



(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**  
**Anderson et al.**

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2012/0255095 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date: Oct. 11, 2012**

(54) **BALL GLOVE WITH ADJUSTABLE AND CUSTOMIZABLE STRAP**

(52) **U.S. Cl. .... 2/19**

(76) Inventors: **James Trevor Anderson**, Oakland, CA (US); **John Mun**, Irvine, CA (US); **Thomas Hoke**, West Hills, CA (US)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

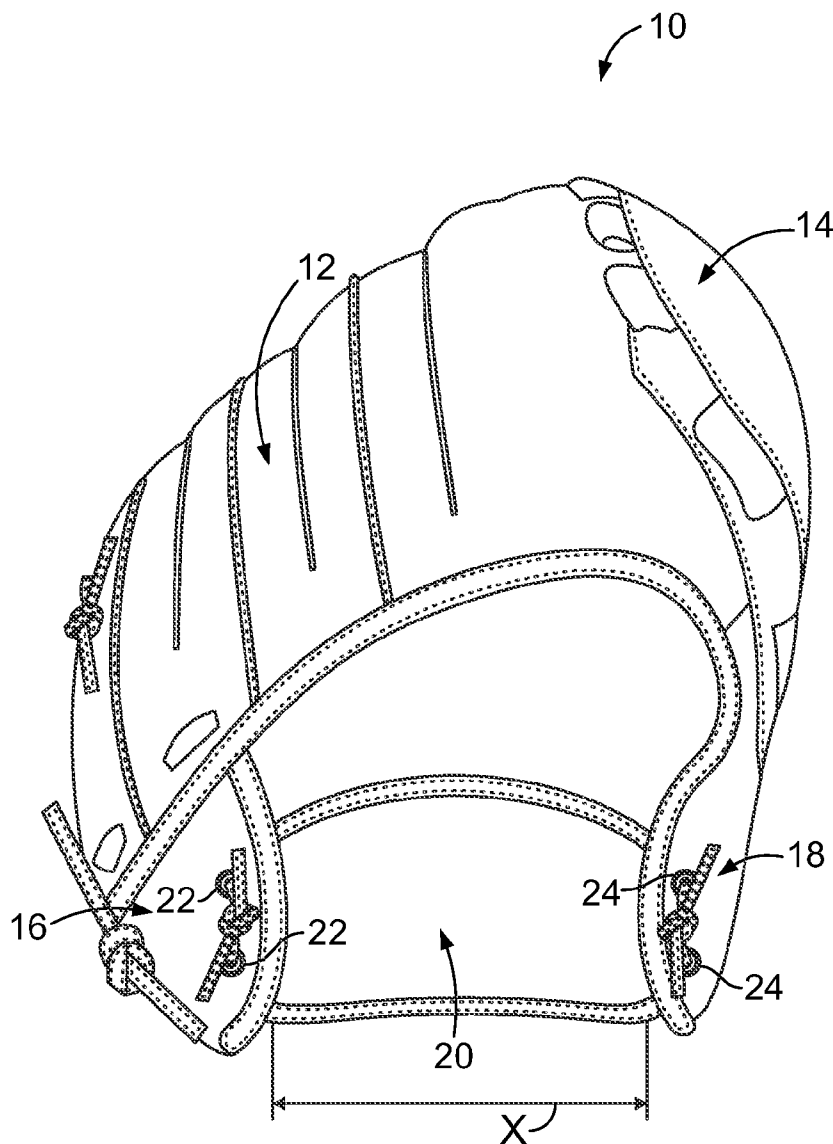
A ball glove includes a rear strap or back strap that is adjustable to accommodate different hand configurations and sizes. The back strap includes multiple spaced apart openings, or sets of openings, through which one or more laces or other connecting elements may be threaded. A user may adjust the length of the back strap by threading the laces through the openings that yield the best strap-length for his or her hand or wrist. The back strap optionally includes a top portion and a bottom portion that are detachably connected to each other, such that the top portion may be replaced with a different top portion embroidered with—or otherwise displaying—a wearer's jersey number, team logo, or other desired feature.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/081,002**

(22) Filed: **Apr. 6, 2011**

**Publication Classification**

(51) **Int. Cl.**  
**A41D 13/08** (2006.01)



