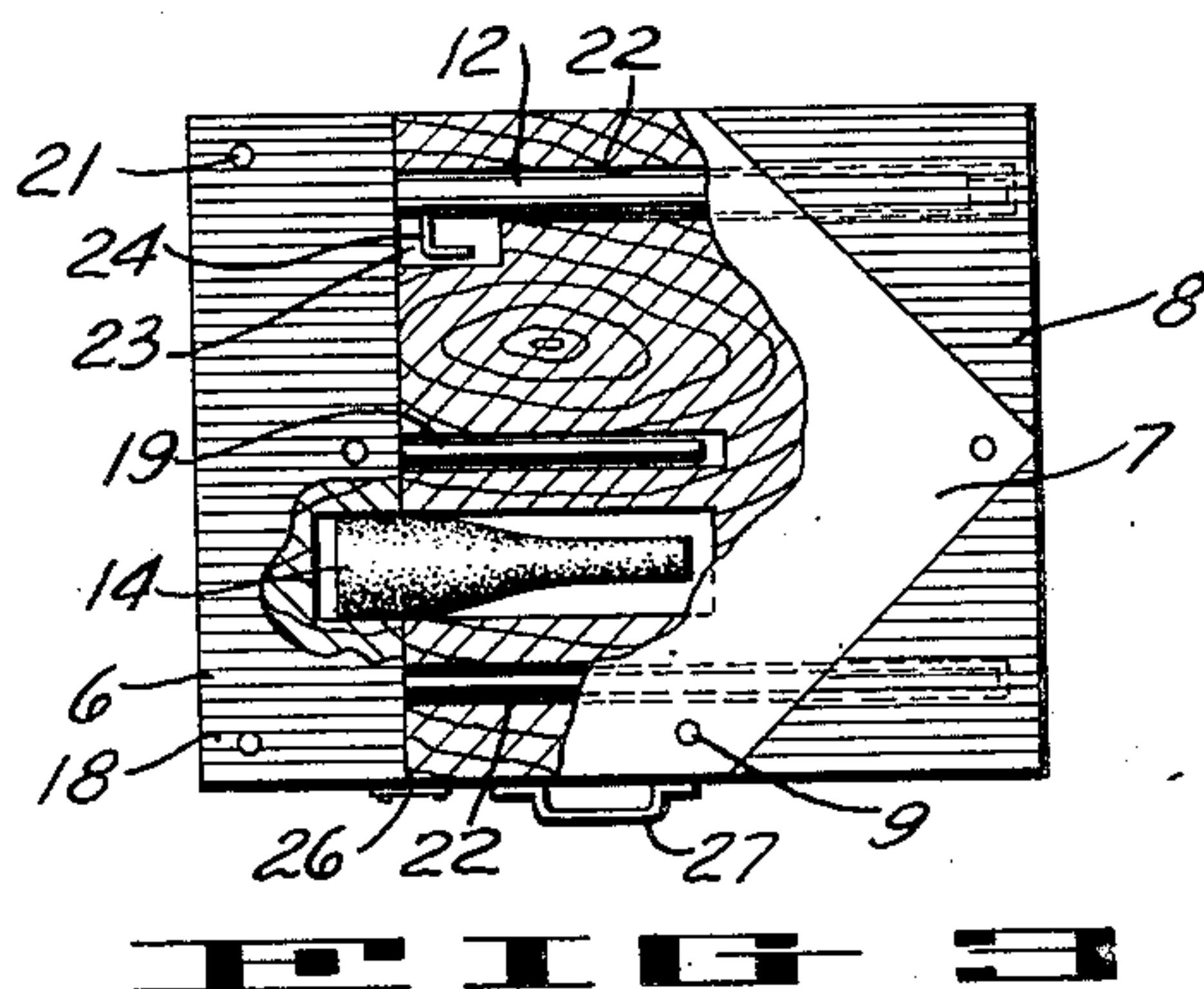
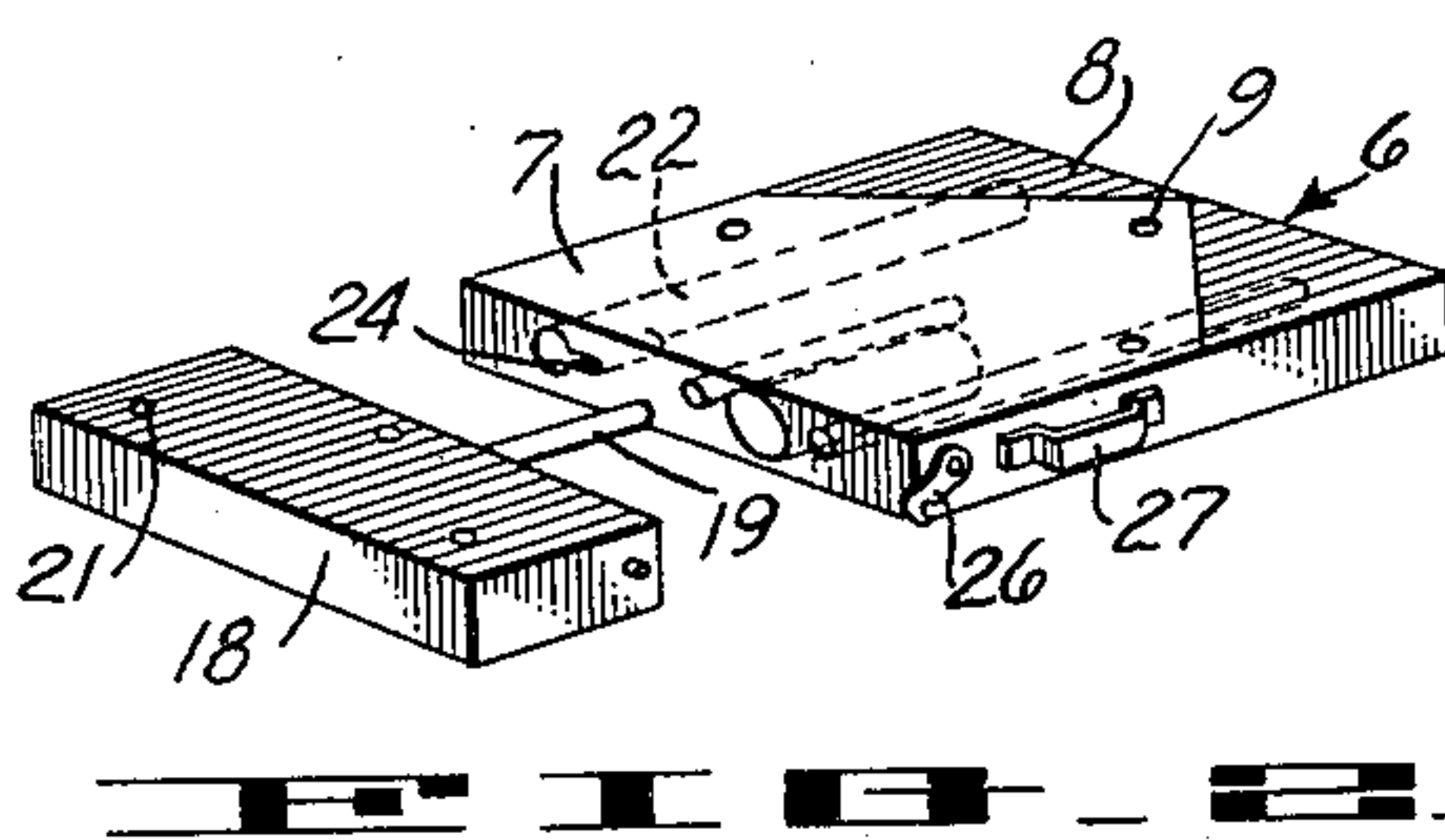
