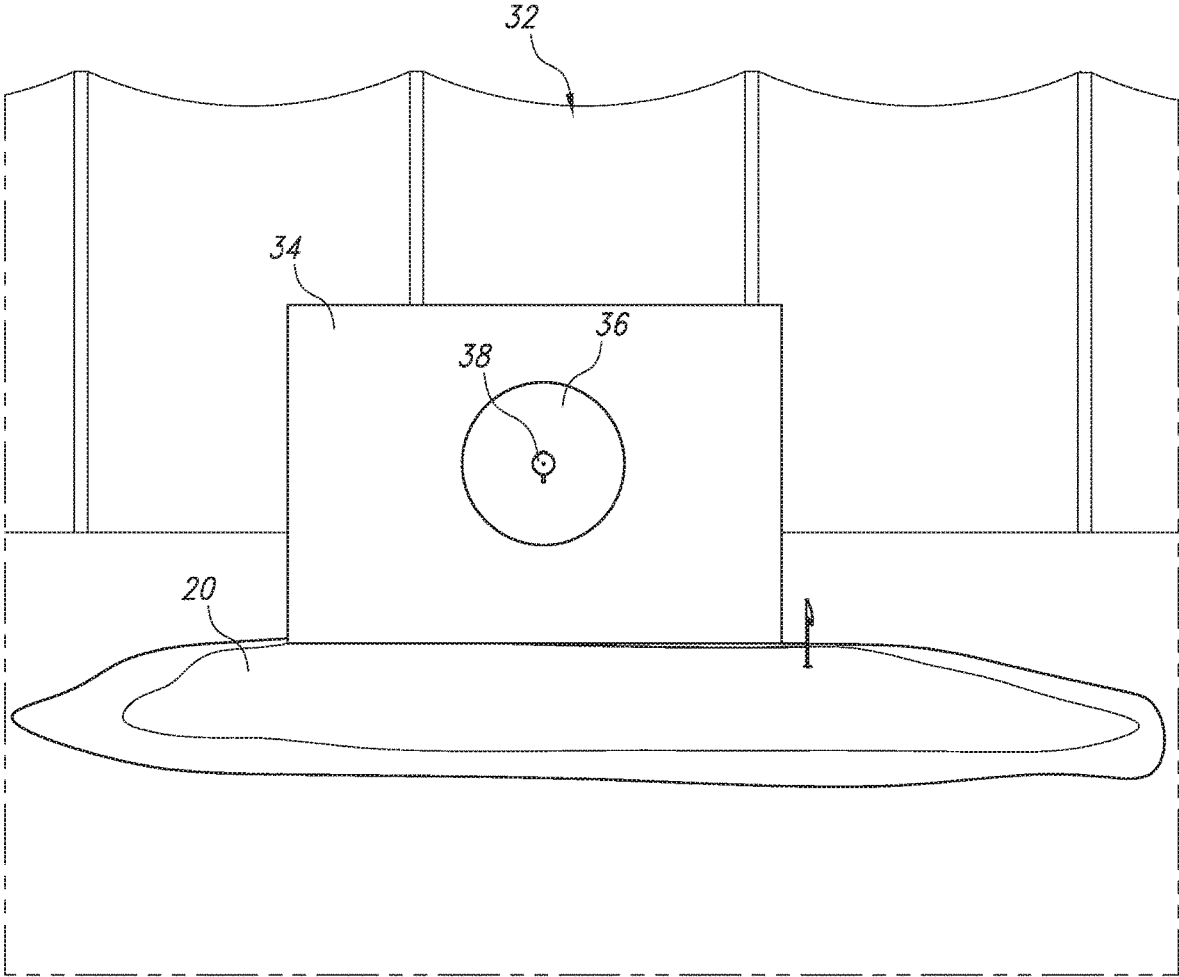


FIG. 5

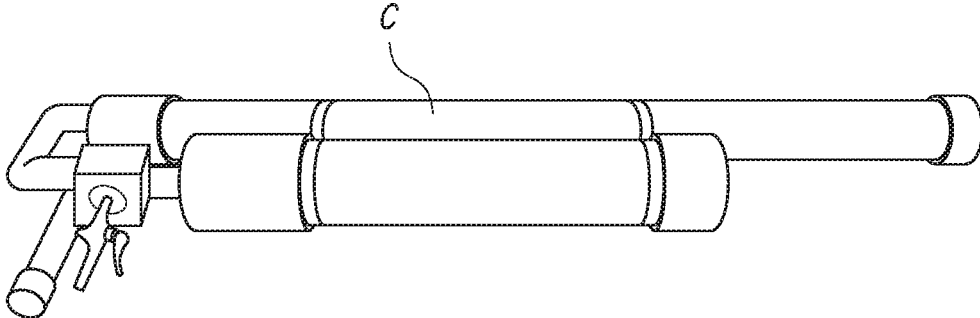


FIG. 6

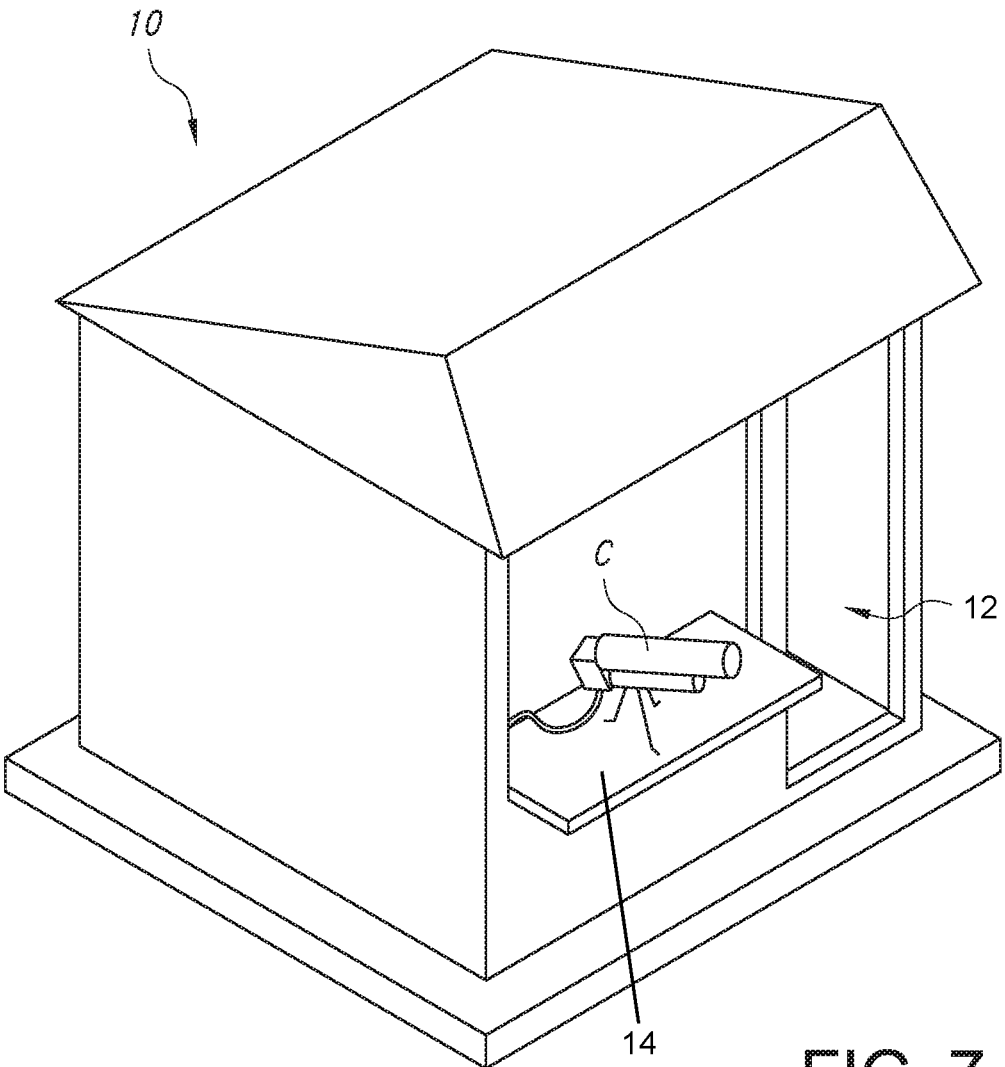