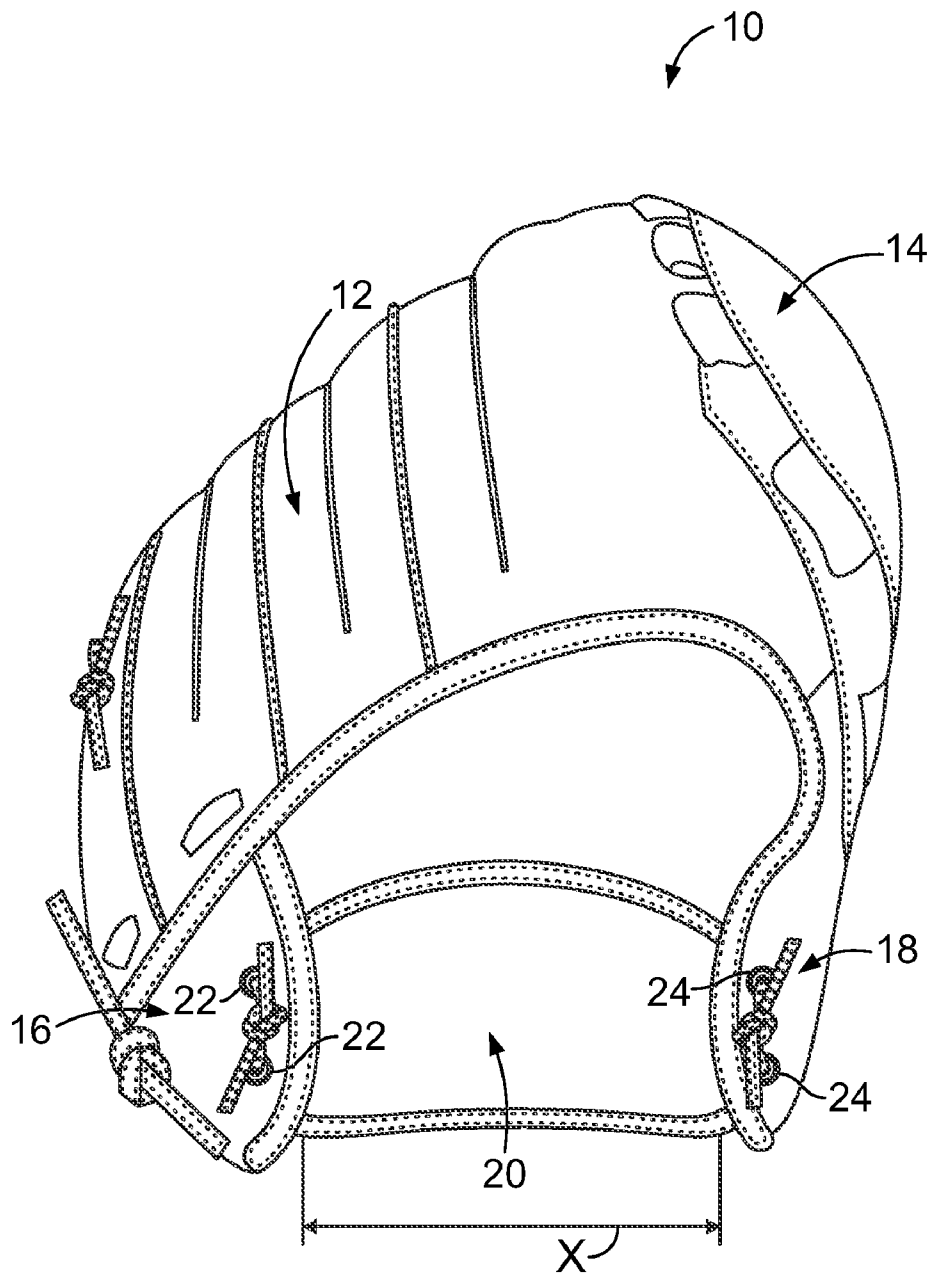
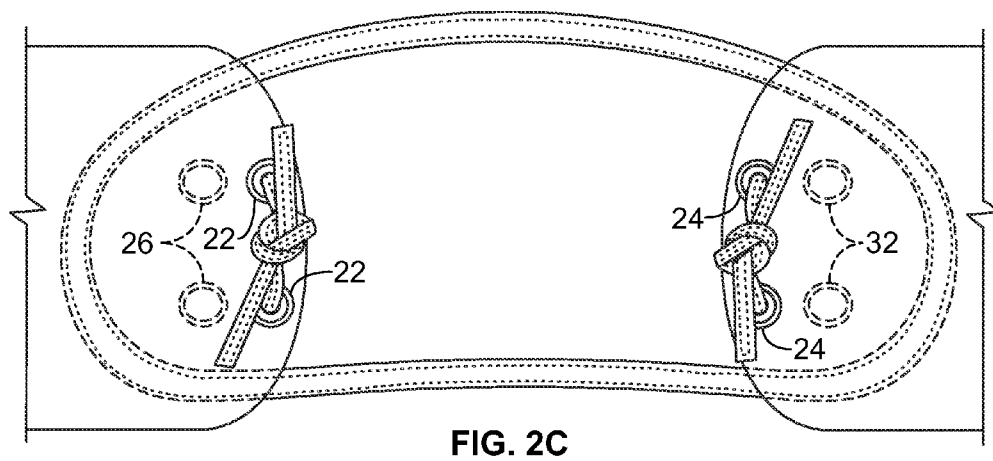