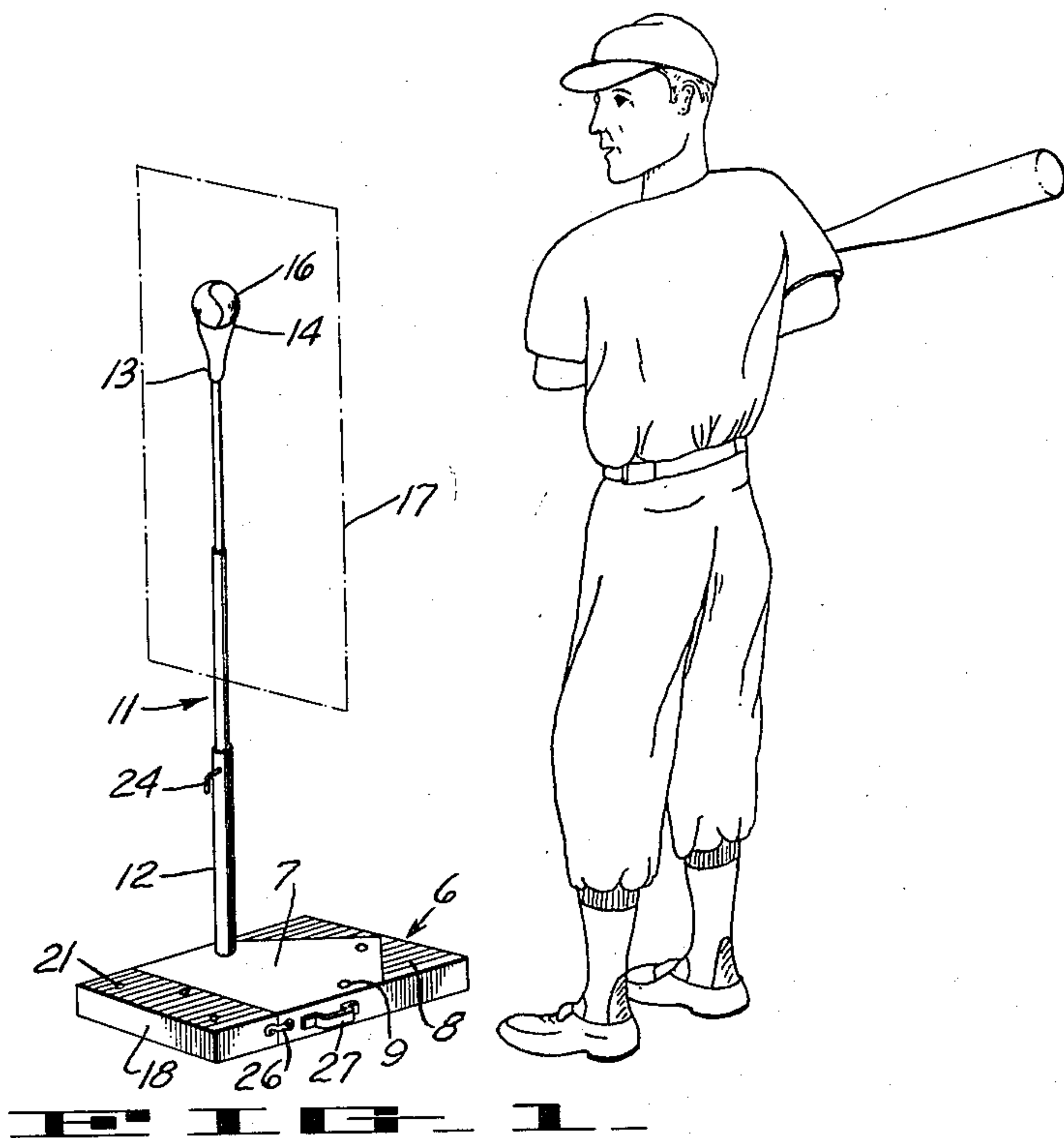


