US 20170027275A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication** (10) **Pub. No.: US 2017/0027275 A1**

Nava (43) **Pub. Date: Feb. 2, 2017**

(54) **MODERNIZED BASEBALL/SOFTBALL FOOT GUARD SLEEVE**

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(21) Appl. No.: **15/216,417**

(22) Filed: **Jul. 21, 2016**

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 62/282,435, filed on Jul. 30, 2015.

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**

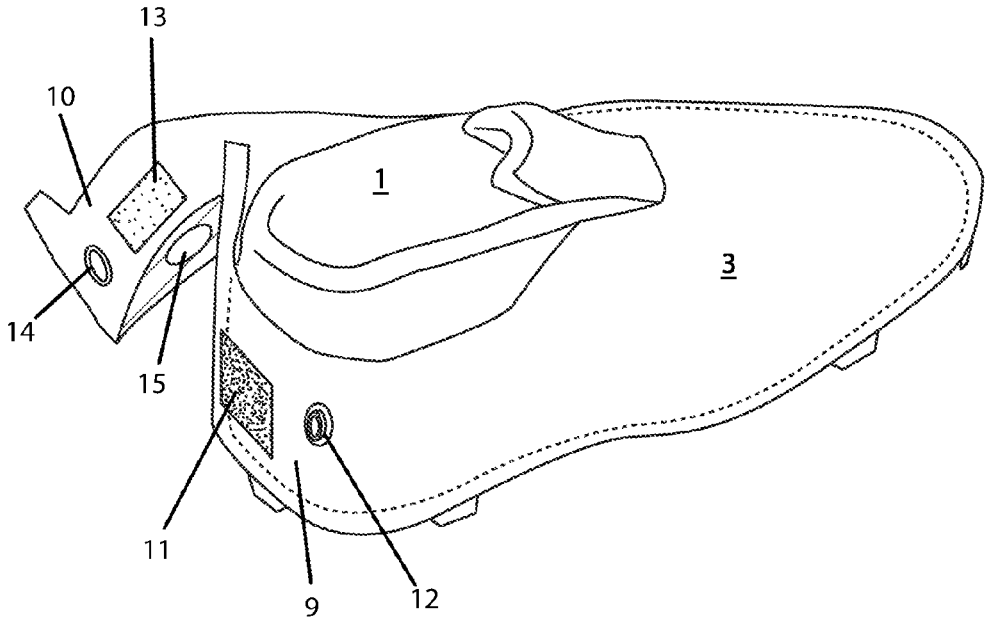
A43B 5/18	(2006.01)
A43B 23/02	(2006.01)
A43B 5/10	(2006.01)

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

CPC ***A43B 5/185*** (2013.01); ***A43B 5/10*** (2013.01); ***A43B 23/026*** (2013.01); ***A43B 23/028*** (2013.01)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

The invention provides an entirely new form of protective gear to protect baseball/softball player's feet, while batting. This foot guard slides over and wraps around the entire shoe, like a sleeve, creating the feeling that it is one with the shoe. The foot guard sleeve is comprised of a thin layer of Kevlar, or other aramid material, fastened to a thin layer of neoprene, all sewn into and enveloped by a negligibly thin outer mesh/spandex sleeve, and altogether measuring ⅛" to ¼" in thickness. These thin, flexible, malleable, and lightweight materials allow for the full mobility and flexion of the player's foot, greatly reducing any hindrance caused by the gear, while still providing ample protection against serious injury caused by accidental/incidental impact resulting from foul balls hit directly from the bat to the foot. Two distinct versions would be available for spikes/cleats and tennis shoes, respectively.