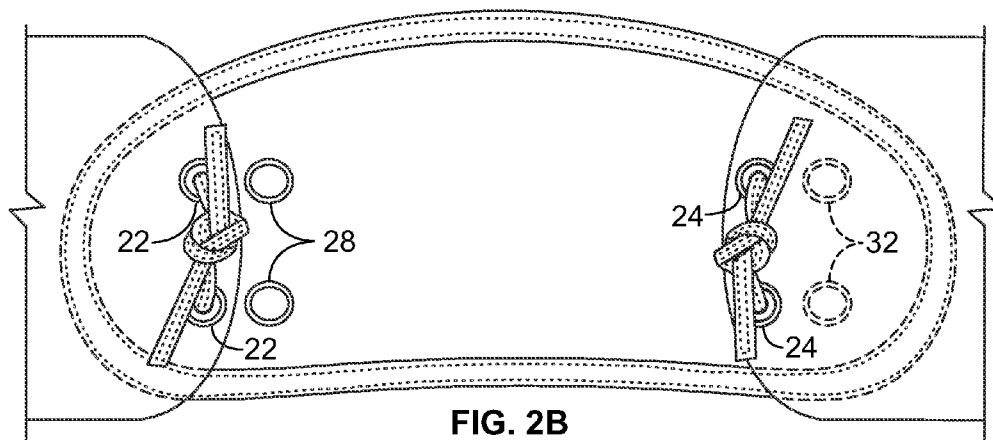
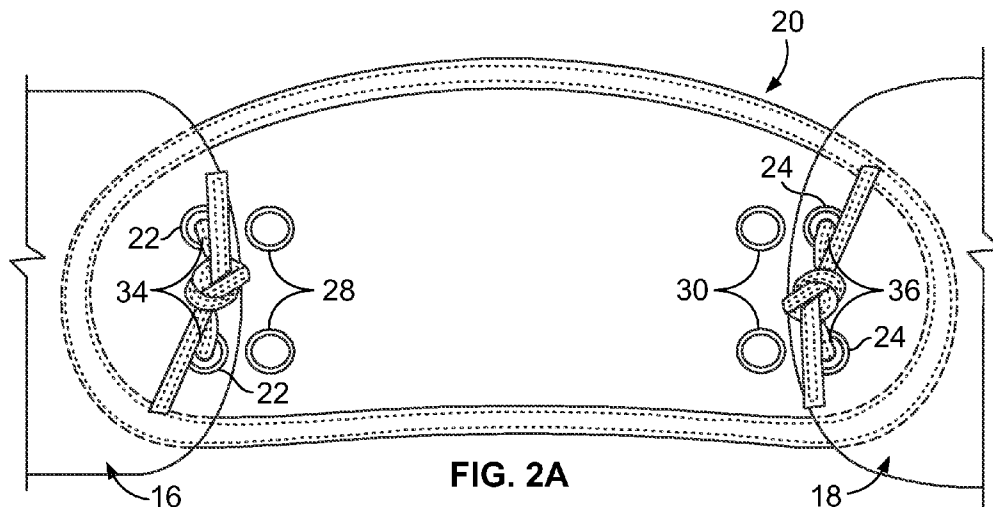