FIG. 7

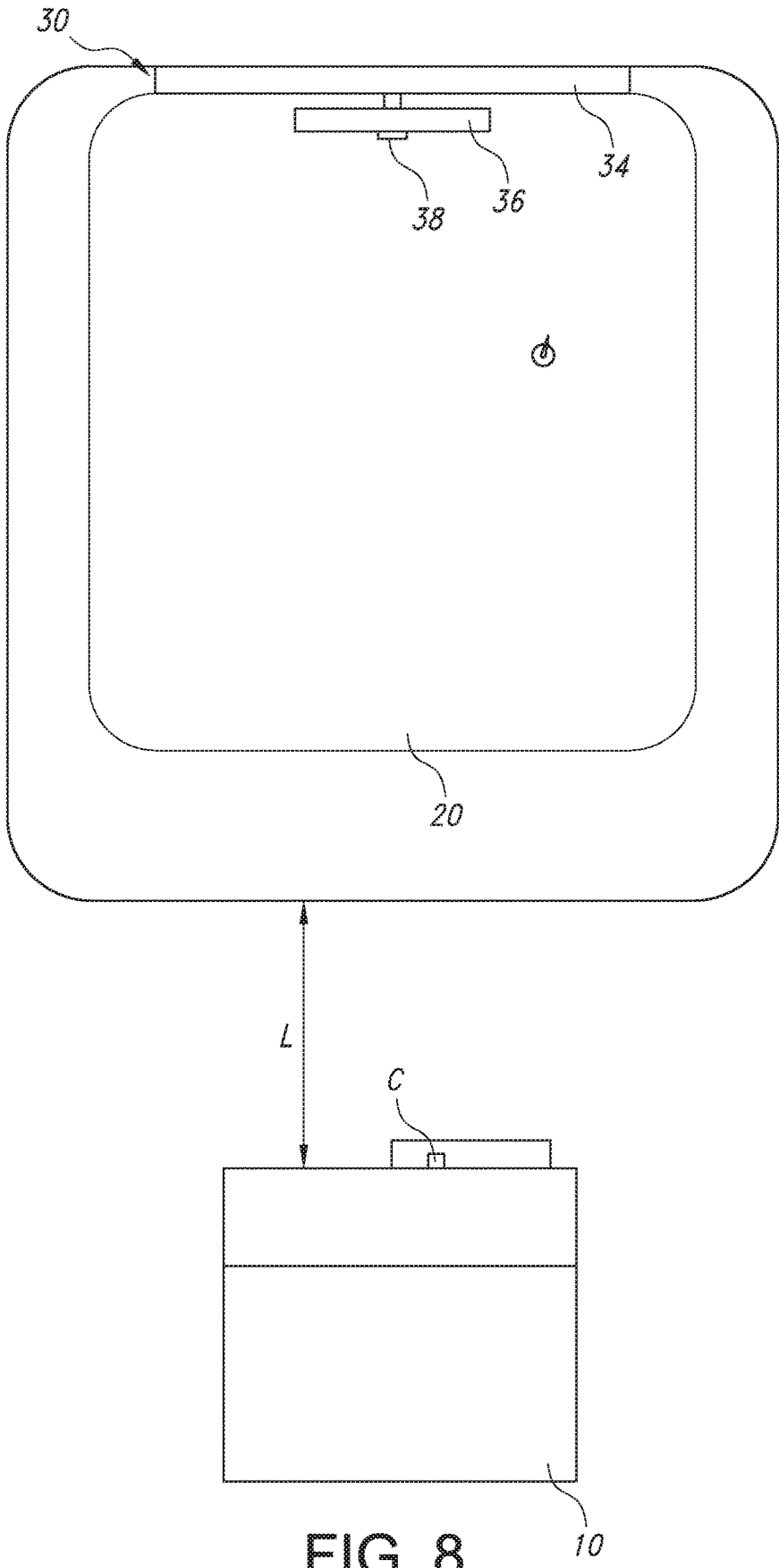


FIG. 8

GOLF COURSE AND METHOD OF PLAYING GOLF

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Field of the Invention

[0001] The invention relates to the game of golf, and specifically to course designs and methods of playing and scoring.