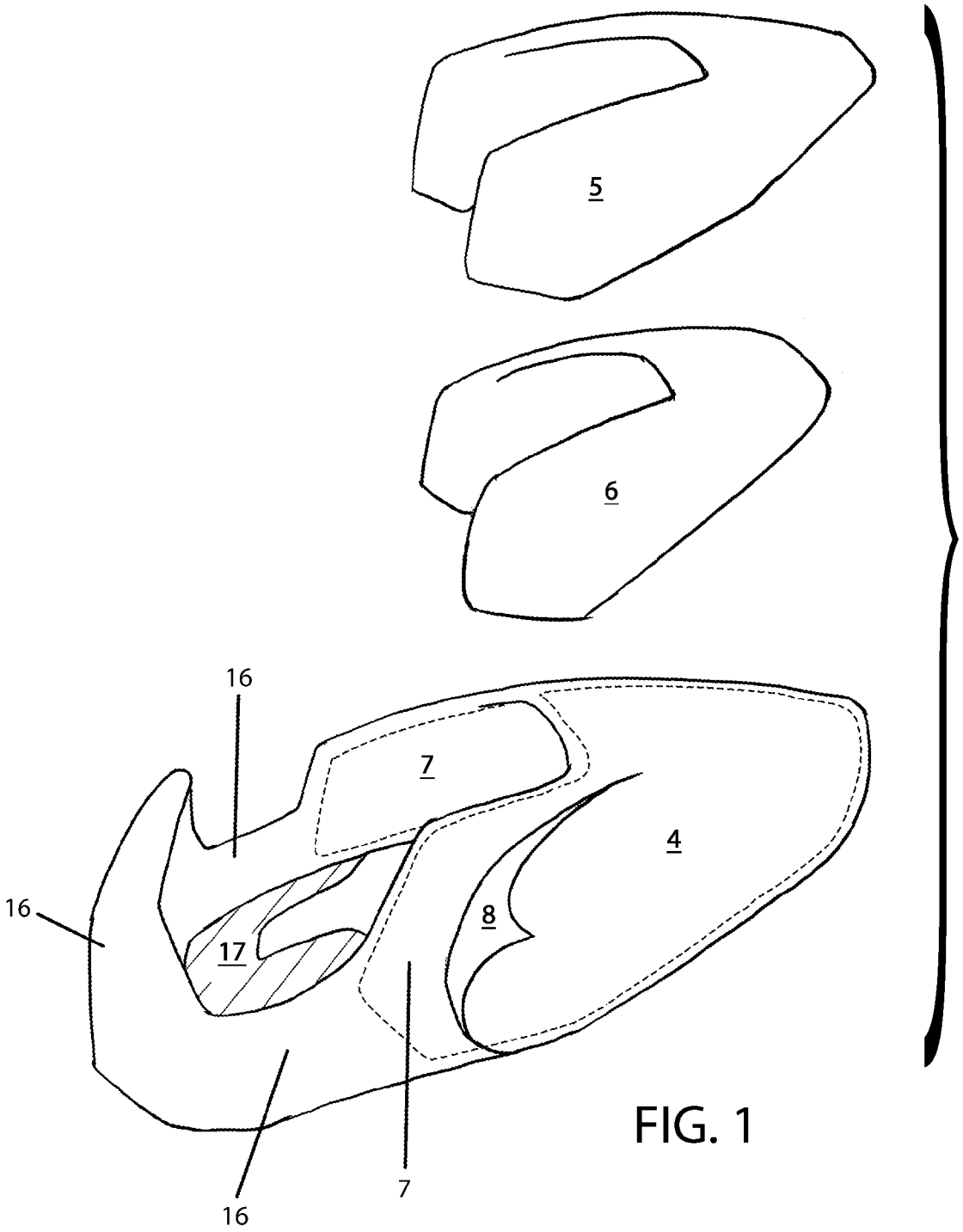


FIG. 1

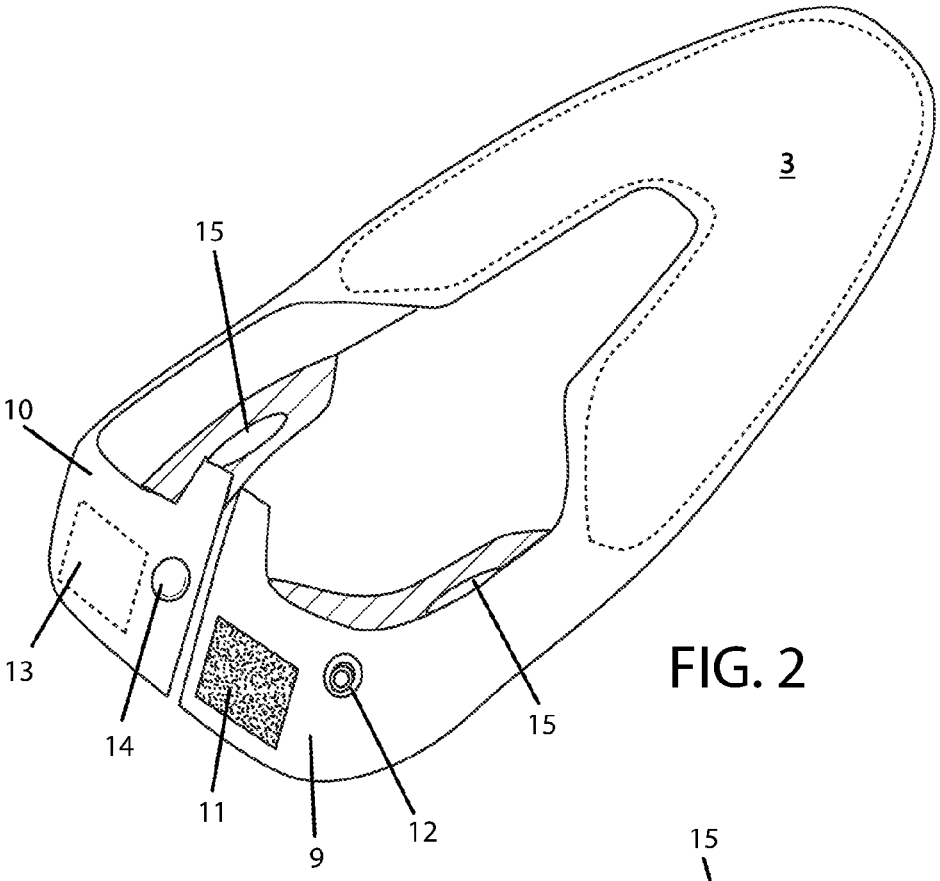


FIG. 2

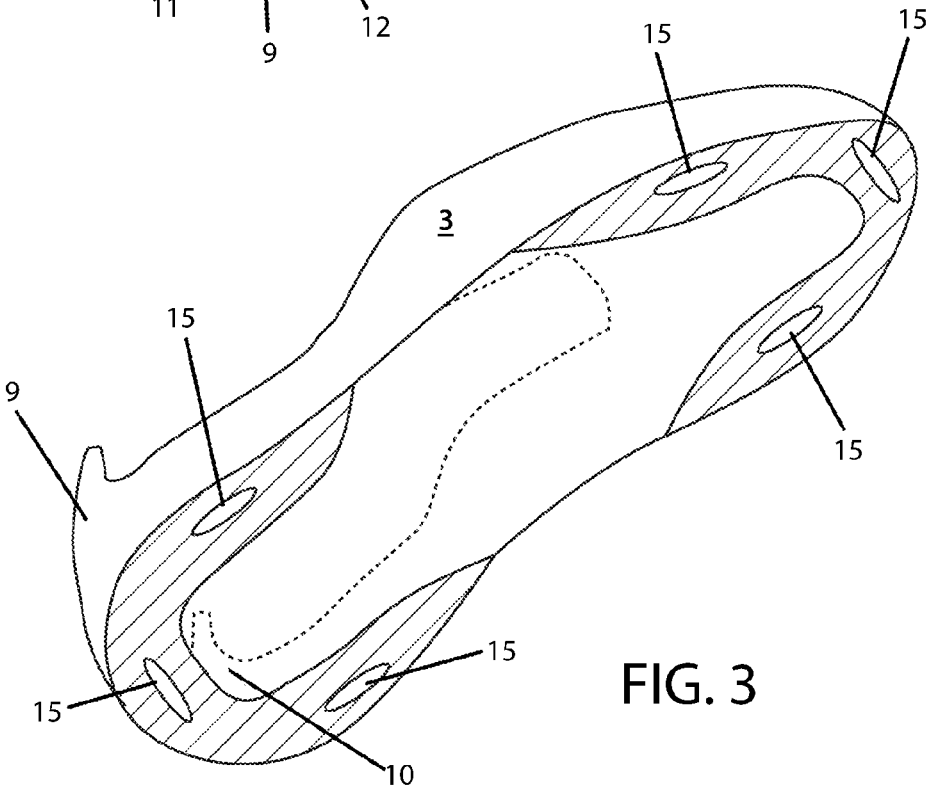


FIG. 3

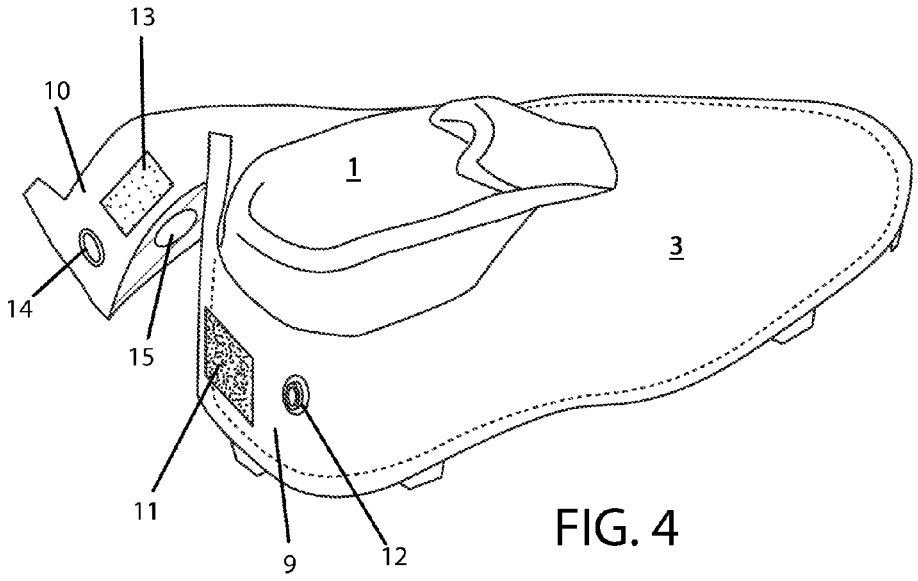