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BASEBALL PRACTICE APPARATUS

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## UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

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## BASEBALL PRACTICE APPARATUS

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This invention relates to apparatus by means of which training in the perfection of striking swings, with implements such as baseball bats, may be achieved.

An object of the invention is to provide, in apparatus of the character described, separate objects, one of which may be a principal target, which respectively come within the purview of the user, regardless of which object may be the subject of direct gaze, so as to approximate distractions as exist under actual playing conditions.

Another object of the invention is to provide a device of the nature referred to in which the user may selectively locate the visible objects, including the principal target to suit his individual requirements or to provide an arrangement most conducive to the correction of a faulty swing or the improvement of swing rhythm and to improve the ability to make the target object and the swing implement, such as the bat, meet properly in the course of the swinging stroke.

A further object of the invention is to provide apparatus of the class described in which the target and other associated objects are reproduced in their full sizes and are disposed as encountered under actual game conditions so as to afford the user exercise of his faculties of visual depth perception and to perfect his accuracy in properly striking the target element with the bat.

The invention possesses other objects and features of advantage, some of which, with the foregoing, will be set forth in the following description of the preferred form of the invention which is illustrated in the drawing accompanying and forming part of the specification. It is to be understood, however, that variations in the showing made by the said drawings and descriptions may be adopted within the scope of the invention as set forth in the claims.

Referring to the drawing:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the apparatus of our invention set up for use.

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the base structure showing the same in extended position.

Figure 3 is a top plan view of the base structure showing some of the apparatus parts packed therein. A portion of the view is broken away and shown in horizontal section so as to more clearly disclose the internal construction.

