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(54) **TOLF**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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A recreational toss golf game involving one to four members and a scoring method similar to the game of golf. A start flag and a target flag indicate the starting and ending positions of each round, with players tossing a large diameter ball from the starting flag towards the target flag. The player's ball that comes closest to the target flag scores the lowest for each round, and the player with the lowest combined score after all rounds is declared the winner. The game setup is modular and may be set up over different terrains or distances, depending on player preference and skill level. A full game may comprise any number of rounds up to 18, similar to a full round of golf. The game provides players with the joys of golf without requiring each player to invest time and money developing golf specific skills or paying for specialized equipment.

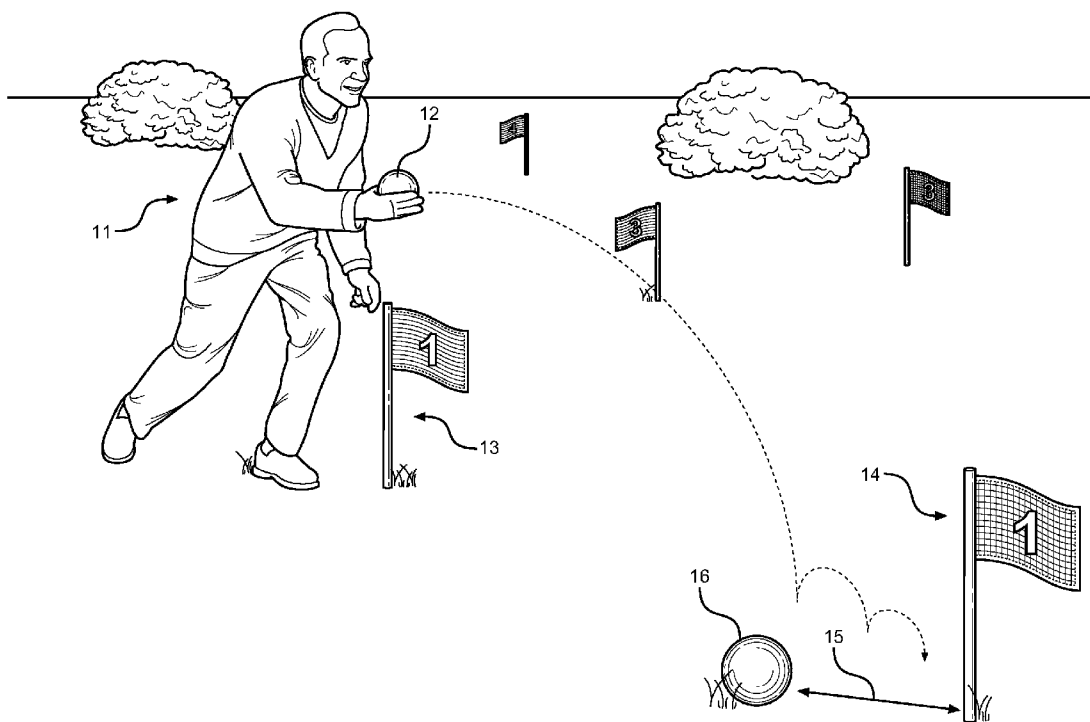
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TOLF

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 61/312,787 filed on Mar. 11, 2010, entitled "TOLF"

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to outdoor recreational games. More specifically, the present invention relates to a hand toss golf game with a scoring system that rewards hand toss accuracy and one that can be set up in any outdoor location.

[0004] 2. Description of the Prior Art

[0005] Several patents have been suggested in the art that describe hand toss recreation games with associated targets and rules of play. U.S. Pat. No. 5,575,483 to Dineen describes such a game, in which a transportable golf toss game is disclosed involving tossable bean bags and target receptacles. Several players compete to toss their bags into the receptacles in the least amount of tosses.

[0006] U.S. Published Patent Application 2004/0108652 to Vaden describes another toss game that involves tossing objects into opposing target receptacles. This game pits two opponents or teams of opponents against one another, with each team taking turns tossing their objects into the opposing team's receptacles. Like the Dineen patent, this game involves a receptacle and a scoring system that rewards sinking the tossed objects into the receptacle.