FIG. 1



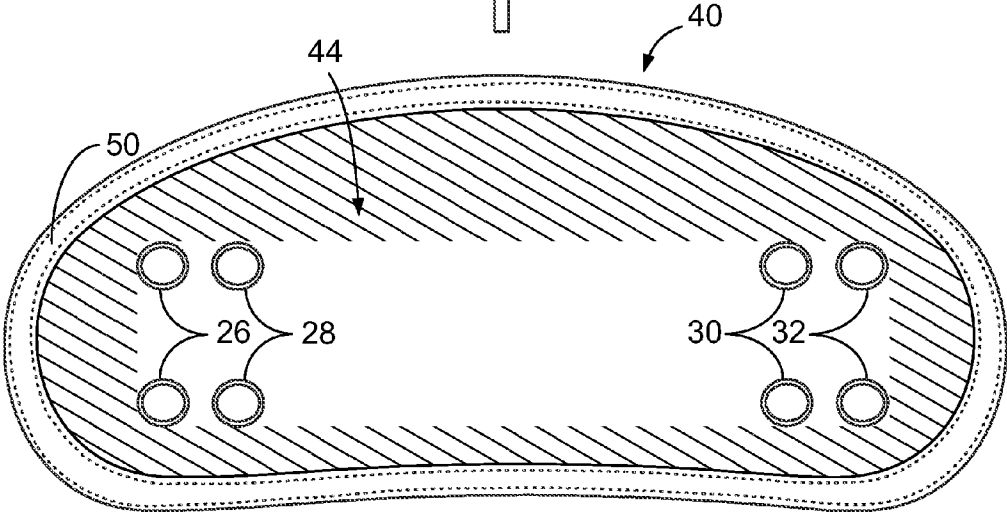
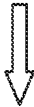
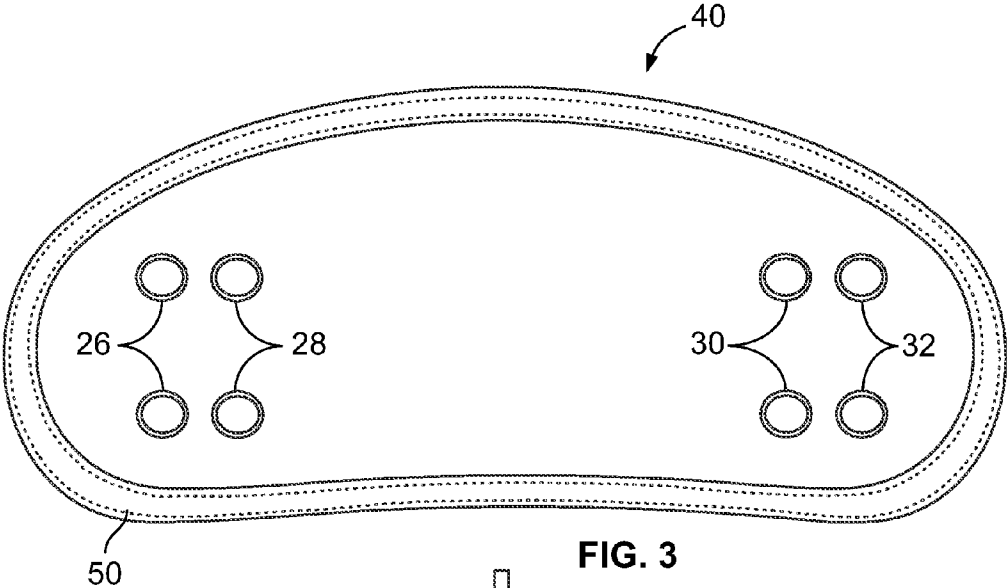