Discussion of Prior Art

[0002] Golf is a sport that conventionally involves a number of players using golf clubs to hit a ball from tee area towards a putting green that includes a cup, with the goal of getting the ball in the cup in as few shots, or strokes, as possible. Each golf course is comprised of a number of holes, usually 9 or 18, with each hole typically including various types of terrain between the tee box and the putting green including a fairway, rough, bunkers, and various hazards such as water, trees, and rocks. Unlike many other sports that have standard fields of play each golf course is unique in its specific layout and arrangement.

[0003] The most common course includes 18-holes of varying length and having various features. There are, however, many modifications on the most traditional approach. One such modification is known as a “par 3” course, which is a smaller course having shorter holes, with all holes intended to be completed with three strokes of the ball. Another well-known modification is miniature golf, or “minigolf.” Minigolf only involves the use of a putter on very short holes, most of which have a number of unique obstacles that the players must putt through or around.

[0004] While people enjoy the various forms of golf all are quite conventional in the sense that players use one or more clubs to move the ball from the tee to the cup.

[0005] What is needed, therefore, is a method of golf that allows the players to use a device other than a club to help advance the ball from tee to cup.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] The invention is a method of playing golf that incorporates the use of a shooting device and a target area with conventional aspects of the game. More particularly, a golf course is provided that has a tee area, conventional fairways, and conventional putting greens. However, rather than starting each hole by hitting a golf ball off of a tee with a golf club, the golf ball is fired out of a shooting device and towards a target that is positioned on the far side of the putting green. After the first shot from the shooting device players finish the hole in a more conventional manner, using conventional golf clubs to put the ball in a cup on the green.

[0007] As noted, the method of playing golf involves some conventional components. For example, there are likely to be a number of different holes arranged in a conventional manner to create an entire golf course, probably either 9 or 18. A conventional par-3 course is particularly advantageous due to the closer proximity of the putting greens to the tee area and the fact that the putting green is almost always visible from the tee box, which is highly advantageous with the inventive course and method of play.

[0008] To start, the players load a shooting device with a golf ball. There are a number of suitable shooting devices, most of which are relatively small hand-held cannons pow-

ered by compressed air. Once the shooting device is loaded players shoot the ball towards the target area. After the ball lands the players complete the hole in a conventional manner of using golf clubs to move the ball into the cup, assuming the first shot was not a hole-in-one.

[0009] The target area may also be used as a part of the scoring. For example, if the player hits the bullseye it may be considered a hole-in-one and the player may deduct one or more strokes from his/her score, thus receiving a total score of zero for the hole. If the player misses the bullseye but hits the outer area target he/she may deduct one or more strokes from his/her score and then finish the hole in the conventional manner. The number of stroke deductions for hitting various parts of the target area may vary.

[0010] Additionally, if the player misses the target entirely but hits the ricochet wall the player simply receives 1 stroke for the initial shot and then plays the ball where it lies counting the number of strokes necessary to put the ball in the cup to determine the total score for that hole. If the player misses both the target and the wall he/she takes a drop in a drop area and adds one “penalty stroke” to his/her score before completing the hole in a conventional manner.

[0011] A score card may also be provided that includes a column for the number of strokes per hole as well as a column for targets hit, which may be tallied at the end of the game to calculate the final score. Other methods of scoring may also be used based on the players’ interaction with the target area.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] The present invention is described with reference to the accompanying drawings. In the drawings, like reference numbers indicate identical or functionally similar elements. The drawings are not drawn to scale.

[0013] FIG. 1 illustrates a sample golf hole for use in practicing the method, starting from the tee box and showing the target area beyond a putting green.

[0014] FIG. 2 is illustrates a closer view of the target area and putting green.

[0015] FIG. 3 is a side view of a target.

[0016] FIG. 4 is a side perspective view of a sample target area and putting green.

[0017] FIG. 5 is a front view of a sample target area and putting green.

[0018] FIG. 6 is a side view of a shooting device.

[0019] FIG. 7 is perspective view of the shooting shack.

[0020] FIG. 8 is a top view of a hole having the shooting shack on the tee area.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0021] The present invention will now be described more fully in detail with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which the preferred embodiments of the invention are shown. This invention should not, however, be construed as limited to the embodiments set forth herein; rather, they are provided so that this disclosure will be complete and will fully convey the scope of the invention to those skilled in the art.