[0007] U.S. Pat. No. 6,367,797 to McKenna-Cress describes an alternative to the standard method of playing golf, wherein players utilize their hands to "flick" or "nudge" a rubber ball into a cup rather than using a golf club, putter and a traditional golf ball. The course is considerably shortened, and the level of skill is reduced to incorporate a broader range of players.

[0008] U.S. Published Patent Application 2007/0262518 to Lapinski describes an alternative set of rules for playing golf, in which golf equipment is combined with the rules of bocce ball. Players compete to putt a set of balls toward a target location. Each ball may be used to get closer to the target, to strike another ball in order to improve one's own ball relative to the target, or to knock an opposing player's ball farther from the target location. The closest ball is scored, along with any of the same player's balls next closest before encountering an opposing ball.

[0009] Each of the prior art patents describe games of varying difficulty, with differing elements and rules of play. They provide a fresh take on the rules and skills required to play a game similar to traditional golf. However, these patents differ from the disclosed invention in several ways, including the rules of play and the elements of the game. The disclosed invention, TOLF, is a hand-toss golf game with a start flag and target flag. One or more participants toss a large diameter ball from the start flag towards the target flag, with the goal of coming as close to the target flag as possible. A measuring tape is used to determine the shortest distance, especially in those situations where two opposing player's game balls are very close in distance to the target flag radially. One start and one target flag is provided for each round of the game, with the game lasting any number of rounds up to eighteen.

[0010] The closest ball to the target flag in any radial direction is given the lowest score per round, continuing outward from the target flag to the last player's ball. Scores are recorded and tallied after the each round, with the cumulative score being calculated after the final round. The player with the lowest overall score is crowned the winner. The intent of the game is to introduce players of all ages and skill levels to the joys of golf, while utilizing a simpler method of moving the ball along the course. The game eliminates the high degree of difficulty and amount of practice required to master the skills of golf, and invites players of all ages and skill levels to participate.

[0011] The games in the prior art also describe games in which objects are tossed toward a target, however most involve a receptacle in which the targets are required to enter before scoring can be calculated. Others require opposing teams that compete to fill a respective receptacle with a tossed object. The present invention describes a game of distance, which requires skill of tossing and consideration for the surface conditions during play. A cup or basket is not required for scoring purposes. The bocce golf game of Lapinski describes a distance game; however this game involves several balls which are putted using a traditional golf putter as opposed to a single object tossed toward a target by hand. While all of the prior art games introduce a fresh alternative to the outdoor game of golf, their rules, structure and game play differ from the disclosed invention.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0012] In view of the foregoing disadvantages inherent in the known types of hand toss games now present in the prior art, the present invention provides a new hand toss game wherein the same can be utilized for providing the user with an entertaining and modular game that can be enjoyed by players of all ages and skill levels.

[0013] It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide an entertaining hand toss game with rules similar to golf, in which distance from a target flag is measured to determine the most accurate player.

[0014] Another object of the present invention is to provide a game for one or more players, involving up to 18 rounds with a start flag and target flag, a tape measure for distance determination, and a scoring tablet for recording scores.

[0015] Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a game that incorporates the joys of playing a golf-type game without the rigid rules and specialized skills associated with its game play.

[0016] Other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTIONS OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] FIG. 1 shows a perspective view of the disclosed game in progress.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0018] Referring now to FIG. 1, there is shown a perspective view of the toss golf game in progress, wherein a player 11 tosses his game ball 12 from a start flag 13 toward a target flag 14, and the layout of a theoretical course is shown in the background. A start flag 13 and a target flag 14 are provided for each round of play, in which a plurality of players 11 toss

a game ball **12** towards the target flag in an attempt to have their ball **12, 16** settle closest to the target flag. The distance from the target flag **15** determines the accuracy of each player's toss, and determines the hierarchy of scoring between the participating members.

[0019] The toss golf game provides a set of eighteen start flags and eighteen target flags, which define rounds of play and are spread over a given outdoor area. The distance and terrain chosen for each round are determined by the players, and may vary depending on skill level and desired difficulty. Those terrains with mixed vegetation types or undulating playing surfaces may require increased skill to master, and may intrigue different types of players. While flat or homogeneous surfaces may be preferred by others. In this way, the game play can be enhanced or changed by choosing different locations and distances between flags to setup the game and boost competition between participants.