FIG. 4

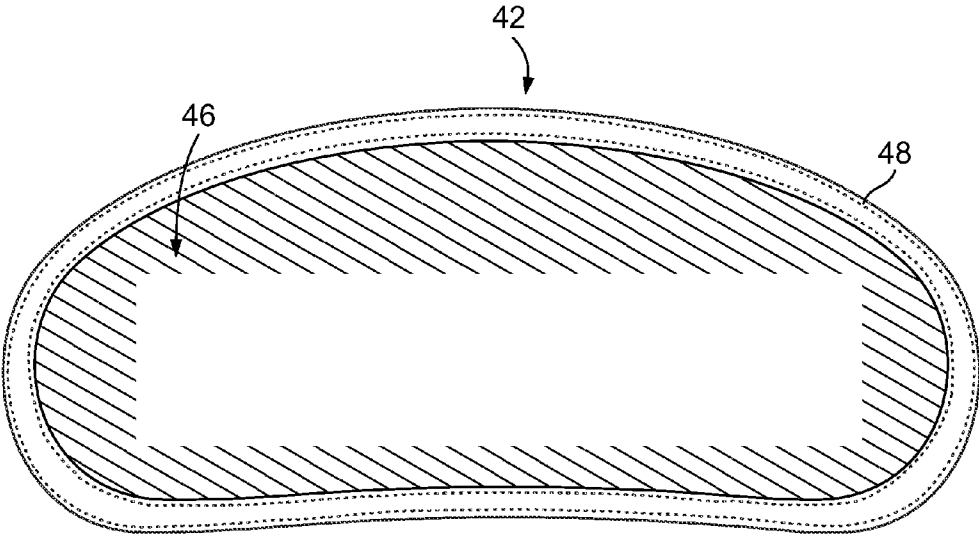


FIG. 5

**BALL GLOVE WITH ADJUSTABLE AND CUSTOMIZABLE STRAP**

**BACKGROUND**

[0001] For baseball and softball players, it is important for a ball glove or mitt to fit comfortably and relatively snugly. Baseball and softball gloves (collectively referred to herein as “ball gloves”) generally include a pocket, finger and thumb receiving portions, a web, and a back strap that covers at least a portion of the back of a player’s hand or wrist. When a player catches a ball, the back of the glove absorbs much of the stress. Thus, it is important for the back strap to fit properly and securely.

[0002] Due to the variations in wearers’ hand sizes and configurations, a ball glove that properly fits over a given wearer’s fingers and thumb may be too loose or too tight for the wearer in the back strap region. Similarly, a ball glove that fits a given wearer properly in the back strap region may not fit properly over the wearer’s fingers and thumb. Thus, many ball players wear ball gloves that do not properly or comfortably fit their hands.

**SUMMARY**

[0003] A ball glove includes a back strap that is adjustable to accommodate different hand configurations and sizes. The back strap includes laterally spaced openings, or sets of openings, through which one or more laces or other connecting elements may be threaded. A wearer may adjust the length of the back strap by threading the laces through the openings that yield the best strap-length for his or her hand or wrist.

[0004] The back strap optionally includes a top portion and a bottom portion that are detachably connected to each other, such that the top portion may be replaced with a different top portion embroidered with—or otherwise displaying—a wearer’s name, jersey number, team logo, or other desired feature. Other features and advantages will appear hereinafter. The features described above can be used separately or together, or in various combinations of one or more of them.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0005] In the drawings, wherein the same reference number indicates the same element throughout the views:

[0006] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a ball glove including an adjustable back strap, according to one embodiment.

[0007] FIGS. 2A-2C are diagrammatic views showing an adjustable back strap in large, medium, and small configurations, respectively, according to one embodiment.

[0008] FIG. 3 is a top view of an upper section of a two-piece adjustable back strap, according to one embodiment.

[0009] FIG. 4 is a bottom view of the upper section shown in FIG. 3.

[0010] FIG. 5 is a top view of a lower section of the two-piece adjustable back strap, according to one embodiment.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0011] Various embodiments of the invention will now be described. The following description provides specific details for a thorough understanding and enabling description of these embodiments. One skilled in the art will understand, however, that the invention may be practiced without many of these details. Additionally, some well-known structures or

functions may not be shown or described in detail so as to avoid unnecessarily obscuring the relevant description of the various embodiments.

[0012] The terminology used in the description presented below is intended to be interpreted in its broadest reasonable manner, even though it is being used in conjunction with a detailed description of certain specific embodiments of the invention. Certain terms may even be emphasized below; however, any terminology intended to be interpreted in any restricted manner will be overtly and specifically defined as such in this detailed description section.

[0013] Where the context permits, singular or plural terms may also include the plural or singular term, respectively. Moreover, unless the word “or” is expressly limited to mean only a single item exclusive from the other items in a list of two or more items, then the use of “or” in such a list is to be interpreted as including (a) any single item in the list, (b) all of the items in the list, or (c) any combination of items in the list.