FIG. 4

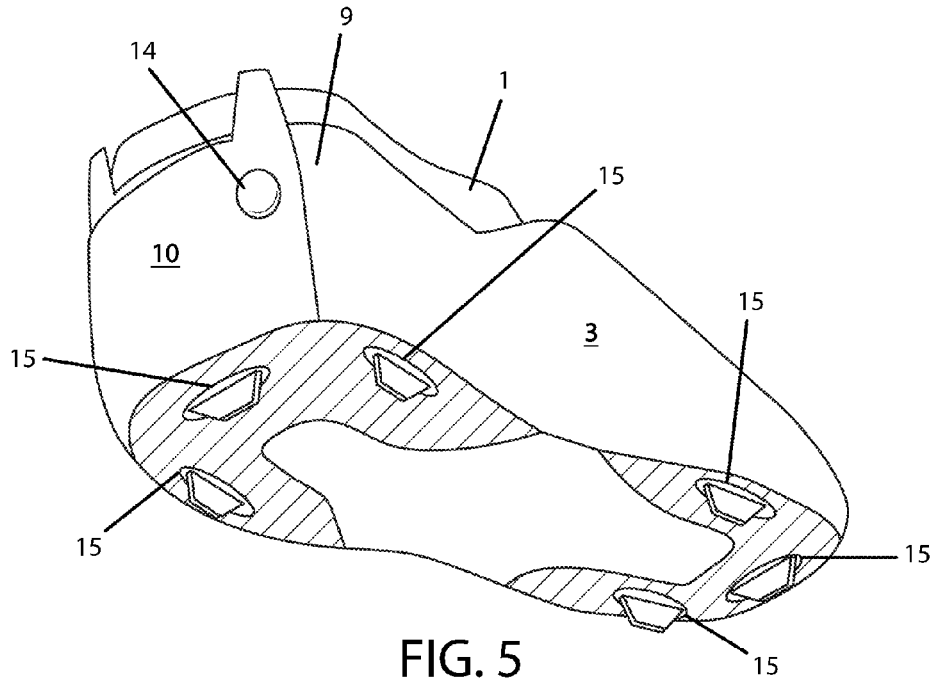


FIG. 5

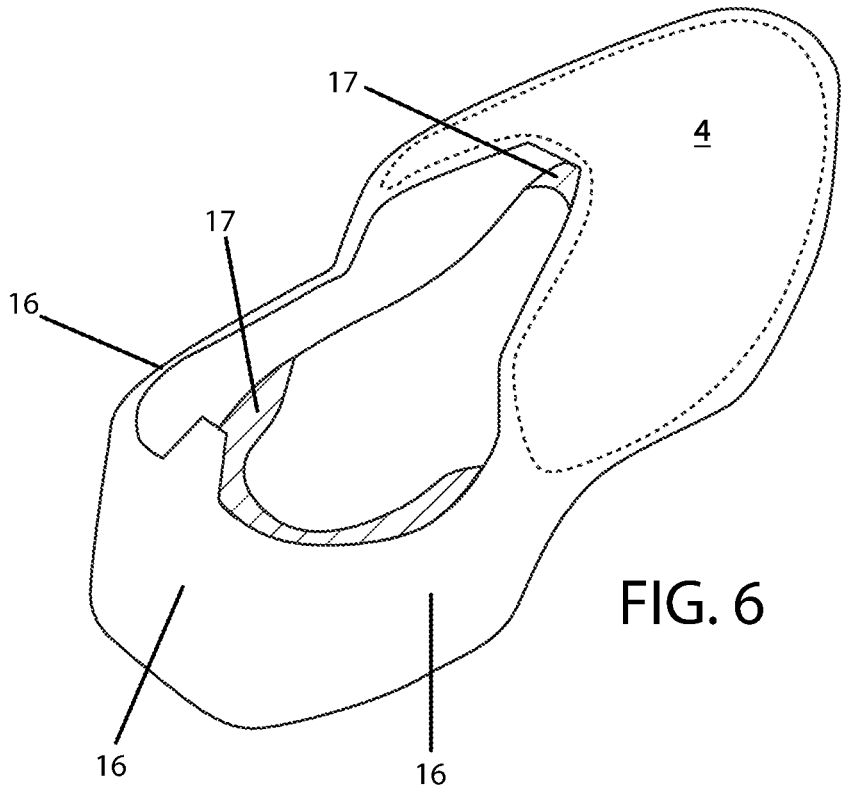


FIG. 6

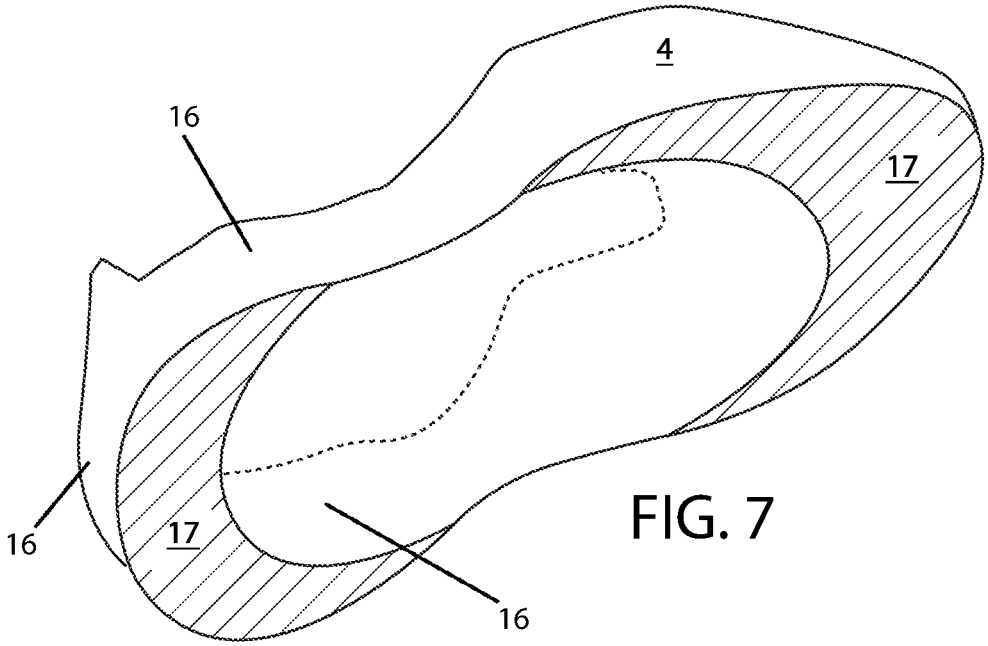


FIG. 7

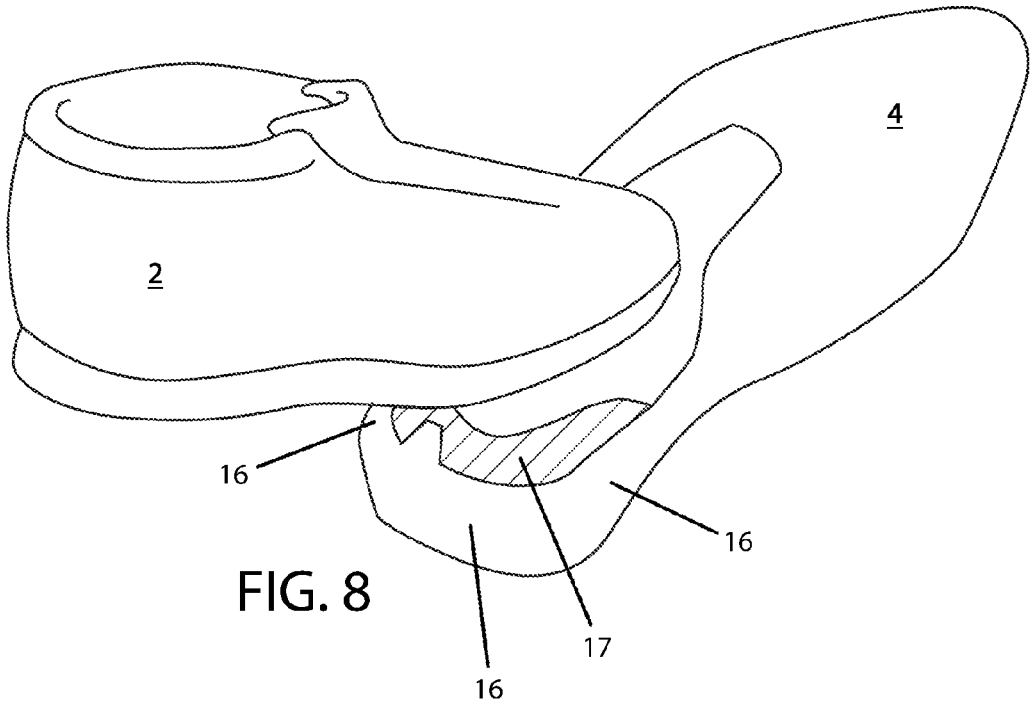