In setting forth our invention we have chosen to describe it, in terms of structure, as it pertains to the game of baseball but it will become apparent to those skilled in the art as the de-

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scription proceeds that the principle may be applied to other sports and games as well.

We provide a supporting base structure 6 preferably of rectangular form and of an equivalent width and length to approximate the corresponding dimensions of the regulation home plate used in the game of baseball, the exact form of the aforesaid home plate being designated on the upper surface of the base structure 6 by an area 7 delineated in white paint the remaining areas 8 of the upper surface being painted green or buff to simulate the grass or dirt areas found around home plate on the average baseball diamond. The base structure may be of solid or cellular construction, being in either case preferably composed of wood, and possessed of sufficient weight to give the structure a desired degree of positional stability when placed upon the ground or other supporting surface such as a gymnasium floor. Such weight may be afforded in the base structure by making the latter sufficiently thick vertically or, in the case of a hollow structure, by adding sand or other weighty material to the cells within the structure.

In the base structure 6 we provide a plurality of relatively dispersed, axially vertical sockets 9 in a selected one of which may be received an upwardly extending standard 11 which may be a unitary length of rod or tubing but which we prefer to construct of two or more sections 12 of tubing or axially bored rod sized to permit the telescopic engagement of adjacent sections so as to form an axially extended and aligned unit. Preferably, the respective sections are snugly interchangeable with each other and are suitably limited as to the degree of such engagement but it is also within the scope of the invention to provide, in each outermost member at the respective joints, a manually operable set-screw or other clamping device for securing adjacent sections of the standard together against relative separation and to establish lateral rigidity between the sections at the joints. The top end of the uppermost section 12 is adapted to telescopically engage the tubular stem member 13 of a target support having an integral cup-shaped head 14 associated therewith arranged to receive and support a free target piece 16 here shown as a spherical body sized and ornamented to represent a regulation baseball. It is preferred that the target support be constructed of rubber or other soft material which will not damage a bat or other implement when struck thereby and it is also preferred that the target piece be



constructed of knitted or otherwise wadded soft textile material so that in the event that the target piece is forcibly projected against a person or object, as the result of being struck by a bat or other game implement, injury will not be inflicted on the person or object by the target piece. Thus the apparatus may be safely used indoors without the danger of the target piece causing destructive damage.

The design and arrangement of the parts in the baseball practice apparatus illustrated are such that the user, in regulating the height of the standard 11 and placing the latter in any of the base structure sockets 9, may position the ball or target piece 16 as desired in relation to the area 7 designating home plate and also in relation to the regulation strike zone above the home plate as indicated by the dot-dash rectangle 17 of Figure 1. Thus a batter who, under actual game conditions, may be experiencing difficulty in properly hitting pitches delivered in certain areas of the strike zone or who may be desirous of correcting or improving swing rhythm or timing may, by concentrated practice with the apparatus of our invention, materially overcome his faults or deficiencies and measurably improve his accuracy and hitting ability. Such practice consists of nothing more than taking a proper stance adjacent the home plate area 7 of the base and, with his regulation bat, taking successive swings at the target piece 16 which he has previously positioned in the area in which he has the greatest trouble in properly meeting the ball with the bat. A feature of particular value lies in the fact that the ball 16 and the home plate 7 each stand out prominently in the players normal field of vision regardless of which object may be the subject of the player's direct gaze. This results in a close approximation of the visual field as it exists under actual game conditions and any distraction which the home plate image might cause and which might adversely affect timing or accuracy in the batter's swing will become apparent to him so that he may take proper measures or train himself to overcome the difficulty.

We have also provided means whereby the target piece 16 may be positioned in at a selected point in a zone outside of the area directly above the home plate area 7 so that a batter who may be desirous of developing the ability to meet the ball at a point ahead of home plate may derive beneficial practice by the use of the apparatus. As shown, we provide an auxiliary base structure 18 of a width and height corresponding to a side of the main base structure 6 which carries a rod 19 slidably engaged in a guide recess formed in a latter base structure so that the two sections may be brought together in aligned relationship as shown in Figure 1. The auxiliary structure 18 has therein a plurality of socket apertures 21 in which the standard 11 may be placed for support. As shown in Figure 2, the structure 18 may be positioned in advance of the base section bearing the designation of home plate and by engaging the standard 11 in a selected one of the sockets 21, the target ball 16 may be positioned as far in front of home plate as desired approximately registering with the paths of inside, outside or directly centered pitches. Thus the batter may avail himself of practice in swing timing or sighting to meet the ball ahead of the plate so as to "pull" the ball toward left or left-center fields. Such a set-up is valuable in correcting the faults of a batter who habitually

"pushes" the ball toward right field and which is indicative of tardiness in the swing.