[0014] Turning now in detail to the drawings, as shown in FIG. 1, in one embodiment, a ball glove 10 includes a main body having a palm region or pocket (not shown), at least one finger-receiving portion 12 extending from the pocket, a thumb-receiving portion (not shown) extending from the pocket, and a web 14 between the finger and thumb-receiving portions. Depending on the type of ball glove (e.g., a standard fielder’s glove, a first baseman’s glove, a catcher’s glove, etc.), the glove may include one to four finger-receiving portions, each for receiving one or more of a player’s fingers.

[0015] A first rear portion 16 extends in a substantially longitudinal direction directly or indirectly from one or more of the finger-receiving portions 12 of the main body. A second rear portion 18 extends substantially in a longitudinal direction directly or indirectly from the thumb portion or from the web 14 of the main body. A rear strap or back strap 20 extends laterally between the first rear portion 16 and the second rear portion 18. The various components of the ball glove may be made of a leather material or of another suitable material. Internal padding is preferably included in the pocket and in the finger-receiving and thumb-receiving regions of the ball glove, as well as in any other desired regions. Laces, stitches, or other suitable elements are used to close the leather or other material around the padding.

[0016] The first rear portion 16 and the second rear portion 18 each include at least one opening through which a lace, string, cord, or other connecting element may pass. For ease of description, laces will be referenced throughout this description but any suitable connecting elements may be used. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 1, the first rear portion 16 includes a set of two openings 22, and the second rear portion 18 includes a set of two openings 24. A greater or lesser number of openings may be included in the first and second rear portions 16, 18.

[0017] As shown in FIGS. 2A-2C, the back strap 20 includes multiple sets of openings that are alignable with the openings in the first and second rear portions 16, 18. (The first and second rear portions 16, 18 are shown as transparent so that the openings in the back strap 20 are visible.) In the illustrated embodiment, the back strap 20 includes a first outer set of openings 26 and a first inner set of openings 28 at a first end of the strap 20, and a second outer set of openings 30 and a second inner set of openings 32 at a second end of the strap 20.

[0018] In FIG. 2A, the back strap 20 is attached in a loose or large position. One or more laces 34 pass through the openings 22 in the first rear portion 16 and through the corresponding outer set of openings 26 at the first end of the back strap 20. Similarly, one or more laces 36 pass through the openings 24 in the second rear portion 18 and through the corresponding outer set of openings 32 at the second end of the back strap 20.

[0019] In FIG. 2B, the back strap 20 is attached in a medium position. As in the large configuration shown in FIG. 2A, one or more laces 34 pass through the openings 22 in the first rear portion 16 and through the corresponding outer set of openings 26 at the first end of the back strap 20. The one or more laces 36, however, pass through the openings 24 in the second rear portion 18 and through the corresponding inner set of openings 30 at the second end of the back strap 20. Thus, a distance X between the first and second rear portions 16, 18 is shortened—relative to the large position shown in FIG. 2A—by the distance between the outer set of openings 32 and the inner set of openings 30.

[0020] In FIG. 2C, the back strap 20 is attached in a tight or small position. In this position, one or more laces 34 pass through the openings 22 in the first rear portion 16 and through the corresponding inner set of openings 28 at the first end of the back strap 20. Similarly, the one or more laces 36 pass through the openings 24 in the second rear portion 18 and through the corresponding inner set of openings 30 at the second end of the back strap 20. Thus, the distance between the first and second rear portions 16, 18 is shortened—relative to the medium position shown in FIG. 2B—by the distance between the outer set of openings 26 and the inner set of openings 28.

[0021] In any of the positions shown in FIGS. 2A-2C, the laces 34, 36 may be used only to secure the back strap 20 to the first and second rear portions 16, 18, or they may pass through additional openings or regions of the ball glove 10. In either case, the ends of the laces 34, 36 are tied or knotted (or otherwise secured) so that the laces 34, 36 are prevented from being pulled back through the openings. In this manner, the laces 34, 36 secure the back strap 20 to the first and second rear portions 16, 18.