FIG. 8

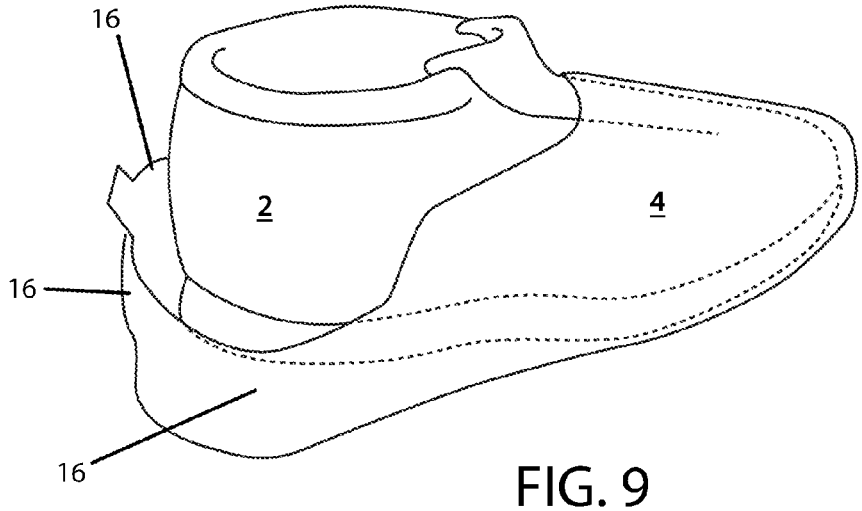


FIG. 9

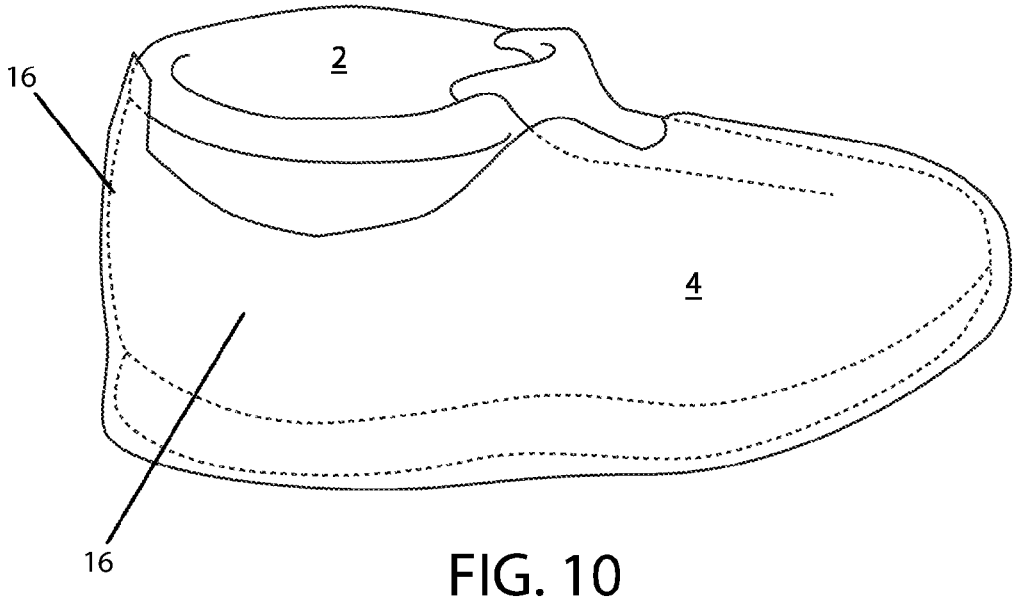


FIG. 10

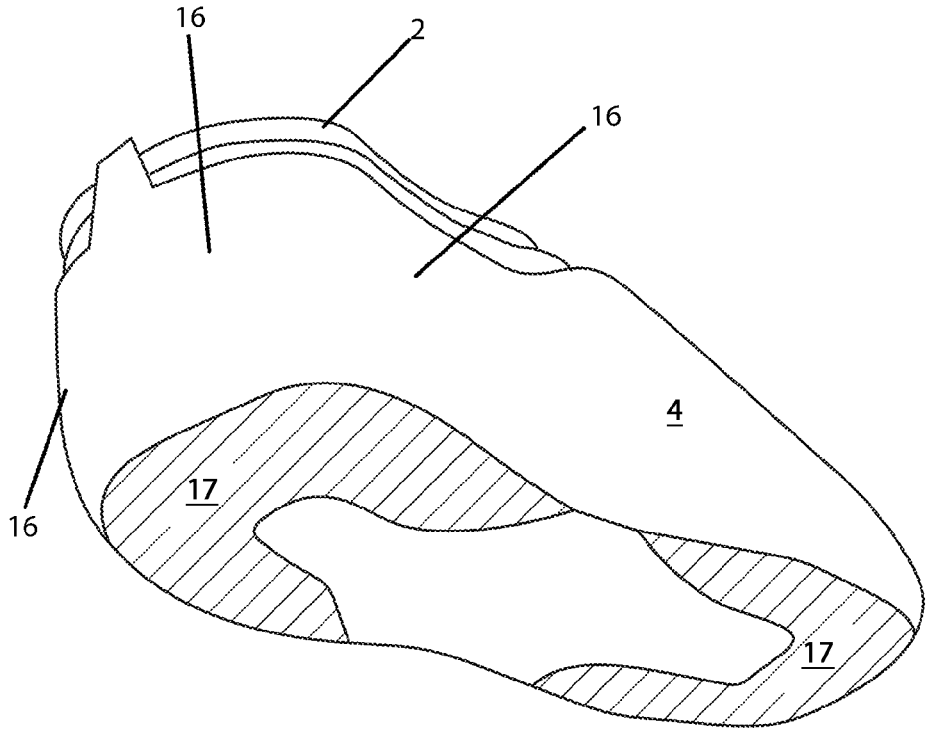
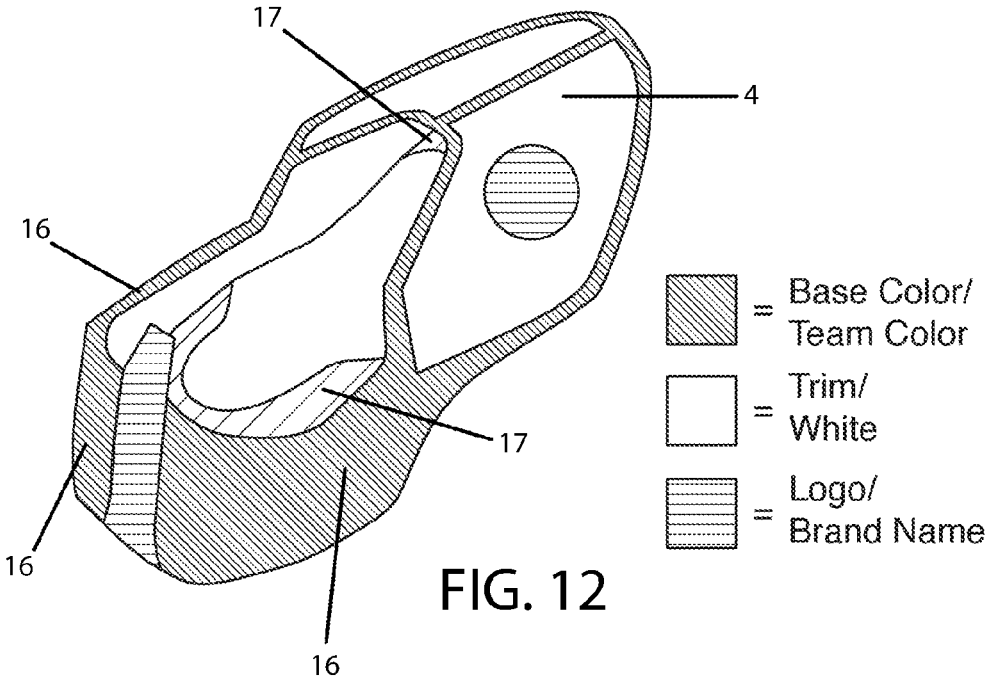