The apparatus of our invention is capable of being disassembled and arranged in compact form so as to provide a readily portable and space-conserving unit. As shown in Figure 3, the main base structure 6 is provided with relatively spaced storage recesses 22 formed therein which preferably parallel the guide recess for the rod 19 and which open at the vertical face of the structure 6 over which the base section 18 lies when the latter is brought into engagement with the former. One of the recesses 22 is sized to completely receive one of the standard sections 12 while the other recess 22 is diametrically enlarged to receive a pair of relatively telescoped sections 12 and is further provided with a counter-recess 23 for receiving the clamping screw 24 of the outer section. When the standard sections are placed within the recesses 22, the base sections 6 and 18 are brought together in abutting relationship and secured by suitable releasable catches 26 bridging the abutment interstice. A carrying handle 27 secured preferably to the section 6 provides means for affording ready portability of the collapsed and interpacked unit as shown in Figure 3.

The device of our invention, as will be evident to those skilled in the art, is adapted to other games other than baseball wherein a ball may be struck by an implement such as a bat as, for instance, the game of tennis or the like in which the player is desirous of perfecting timing, swing precision or other characteristics of actual game play. The apparatus is also designed for use outdoors on a baseball or other field or indoors in the home, clubroom or gymnasium.

We claim:

1. A baseball game apparatus for perfecting game swinging strokes with a manually controlled striking implement, comprising a base having upper, bottom and side faces, said base having designated on part of its upper face an area representing home plate, a vertically adjustable standard detachably connected with and rising from said base to terminate in a zone between the user's knees and shoulders, a head piece carried by said standard having a recess therein for receiving and supporting a baseball in said zone, and a plurality of recesses in the upper face of said base within and in front of the home plate area, said recesses providing connecting means with a selected one of which said baseball standard may be connected to said base for variably positioning said baseball relative to said home plate.

2. A baseball game apparatus for perfecting game swinging strokes with a manually controlled striking implement comprising a base having two portions with upper, bottom and side faces, one portion being adjustably secured to the other portion for relative lateral movement thereof, said other portion having designated on its upper face an area representing home plate, a standard detachably connected with and rising from said base to terminate in a zone between the user's knees and shoulders, a head piece carried by said standard having a recess therein for receiving and supporting a baseball in said zone, and a plurality of recesses in the upper face of both portions of said base with a selected one of which said standard may be connected for variably positioning said standard relative to the home plate area thus enabling the user to assume a stance along the side faces



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of said base equivalent to that assumed in actual game play.

3. A baseball game apparatus for perfecting game swinging with a manually controlled striking implement, comprising a base including two members, one of said members having upper, bottom and side faces and having provided on the upper face thereof an area representing home plate, means connecting said member to the other of said base members for relative lateral adjustment thereof, standard receiving and supporting means on said other member, a vertically adjustable standard mounted on said supporting means and rising from said other member, a head piece carried by said standard for receiving and supporting a baseball and vertically movable with the standard for positioning the ball thereon in substantially any selected elevation between the user's knees and shoulders.

4. A baseball game apparatus for perfecting game swinging strokes with a manually controlled striking implement comprising a base having two portions with upper, bottom and side faces, one portion having designated on its upper face an area representing home plate, the other portion being adjustably secured in front of said area to the one portion for relative lateral movement thereof, a standard detachably connected with and rising from said base to terminate in a zone between the user's knees and shoulders, a head piece carried by said standard having a recess therein for receiving and supporting a baseball in said zone, and a plurality of recesses in the upper face of said other portion and in the upper face of said one portion within the home plate area with a selected one of which said standard may be connected for variably positioning said standard in front of or

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within the home plate area whereby the baseball is moved relative to said plate thus enabling the user to assume a stance along the side faces of said base equivalent to that assumed in actual game play.

5. A baseball game apparatus for perfecting game swinging strokes with a manually controlled striking implement, comprising a base having upper, bottom and side faces, said base having designated on its upper face an area representing home plate, a vertical standard detachably connected with and rising from said base to terminate in a zone between the user's knees and shoulders, the upper end of said standard having means for receiving and supporting a baseball in said zone, and a plurality of recesses in the upper face of said base within the home plate area, said recesses providing connecting means with a selected one of which said baseball standard may be connected to said base for variably positioning said baseball relative to said home plate.

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