[0022] FIGS. 1-5 illustrate an example golf hole for use in performing the method 100, having a tee area 10, a putting green 20, and a target area 30. The method of play starts with one or more players using a shooting device C, such as an

air cannon, to shoot a golf ball from the tee area **10** towards the target area **30**. The tee area **10** and target area **30** are separated by, at least, a conventional fairway **L**. Once the ball lands the players proceed to finish the hole using conventional means, such as using golf clubs to hit the ball into a cup on the green **20**. The target area **30** includes a number of features that may factor into the scoring, with the goal being the same as with conventional golf, namely, completing each hole in as few shots and strokes as possible.

[0023] The target area **30** includes a protective netting **32**, a ricochet wall **34**, and a target **35** having an outer area **36** and a bullseye **38**. In most instances, the putting green **20** is located in front of the target area **30**, between the tee area **10** and the target area **30**.

[0024] The tee area **10** may include a shooting shack, an example of which is shown in FIGS. 7-10. The shooting shack has an entry **12** next to a shooting counter **14** where the shooting device **C** is mounted. The shooting device **C** is moveable in all directions on all axis; however, the extent of movement may be limited to prevent a player from firing in a dangerous direction. For example, the side-to-side movement may be limited such that the user must shoot in a direction that will at least be caught by the netting **32**. The shooting shack and mounting device are primarily provided for player safety and may not be needed in all scenarios and on all holes, particularly when the majority of possible shots are safe.

[0025] The putting green **20** may be a conventional putting green, or it may include additional features. For example, parts of the green may include colored turf, such as blue turf to signify a water hazard or brown turf to signify a sand trap. If the player lands on the water hazard he/she must take a drop in a drop area and add a penalty stroke. The brown turf may be comprised of a thicker material so that it is more difficult to hit out of, thus imitating a traditional sand trap.

[0026] There are a number of suitable shooting devices, most of which are small cannons powered by compressed air. One suitable example, generally illustrated in FIG. 6, is the HOT SHOT cannon made by JVD Golf LLC. Such air cannons shoot golf balls varying distances based on the amount of air pressure provided to the cannon. Each hole may be provided with a shooting device that has a limit as to the amount of air pressure allowed in the shooting device to prevent, for example, a player from shooting a ball 300 yards on a 100 yard hole.

[0027] The method of play **100** incorporates the shooting device **C** and the target area **30** into the scoring of the golf game. For example, in a preferred embodiment, each player starts each hole by shooting a ball from the tee area **10** from the shooting device **C** towards the target area **30**. This first shot is one stroke on the players score, and if the shooting device **C** causes the ball to land in the cup the player receives a hole-in-one and moves on to the next hole. This may happen, for example, if the player hits the target area and ball ricochets into the cup, or if the ball lands near the cup and rolls in.

[0028] If the player hits the target **35** the player deducts one or more strokes from his/her score. In most embodiments the players will deduct one stroke for each target hit, however, more strokes may be awarded if the players or course designer deem that to be advantageous. For example, an especially small bullseye may be provided on some number of holes for which a player may deduct additional

strokes. Or, for example, one or more holes may simply be deemed special holes for which larger deductions are awarded.

[0029] If a player hits the bullseye **38** the player is awarded a "hole in one" and is allowed to move on to the next hole without taking additional shots to place the ball in the cup, which has the effect of giving the player a "0" score for that hole. If the player hits the outer area **36** the player continues to finish the hole using conventional means, such as using a putter to putt the ball into the cup, with each stroke added to the players score. It is also possible that after hitting the outer area **36** the ball may roll into the cup as it ricochets off the outer area **36**, in which case the player would get a "hole in one" and continue on to the next hole.

[0030] If the player misses the target **35** but hits the ricochet wall **34** he/she proceeds to finish the hole using conventional means with the score being the number of conventional strokes it takes to place the ball in the cup after the initial shot from the shooting device **C** plus one stroke for that initial shot. If the player misses the wall **34** entirely he/she takes a drop and adds a penalty stroke, after which he/she finishes the hole in the normal course of play. In this case, the final score is the total of 1 stroke for the initial shot, plus 1 for the drop penalty, plus 1 stroke for each shot that the player must take to move the ball from the drop area to the cup.