FIG. 11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16
17
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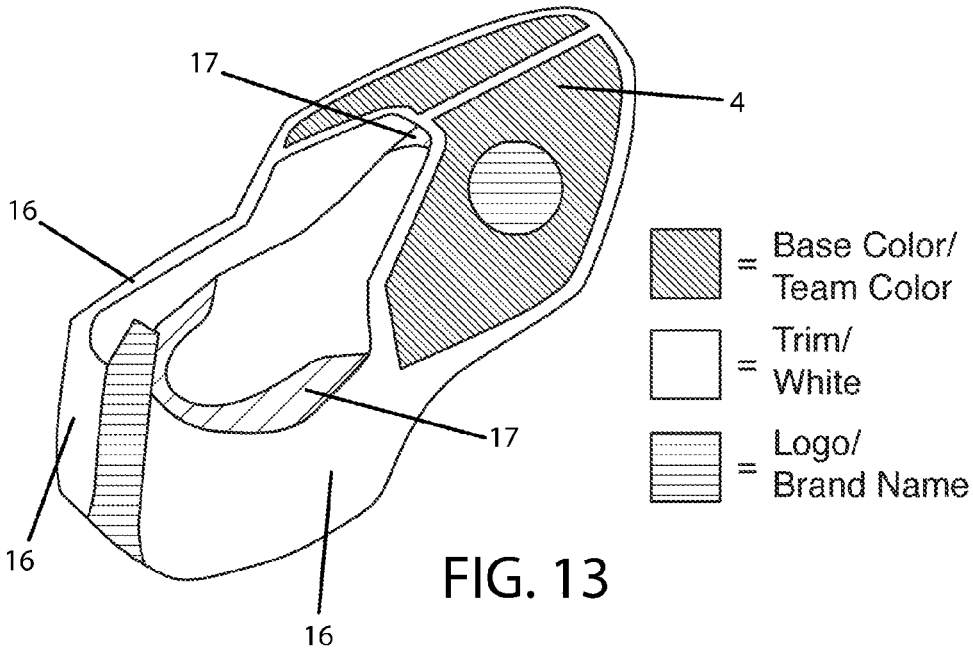
16
= Base Color/ Team Color
= Trim/ White
= Logo/ Brand Name

FIG. 12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= Base Color/ Team Color
= Trim/ White
= Logo/ Brand Name

FIG. 13

MODERNIZED BASEBALL/SOFTBALL FOOT GUARD SLEEVE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 62/282,435, filed on Jul. 30, 2015, which is entirely incorporated herein by reference.

STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

[0002] Not Applicable

REFERENCE TO SEQUENCE LISTING, A TABLE, OR A COMPUTER PROGRAM LISTING COMPACT DISC APPENDIX

[0003] Not Applicable

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0004] The present invention relates generally to athletic protective gear for the feet. More specifically, the present invention relates to athletic protective gear for a baseball/softball player's foot while batting.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0005] After extensive research, it has become clear that about half of the professional baseball players use one of the two prevalent forms of protective gear for their feet while batting. Both forms are very rigid and made of plastic or a combination of plastic and gel padding. The potential for serious injury resulting from impact from a foul ball hit directly off the batter's foot is always looming, during the games as well as practice, and the aforementioned guards are very effective but also very restrictive. This restrictive quality breeds a large contingency of very elite athletes who are choosing to forego protecting their feet for the sake of success on the field. These athletes are often some of the better players, if not the best players, on their teams, let alone the league, and for the most part, fall under two distinct categories—the dual threat player (speed/power) and the technical power hitter. These players are usually invaluable commodities to their teams both physically and monetarily.

[0006] The dual threat athlete is sprinting out of the batter's box putting pressure on the defense, while on the base paths, from their very first step. A split second can make the difference between being called safe or out when stretching a routine ground ball into an infield single, or a long single into a double. These players want zero restriction as they transfer from swing to sprint. Equally important is the topic of a very technical swing. The more technical the swing, the more important the regimen, the preparation, the process, the comfort and the "feel". The "feel" is extremely important as baseball is a game that is played with the mind as much as it is with the body. The batter's front foot is the timing mechanism for the release of the hips (and, thus, the bat) and the gauge for whether the pitch is inside or outside. The front foot acts like an antenna sensing the speed and location of the pitch, and, once it is replanted or repositioned on the ground, the swing is initiated. Batters do not like this "feel" and sense of timing being obstructed, or tampered with, whatsoever—no matter how frivolous or trivial the obstruction may be to those outside the game. The batters' results are negatively affected by anything they consider a distraction or hindrance. These are the reasons why many players forego using the current protective gear available for their feet when batting. These athletes consistently would rather compromise their safety, health, and longevity in their sport for comfort, peace of mind, and success on the field because they feel somewhat obstructed physically, and therefore to a much greater extent mentally, by the rigid, uncomfortable, distracting, and unfixed, constantly shifting guards currently available. These players want their "feel" and sense of timing free of obstruction and distraction while batting, and they want zero restriction when transferring from swing to sprint.

[0007] There is a large contingency of baseball, and softball, players that are being overlooked. These players are in need of a thin, flexible, malleable piece of alternative protective equipment for their feet that conforms to their shoe as if it is one with the shoe (an integral part of the shoe) and provides ample protection from serious injury resulting from accidental/incidental impact from foul balls hit directly from the bat to the foot, while still allowing for the complete range and freedom of motion and flexion of the foot when batting and running.