[0022] The lateral spacing between the openings or sets of openings—as well as the number of laterally spaced openings or sets of openings—in the back strap 20 may be varied to meet the sizing goals for a given glove. (The longitudinal spacing between openings within a set may be varied as desired, as well.) In one embodiment, the inner and outer openings at each end of the back strap 20 may be spaced from each other by approximately 0.5 inches, such that the effective length of the back strap 20 is approximately 0.5 inches shorter in the medium position than in the large position, and approximately 0.5 inches shorter in the small position than in the medium position. In one embodiment of a men's baseball glove, for example, the distance X between the first and second rear portions 16, 18 may be approximately 4.5 inches in the large configuration, 4.0 inches in the medium configuration, and 3.5 inches in the small configuration. Additional laterally spaced openings or sets of openings may be included in the back strap 20 or in the first or second rear portions 16, 18 to provide additional sizing options.

[0023] In one embodiment, for example, at least one of the first and second rear portions 16, 18 may include two or more openings or sets of openings laterally spaced from each other to provide additional or alternative back strap attachment

positions. In this embodiment, the back strap 20 optionally may include only one opening or one set of openings at a single lateral position, or may include a greater number of openings or sets of openings at multiple lateral positions. Any combination of openings in the first and second rear portions 16, 18 and in the back strap 20 may be provided to achieve a desired number of attachment positions, and, therefore, a desired number of effective back strap sizes.

[0024] The inclusion of laterally spaced openings in the back strap 20 or in the first and second rear portions 16, 18 allows a player to adjust the effective length of the back strap 20 and to secure it in a comfortable position over the back of the wearer's hand or wrist. Thus, the back strap 20 can be fitted properly to a variety of hand sizes, allowing it to effectively absorb the stress produced by a ball impacting the glove during a catch without concern for the strap loosening.

[0025] As shown in FIGS. 3-5, in one embodiment, the back strap 20 includes a top portion 40 detachably connected to a bottom portion 42. The top portion 40 includes the openings 26, 28, 30, 32 through which the laces 34, 36 may pass to secure the back strap 20 to the first and second rear portions 16, 18. In one embodiment, the bottom surface of the top portion 40 includes a fastener 44 for attaching the top portion 40 to the bottom portion 42. The fastener 44 may be hooks or loops for attaching to a corresponding fastener 46 of loops or hooks (e.g., Velcro®) on the bottom portion 42, or may be any other suitable fastener.

[0026] The bottom portion 42 may additionally or alternatively include openings through which the laces may pass to connect the bottom portion 42 to the top portion 40. The use of a hook-and-loop fastener (or of another fastener that does not require unthreading of laces) may be preferable for a player who regularly removes the bottom portion 44 for cleaning or for other reasons.

[0027] A binding 48 around the perimeter of the bottom portion 42 optionally is made of a relatively soft material, such as polyester, for example, so that it is comfortable against the back of a player's hand or wrist. A binding 50 around the perimeter of the top portion 40, conversely, may be made of a relatively stiff material, such as leather. Alternatively, the bottom binding 48 and the top binding 50 may each be made of a relatively soft or relatively stiff material. The lower surface of the bottom portion 42 may include a wicking material or similar material to help keep the back of the player's hand cool and dry.

[0028] In one embodiment, the upper surface of the top portion 40 may be embroidered or otherwise adorned with a company logo or other indicia. A player who wishes to personalize the top portion 40 may have a blank replacement upper portion (which may be included with the ball glove) embroidered or otherwise adorned with personalized information, such as the player's name, number, team name, position, and so forth. The replacement upper portion may be attached to the first and second rear portions 16, 18 via the laces 34, 36, and the bottom portion 42 may be attached to the replacement upper portion via the hook-and-loop fastener or other fastener. Thus, the two-piece strap offers customizability, and only the top portion of the strap must be replaced to personalize the strap.

[0029] Any of the above-described embodiments may be used alone or in combination with one another. For example, the ball glove may include a one-piece or two-piece adjustable back strap. Furthermore, the ball glove may include additional features not described herein. While several

embodiments have been shown and described, various changes and substitutions may of course be made, without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. The invention, therefore, should not be limited, except by the following claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