[0031] These steps are then repeated for each hole on the golf course. A score card may also be provided that includes a column for the number of strokes per hole as well as a column for targets hit, which may be tallied at the end of the game to calculate the final score, e.g. by adding the number of strokes and then deducting the number of targets that were hit.

[0032] In one embodiment, the components of the target area **30** may be comprised of materials that have different impacts on the ball to award an accurate shot. For example, the target **35** may be made of a material that has a bouncing effect on the ball. The target **35** may also be shaped in a manner that causes the ball to bounce off the target in the direction of the hole. For example, the target **35** may be curved in a manner that directs the ball toward the hole and may have more or less bounce to cause the ball to bounce near the hole depending on the distance between the cup and the target area.

[0033] The ricochet wall **34** may be constructed in a manner that is somewhat opposite of the target **35**, causing the ball to bounce off of the wall in a manner that is likely to place the ball further from the hole relative to the target. For example, if the target area is far from the hole the ricochet wall **34** may have relatively little bounce to it. Alternatively, if the hole is near the target area the wall may have more bounce.

[0034] The target **35** and ricochet wall **34** may also be covered in a padding that reduces ricochet and noise but that does not have a particularly high impact on ball placement. As one example the ricochet wall **34** and target **35** may each be made from plywood that is first covered with a 2 inch rigid foam board, then with 4 inches of foam rubber and finally covered in a vinyl that is suitable for outdoor use. The bullseye **38** may be made of a hardened material such as steel or iron. The target **35** is affixed to the ricochet wall **34** using conventional means.

[0035] The netting is generally intended to provide a safety barrier and to avoid lost balls, and in general it is

likely that there is a conventional “drop area” near the netting and to the side of the putting green from where the players continue to play the hole in a conventional manner if they miss the target area **30**.

[0036] The course may include any number of holes, but as noted is most likely to follow the format of a typical par-3 course.

[0037] It is understood that the embodiments described herein are merely illustrative of the present invention. Variations in the steps of the method of golf or design of the course may be contemplated by one skilled in the art without limiting the intended scope of the invention herein disclosed and as defined by the following claims.

1: A method of playing golf for one or more players comprising the following steps:

Providing a golf course that includes one or more holes having a tee area, a target area, and a putting green, the target area that includes one or more components at least one of which is constructed of a hardened material that causes objects to ricochet when the objects strike the component, the target area positioned near the putting green, and the putting green having a cup;

Using a shooting device to shoot a ball from the tee area toward the target area;

Using one or more golf clubs to stroke the ball into the cup; and

Keeping a player’s score for each of the one or more players by at least counting the number of shots and strokes it takes for each of the one or more player’s to place the ball in the cup.

2: The method of claim **1**, wherein the target area includes a wall and a target that has a bullseye.

3: The method of claim **2**, wherein the player’s score is reduced by a number when one of the one or more players hits the target.

4: The method of claim **3**, wherein when one or more player’s hits the bullseye the player allowed to move on to the next hole without using one or more golf clubs to stroke the ball into the cup.

5: The method of claim **1** wherein the tee area includes a shooting shack and the shooting device is an air cannon mounted to a shooting counter.

6: A golf course comprising:

At least one hole that includes a tee area, a target area, and a putting green, the target area located near the putting green; and

wherein the target area includes a wall and a target.

7: The golf course of claim **6**, wherein the tee area is a shooting area from which players use a shooting device to shot a ball towards the target area.

8: The golf course of claim **6**, wherein the tea area includes a shooing shack having a shooting counter on which a shooting device is mounted.

9: The golf course of claim **6**, wherein the target includes an outer area and a bullseye.

10: The golf course of claim **7**, further including a safety net located on the side of the target area that is opposite the tee area

11: The method of claim **2** wherein the target has an outer area that has a ricochet effect on the ball.

12: The method of claim **2** wherein the target’s bullseye has a ricochet effect on the ball.

13: The method of claim **2** wherein the wall has a ricochet effect on the ball.

14: The method of claim **2** wherein the wall and the target each have a different ricochet effect on the ball.

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