[0008] As previously mentioned, there have been several attempts to protect the baseball, and softball, batters' feet without impeding or disturbing their mobility, "feel", and results, and there have also been several patents attempting to achieve the same goal. A couple of these products have achieved considerable popularity and commercial success. However, all of these guards are constructed with rigid or semi-rigid material, and all are attached to the shoe with a simple strap that reaches underneath the shoe, from one side of the guard to the other. No matter how lightweight these guards may be, they must be readjusted constantly due to the rigidity of the materials used and the lack of secure form fitting attachment to the player's shoe. The players constantly feel that something is attached to their foot and are made aware of it every couple of swings when they are inclined to adjust their gear for a proper "feel". The common type of baseball/softball foot guards used currently, as described herein, are referenced, for example, in the following United States of America patents:

U.S. Pat. No. 4,608,718A Reed

U.S. Pat. No. 4,967,493A Mues

U.S. Pat. No. 5,074,060A Brncick, Moritz Jr.

U.S. Pat. No. 5,566,476A Bertrand, Seyler

U.S. Pat. No. 5,898,939A Schramm Sport Gmbh, Kwo-Kampfsportausstattung

U.S. Pat. No. 6,131,195A Parker Athletic Products, Llc.

[0009] The focus of these referenced protective foot guards is to prevent from even the slightest bruising occurring from impact from a foul ball hit directly from the bat to the foot, and, for this objective, they are effective at the cost of being cumbersome for the players to wear while batting. The Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve is an alternative that focuses on sleekness, flexibility, and malleability, and functioning and reacting as an integral part of the shoe as opposed to an accessory that is tangentially attached to the shoe, hindering the natural movement and flexion of the athlete's foot. This new foot guard sleeve slides over and wraps around the entire shoe snugly and form fit, with the elasticity of the outer sleeve layer being made of mesh or spandex material, to create the feeling that it is one with the

shoe. Because of the sleek design and negligible light weight and "feel", some impact might be felt. The slightest bruising might not be fully protected, but the Kevlar and neoprene ensure the guard sleeve will more than amply protect from serious injuries such as severe bruising and broken bones. These specific materials guarantee that the guard sleeve more than amply deflects the blunt impact as well as more than amply dissipates the force/momentum of impact, from foul tips hit directly form the bat to the foot, with Kevlar having a strength to weight ratio five times stronger than that of steel. The Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve is an all new, alternative form of protective gear for the player whose results while batting are, even if just mentally, adversely affected by the interference of any accessory they can feel attached to their foot, but who still want and need a dependable, substantial and effective form of protective gear. This foot guard sleeve is for the baseball, and softball, player who is hypersensitive and recalcitrant in regards to any change in routine, process, and "feel". This is where the alternative becomes the necessity, and, with this potential product, a reality.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0010] The Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve is an alternative form of protective gear for the foot that bridges the gap in player safety, which currently exists for a significant number of elite baseball/softball players while batting (at all levels of the game). These players consistently forego using protective gear for their feet because the current guards available to them, although very effective against impact and injury, are very rigid, restrictive, and shift easily out of place causing the athletes to lose some of their "feel", sense of timing, and overall comfort and peace of mind while batting. Many elite baseball/softball players would rather compromise their safety and health for the sake of comfort and success on the field.

[0011] Instead of being made of rigid and/or semi-rigid plastic molds, the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve is comprised of two protective layers fastened together to form a singular protective unit. The top layer is to be made of Kevlar, or other effective aramid material. The bottom layer is to made of neoprene. This protective unit, comprised of the two distinct and fastened layers, is sewn into and enveloped by a negligibly thin outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve that holds the guard flush and securely to the shoe. This outer sleeve/mold may be constructed of mesh and/or spandex. Both mesh and spandex expand and conform back to their original size. These materials are ideal to create a firm and snug fit over the player's shoe without impeding the foot's normal motion, flexion, and function. Both mesh and spandex are also ideal materials for wicking away moisture/water. A pertinent attribute of both Kevlar and neoprene is that they repel water. All three of the materials that compose the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve allow the gear to function properly and effectively in rainy conditions. Altogether, with the two protective layers fastened together and sewn into the negligibly thin mesh/spandex outer sleeve/mold, the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve would measure between ⅛" and ¼" in thickness. This new guard slides over and wraps around the entire shoe like a sleeve to create a firm and balanced hold and, along with the flexibility and sleekness of the Kevlar layer, neoprene layer, and mesh/spandex outer sleeve/mold, creates the feeling that the foot guard sleeve is actually an integral part of the shoe. There would, therefore, be no concerns of the guard shifting out of place or position with any forceful motion and even with any forceful blow to the foot. The Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve is a new way to protect baseball and softball players' feet, while batting, by providing a very thin, very flexible, very malleable, and negligibly lightweight form of protection that allows for complete range and freedom of motion and flexion of the player's foot while still being more than amply effective against serious injury (Kevlar being five times stronger than steel in strength to weight ratio) resulting from accidental/incidental impact from foul balls hit directly from the bat to the foot.

[0012] Two versions of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve would be available—the primary version for use with spikes/cleats (games/on-field) and the supplementary version for use with tennis shoes (practice/batting cages).

[0013] The version of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve for use with spikes/cleats will, at the back of the shoe, come to an end with two symmetrical flaps, one stretched out and attached over the other to create a firm and balanced hold. The strap underneath is to be assembled with the male half of a Velcro attachment and clasping button, and the overlaying strap is to be assembled with the female half of the Velcro attachment and clasping button to achieve a flush and secure attachment to the spikes/cleats. This on-field version for spikes/cleats will also be assembled with custom cutouts molded, or fastened, to the underside of the outer mesh/spandex sleeve for the spikes/cleats to slide through to, again, provide a firm and balanced hold. These custom cutouts would be designed to match with and fit the most popular spike/cleat patterns.

[0014] The version of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve for use with tennis shoes (practice/batting cages) is held in place with well positioned elastic bands located at the back of the guard, fastened from one side of the guard to the other, that stretch out and over the back of the shoe to create a firm and balanced hold. This version for tennis shoes will also be assembled with slip resistant pieces of rubber contoured to the front and back of the shoe and molded, or fastened, to the underside of the outer mesh/spandex sleeve of the guard, reaching over the underside of, and cupping the front and back of, the shoe to, again, create a firm and balanced hold, as well as to help grip the concrete floors of the batting cages. By providing both versions of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve, a primary version for use with spikes/cleats (games/on-field) and a supplementary version for use with tennis shoes (practice/batting cages), baseball and softball players who want to maintain consistency of regimen, process, and "feel" between their practice and games will have no issues and can be assured that their feet will be protected without their results being affected.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE SEVERAL VIEWS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] FIG. **1** is an exploded view of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve (tennis shoe version) distinguishing between the two individual protective units (Kevlar, or other aramid material, layer and neoprene layer) and the outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve they are sewn into.

[0016] FIG. **2** is a top view, with sight angled to show the side and rear of the foot guard sleeve (spikes/cleats version) as well.

[0017] FIG. **3** is a bottom view of the foot guard sleeve (spikes/cleats version) slightly angled to partially show the side of the guard as well.