- 1. A ball glove, comprising:
  - a pocket;
  - a finger-receiving portion extending from the pocket;
  - a thumb-receiving portion extending from the pocket;
  - a web between the finger-receiving portion and the thumb-receiving portion;
  - a first rear portion extending from the finger-receiving portion, the first rear portion including at least one first rear opening;
  - a second rear portion extending from the thumb portion or from the web, the second rear portion including at least one second rear opening;
  - a back strap including:
    - a first end region having at least a first loose-fit opening and a first tight-fit opening; and
    - a second end region having at least a second loose-fit opening and a second tight-fit opening;
 wherein the first end region of the back strap is connected to the first rear portion via a first connecting element passing through the first rear opening and through one of the first loose-fit opening and the first tight-fit opening, and wherein the second end region of the back strap is connected to the second rear portion via a second connecting element passing through the second rear opening and through one of the second loose-fit opening and the second tight-fit opening.
- 2. The ball glove of claim 1 wherein the first end region and the second end region of the back strap each include at least two loose-fit openings and at least two tight-fit openings.
- 3. The ball glove of claim 2 wherein the first rear portion includes at least two first rear openings alternatively alignable with the at least two loose-fit openings and the at least two tight-fit openings in the first end region, and the second rear portion includes at least two second rear openings alternatively alignable with the at least two loose-fit openings and the at least two tight-fit openings in the second end region.
- 4. The ball glove of claim 2 wherein, in the first end region and in the second end region, the loose-fit openings are spaced from the tight-fit openings by approximately 0.5 inches.
- 5. The ball glove of claim 1 wherein the back strap comprises a top portion detachably connected to a bottom portion.
- 6. The ball glove of claim 5 wherein the top portion of the back strap includes the first and second loose-fit openings and the first and second tight-fit openings.
- 7. The ball glove of claim 5 wherein the top portion is detachably connected to the bottom portion via a hook-and-loop fastener.
- 8. The ball glove of claim 1 wherein the first and second connecting elements comprise one or more laces.
- 9. A ball glove, comprising:
  - a pocket;
  - a finger-receiving portion extending from the pocket;
  - a thumb-receiving portion extending from the pocket;
  - a web between the finger-receiving portion and the thumb-receiving portion;

- a first rear portion extending from the finger-receiving portion, the first rear portion including at least one opening;
  - a second rear portion extending from the thumb portion or from the web, the second rear portion including at least one opening;
  - a back strap extending laterally between and connected to the first rear portion and the second rear portion via at least one lace, with the back strap including a first end region having at least one opening configured to receive a lace, and a second end region having at least one opening configured to receive a lace;
- wherein at least one of the first rear portion, the second rear portion, the first end region, and the second end region includes at least two laterally spaced openings configured to alternatively receive a lace, with one of the at least two openings positioned to provide a first fit when a lace passes through it, and another of the at least two openings positioned to provide a tighter fit than the first fit when a lace passes through it.
- 10. The ball glove of claim 9 wherein the first end region and the second end region of the back strap each include at least two laterally spaced openings.
  - 11. The ball glove of claim 10 wherein the first end region and the second end region of the back strap each include at least two sets of laterally spaced openings.
  - 12. The ball glove of claim 9 wherein the first rear portion and the second rear portion each include at least two laterally spaced openings.
  - 13. The ball glove of claim 12 wherein the first rear portion and the second rear portion each include at least two sets of laterally spaced openings.
  - 14. The ball glove of claim 9 wherein only one of the first end region and the second end region of the back strap includes at least two laterally spaced openings.
  - 15. The ball glove of claim 9 wherein only one of the first rear portion and the second rear portion includes at least two laterally spaced openings.
  - 16. The ball glove of claim 9 wherein the back strap comprises a top portion detachably connected to a bottom portion.
  - 17. The ball glove of claim 16 wherein the top portion of the back strap includes the openings in the back strap.
  - 18. A ball glove, comprising:
    - a main body including at least one finger-receiving portion, a thumb-receiving portion, and a web;
    - a first rear portion extending from the main body;
    - a second rear portion extending from the main body;
    - a back strap extending laterally between and connected to the first rear portion and the second rear portion via at least one connecting element passing through openings in the back strap, the first rear portion, and the second rear portion;
 wherein at least one of the first rear portion, the second rear portion, and the back strap includes at least two laterally spaced openings configured to alternatively receive the at least one connecting element such that a lateral distance between the first rear portion and the second rear portion is adjustable.
  - 19. The ball glove of claim 18 wherein the back strap comprises a top portion detachably connected to a bottom portion.
  - 20. The ball glove of claim 19 wherein the top portion of the back strap includes the openings in the back strap.