[0018] FIG. **4** is a side view, with sight angled to partially illustrate the top and rear of the foot guard sleeve (spikes/cleats version), in the process of being strapped on and attached to baseball spikes/cleats.

[0019] FIG. **5** is a bottom view, with sight angled to partially illustrate the side and rear of the foot guard sleeve (spikes/cleats version), showing the guard firmly and fully attached.

[0020] FIG. **6** is a top view, with sight angled to illustrate the side and rear of the baseball foot guard sleeve (tennis shoe version) as well.

[0021] FIG. **7** is a bottom view of the foot guard sleeve (tennis shoe version), slightly angled to partially show the side of the guard as well.

[0022] FIG. **8** is a side view of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve (tennis shoe version) in the process of sliding over and onto a tennis shoe.

[0023] FIG. **9** is a side view of the foot guard sleeve (tennis shoe version) in the process of being secured onto the tennis shoe.

[0024] FIG. **10** is a side view of the foot guard sleeve (tennis shoe version) slid fully over and firmly secured to the tennis shoe.

[0025] FIG. **11** is a bottom view of the foot guard sleeve (tennis shoe version), with sight angled to partially illustrate the side and rear of the guard, showing the foot guard slid fully over and firmly secured to the tennis shoe.

[0026] FIG. **12** is a top view of the foot guard sleeve (tennis shoe version), angled to show the side and rear of the guard, displaying possible patterns/color schemes.

[0027] FIG. **13** is a top view of the foot guard sleeve (tennis shoe version), angled to show the side and rear of the guard, displaying possible patterns/color schemes.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0028] With reference to the drawings illustrated in FIGS. **1-13**, the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve **3-4** is comprised of two similarly, if not equally, symmetrical protective layers fastened together to make one cohesive protective unit **7**. The top layer **5** is made of Kevlar, or other aramid material. Kevlar provides the main protection against direct impact from a foul ball hit directly to the foot off the bat. It has a strength to weight ratio that is five times stronger than that of steel yet is still thin, pliable, and flexible. It is an ideal material for this application. The top Kevlar layer **5** is fastened to a bottom neoprene layer **6**. This thin neoprene layer will be used to provide slight cushioning. With both layers combined, the unitary protective unit **7** is sewn into and enveloped by the negligibly thin outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve **8** that holds the foot guard flush to the shoe **1-2**. With all layers combined, the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve will measure between ⅛" and ¼" in thickness. FIG. **1** shows the outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve **8** peeled back to aid in the visualization of all the individual layers being fastened together to form one cohesive unit.

[0029] With reference to FIGS. **1-13**, this new baseball/softball foot guard **3-4** slides over and wraps around the entire shoe like a sleeve creating a firm and balanced hold. Along with the sleekness, flexibility, malleability, and negligible light weight of the Kevlar layer **5**, neoprene layer **6**, and negligibly thin outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve **8**, the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve **3-4** creates the feeling that it is an integral part of the shoe. This new baseball/softball foot guard **3-4** is to move with, conform with, and react to the foot's movements as if it is one with the shoe. Thus, the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve **3-4** is a new way to protect baseball and softball players' feet, while batting, by providing a very thin, very flexible, very malleable, and negligibly lightweight sleeve-like form of protective gear for the foot that allows for the complete range and freedom of motion and flexion of the player's foot, while still being more than amply effective against serious injury resulting from accidental/incidental impact from foul balls hit directly from the bat to the foot (Kevlar being five times stronger than steel in strength to weight ratio).

[0030] The Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve **3-4** is an alternative to the foot guards currently on the market, which are all made with rigid and/or semi-rigid plastic sheets and a simple strap reaching underneath the shoe, from one side of the shoe to the other, to hold the guards in place. The rigidity of these current guards makes them unsuitable options for the athlete who is hypersensitive and recalcitrant in regards to any change in their regimen, process, and "feel". The single strap holding the guard in place is also an issue as any forceful movement or any forceful impact causes the guard to shift out of place. This is another negative attribute of these current foot guards that adds to them being unsuitable options for such aforementioned players. For these players, there is a constant reminder that a piece of equipment is attached to their foot. This is a distraction for this type of baseball/softball player, described above, while batting, and a hindrance as they transfer from swing to sprint. The latter point is especially pertinent to the player who is known for showcasing their speed, as a split second often determines whether a player is called safe or out when stretching a routine ground ball into an infield single, or a long single into a double. The objective of the baseball foot guards currently available on the market is to protect the player from even the slightest bruising. This is why they are built in a way that obstructs the play, "feel", and sense of timing, even if just mentally, of many athletes. As an alternative form of protective gear, the objective of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve **3-4** is to protect from and prevent serious injury to the entire front half of the foot—including the top of the foot, the instep, metatarsal area, and the toes. Some impact may be felt and some slight bruising might occur depending on how direct the impact happens to be. The objective, however, of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve **3-4** is to protect from and prevent serious bruising and broken bones while allowing for the complete range and freedom of motion and flexion of the baseball/softball player's foot. The use of a protective unit **7** made of a thin layer of Kevlar **5**, or other aramid, and a thin layer of neoprene **6**, sewn into and enveloped by a negligibly thin mesh, or spandex, sleeve **8** allows this alternative protective foot gear **3-4** to achieve its objective. With a strength to weight ratio five times stronger than that of steel, Kevlar (or other effective aramid), along with neoprene, composing the protective unit **7** will allow the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve

3-4 to more than amply deflect the blunt impact as well as more than amply dissipate the force/momentum of impact from foul balls hit directly from the bat to the foot, thereby protecting baseball and softball players from serious injury to their feet. The fact that this new foot guard slides over and wraps around the entire shoe like a sleeve also ensures that no matter how forceful the movement or how forceful the impact, the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve **3-4** will stay in place as if it were an integral part of the player's shoe. The modern day baseball/softball player who has forgone using protective gear due to it causing distraction and obstruction in their process and "feel" while batting, as well as when transferring from swing to sprint, will now have a viable and suitable option to protect their feet during games as well as practice.

[0031] Furthermore, two versions of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve **3-4** would be available—the primary version **3** for use with spikes/cleats **1** (games/on-field) and a supplementary version **4** for use with tennis shoes **2** (practice/batting cages). With reference to the drawings illustrated in FIGS. **2-5**, the primary version of the foot guard sleeve **3** for spikes/cleats **1** will, at the back of the spikes/cleats **1**, come to an end with two symmetrical flaps **9-10**, one stretched out and attached over the other to create a firm and balanced hold to the spikes/cleats **1**. The flap underneath **9** is to be assembled with the male half of a Velcro attachment **11** and the male half of a clasping button **12**, and the overlaying flap **10** is to be assembled with the female half of the Velcro attachment **13** and the female half of the clasping button **14** to achieve a flush and secure attachment of the foot guard sleeve **3** to the spikes/cleats **1**. This on-field version of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve **3** for use with spikes/cleats **1** will also be assembled with custom cutouts **15** molded, or fastened, to the underside of the outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve **8** for the spikes/cleats **1** to slide through to, again, create a firm, balanced, and secure attachment of the foot guard sleeve **3** to the spikes/cleats **1**. These custom cutouts **15** would be designed to match with and fit the most popular spike/cleat patterns.

[0032] With reference to the drawings illustrated in FIGS. **6-11**, the supplementary version of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve **4** for use with tennis shoes **2** is held in place with well positioned elastic bands **16** located at the back of the foot guard sleeve **4**, fastened from one side of the foot guard sleeve **4** to the other, that stretch out and over the back of the tennis shoe **2** to create a firm, balanced, and secure attachment of the foot guard sleeve **4** to the tennis shoe **2**. This supplementary version of the foot guard sleeve **4** for use with tennis shoes **2** will also be assembled with slip resistant pieces of rubber **17** contoured to the shape of the front and back of the tennis shoe **2** and molded, or fastened, to the underside of the outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve **8** of the foot guard sleeve **4**, reaching over the underside of, and cupping the front and back of, the tennis shoe **2** to, again, create a firm, balanced, and secure attachment of the foot guard sleeve **4** to the tennis shoe **2**, as well as to help grip the concrete floors of the batting cages.

[0033] By providing both versions of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve **3-4**, the primary version **3** for use with spikes/cleats **1** (games/on-field) and a supplementary version **4** for use with tennis shoes **2** (practice/batting cages), baseball and softball players who want to maintain consistency of regimen, process, and "feel" between their practice and games will have no issues and can be assured that their feet will be protected without their results being affected.

[0034] Lastly, the drawings illustrated in FIGS. **12-13** show potential color and design schemes/patterns to allow for individualizing of the invention/potential product.

1. In the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve, two distinct and similarly, if not equally, symmetrical, pliable, flexible, and malleable protective layers—the top layer made of Kevlar, or other effective aramid material, for protection against direct impact, and the bottom layer made of neoprene, for slight cushioning—fastened together into one protective unit and sewn into and enveloped by a negligibly thin outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve which slides on and wraps around the entire shoe, altogether measuring between a ⅛" and ¼" in thickness so as to create a flush and form fit attachment to the shoe;

"lips" (excess outer mesh, spandex, or even rubber, molded or fastened to the underside of the rest of the outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve) contoured to the shape of the front and back of the spikes/cleats and reaching the underside of the spikes/cleats, featuring custom cutouts for the spikes/cleats to slide through to create a firm, balanced, and secure hold (for the primary version of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve to be used with spikes/cleats);

"lips" (excess pieces of slip-resistant rubber molded or fastened to the underside of the outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve) contoured to the shape of the front and back of the tennis shoe and reaching over the underside, and cupping the underside, of the front and back of the tennis shoe to create a firm, balanced, and secure hold to the tennis shoe as well as to help grip the concrete floors of the batting cages (for the supplementary version of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve to be used with tennis shoes);

outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve ending in two symmetrical flaps, at the back of the shoe, with the bottom flap being assembled with the male half of a Velcro attachment and the male half of a clasping button and the overlaying flap being assembled with the female half of the Velcro attachment and female half of the clasping button to create a flush, balanced, and secure hold to the spikes/cleats (for the primary version of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve to be used with spikes/cleats);

outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve ending in well positioned elastic bands located at the back of the foot guard sleeve, fastened from one side of the foot guard sleeve to the other, stretching out and over the back of the tennis shoe, to create a flush, balanced, and secure hold to the tennis shoe (for the supplementary version of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve to be used with tennis shoes).

2. The foot guard sleeve defined in claim **1**, wherein the protective layers, sewn into and enveloped by the negligibly thin outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve, cover from the tongue of the shoe extending downward and completely over the toes, and bilaterally from the top of shoe down to the bottom of both sides of the shoe providing complete coverage and protection of the entire front half of the foot (the top of the foot, the instep, metatarsal area, and toes).

3. The foot guard sleeve defined in claim **1**, whereby, because Kevlar has a strength to weight ratio five times

stronger than that of steel, the protective unit of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve more than amply deflects the blunt impact as well as more than amply dissipates the force/momentum of the impact from foul balls hit directly from the baseball/softball player's bat to the foot, and thereby provides more than ample protection, for baseball and softball players, from serious injury resulting from said foul balls hit directly from the bat to the foot.

4. The foot guard sleeve defined in claim **1**, whereby the pliability, flexibility, and malleability of Kevlar, or other aramid material, layer, the neoprene layer, and the outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve, along with the elasticity of the outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve, allow for the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve to slide over and wrap around the entire shoe ensuring the baseball/softball player that no matter how forceful the movement, or how forceful the impact, endured by the protective gear, the foot guard sleeve will remain in place as if it were an integral part of the player's shoe.

5. The foot guard sleeve defined in claim **1**, whereby the ability for Kevlar, or other aramid material, and neoprene to repel water, along with the ability of the mesh, or spandex, composing the outer sleeve of the guard, to wick away water quickly and effectively allow the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve to function properly and effectively during rainy conditions.

6. The foot guard sleeve defined in claim **1**, whereby the sleekness, malleability, flexibility, and negligible light weight of the Kevlar, or other aramid material, and neoprene protective layers, as well as of the negligibly thin outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve, allow for complete and natural range and freedom of motion and flexion of the baseball/softball player's foot.

7. The foot guard sleeve defined in claims **1** and **3**, whereby, because Kevlar has a strength to weight ratio five times as strong as that of steel and, along with the neoprene layer and outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve, all exhibit high levels of malleability and flexibility, the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve provides more than ample protection from serious injury resulting from accidental/incidental impact from foul balls hit directly from the bat to the foot and, simultaneously, allows for the complete and natural range and freedom of motion and flexion of the baseball/softball player's foot.

8. The foot guard sleeve defined in claim **6**, whereby allowance for the complete and natural range and freedom of motion and flexion of the baseball/softball player's foot provides freedom of any hindrance, thus allowing for a seamless transition, for the batter, from swing to sprint.

9. The foot guard sleeve defined in claim **6**, whereby the allowance for complete and natural range and freedom of motion and flexion of the baseball/softball player's foot, along with the flush and secure attachment of the foot guard sleeve to the shoe provided by the elasticity of the outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve keeping the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve firmly in place, provide the freedom of any hindrance, or distraction, with regard to the baseball/softball player's sense of timing and "feel" while batting, thus, allowing for more precise calculations and reactions than the current protective gear available, due to the lack of obstruction, hindrance, and distraction.

10. The foot guard sleeve defined in claim **1**, whereby a baseball/softball player can have the option of using the same protective gear for their feet during practice as they use during the games with the supplementary version of the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve, assembled with contoured pieces of slip-resistant rubber molded, or fastened, to the underside of the outer mesh, or spandex, sleeve that reach over the underside of, and cup the underside of, the front and back of the tennis shoe in order to create a firm, balanced, and secure attachment of the foot guard sleeve to the shoe, and also, specifically, to help grip the concrete floors of the batting cages for the baseball/softball player who prefers to maintain consistency in regimen, process, and "feel" between their practice and their games.

11. The foot guard sleeve defined in claims **3**, **4**, and **6**, whereby allowance for the complete and natural range and freedom of motion and flexion of the baseball/softball player's foot, through its flexibility, malleability, elasticity, and negligible light weight provides freedom of any obstruction, hindrance, and distraction with regard to the baseball/softball player's movements, timing, "feel", calculations, and reactions, allowing the batter to feel as though the Modernized Baseball/Softball Foot Guard Sleeve is an integral part of the player's shoe and, thusly, as though nothing is attached to their shoe until they are hit with a foul ball.

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