[0020] While playing, the players may choose different game play embodiments depending upon player preferences. These may include measuring the distance of each player's toss independently, and removing that toss from the playing surface prior to the next player making their attempt. Or the players may choose to allow collisions between game balls in order to alter the resting point of a previous player's toss. This embodiment of the rules may add or detract from game play, depending on player preference. Players may also restrict each other from hitting one another's game balls once those balls have been tossed onto the playing surface. Collisions in this embodiment of the game may constitute a foul. The foul could manifest itself in a distance penalty or other similar sanction. Not being able to hit another player's game ball increases difficulty for later-tossed game balls. Careful planning may be required and even involved trick shots that require side spin or backspin to limit surface roll during a toss. Height of toss may also be a consideration with these types of rules.

[0021] If a larger course is desired, the participants may elect an embodiment of the game that includes stroke play. In this embodiment, multiple tosses are required to reach the target flag. The spot of a previous toss becomes the start point of a player's next toss. This increases the complexity and length of each round. However, the preferred embodiment of the game includes eighteen rounds and one toss per round per player, and a measurement of distance from the target flag to determine scoring.

[0022] A tape measure and clipboard tablet are included with the game flags and balls, which are used to determine the distance of each player's toss from the target flag and tally the scores accordingly. The measurement is taken from the base of the target flag directly to the nearest game ball, in any radial direction with regard to the target flag. In the preferred embodiment of the game, the scoring is ranked in sequential order from closest to the farthest measurement. The closest tossed ball receives the lowest score, increasing as the distance of each ball increases radially from the target flag. At the end of each round, the scores are recorded on the tablet, and at the end of all rounds, the scores are calculated to determine the lowest cumulative score. The player with the lowest cumulative score is crowned first place, second lowest being second place, and so on.

[0023] The game may be played by any number of players, although one to four players is ideal. The order of play may be determined by the order of each player's toss from a previous round. For instance, for a given round, the player with the

lowest score will toss first in the next round, continuing downward from first place. The rules of order may also be updated to reflect the different embodiments of the rules. If players are permitted to knock each other's game balls on the pitch, then being last to toss may be the most advantageous. In this embodiment, the first place toss from one round may wish to go last in the next round. Alternatively, if the rules are set that each player may not contact other players' game balls on the pitch, it may be advantageous to toss first. In any embodiment, the first place toss from a previous round should gain the most advantageous starting point in the next round.

[0024] The game balls themselves are large diameter, weighted spheres that allow easy tossing for players of all ages. The balls may be smooth in nature or have a given texture, and the color of each ball may differ to allow differentiation between different players' game balls on the pitch. The exact size of the game balls may be several inches in diameter, and the interior structure may be of any suitable material to allow for adequate weight. The exterior shell of the balls may be constructed of a hard material to prevent denting of the ball when contacting hard surfaces or other game balls in play. The exact specification of the game balls may vary.

[0025] All items are stored in a convenient carrying bag, including the start flags and target flags, game balls and scoring tablet. This allows all aspects of the game set-up to be easily transported to a location that allows for the rounds of play to be placed over a large, open area.

[0026] Overall, the toss golf game, or "TOLF", is designed to attract all age groups and all skill levels to the traditional golf style game, in which players are rewarded for accuracy with respect to a given target. The game may be setup in any outdoor area, promoting exercise and outdoor activity without the rigidity and high skill level associated with the game of golf.

[0027] With respect to the above description then, it is to be realized that the optimum dimensional relationships for the parts of the invention, to include variations in size, materials, shape, form, function and manner of play, assembly and use, are deemed readily apparent and obvious to one skilled in the art, and all equivalent relationships to those illustrated in the drawings and described in the specification are intended to be encompassed by the present invention.

[0028] Therefore, the foregoing is considered as illustrative only of the principles of the invention. Further, since numerous modifications and changes will readily occur to those skilled in the art, it is not desired to limit the invention to the exact construction and operation shown and described, and accordingly, all suitable modifications and equivalents may be resorted to, falling within the scope of the invention.

I claim:

1) A method of playing a toss golf game, comprising the steps of:

placing a plurality of start flags and corresponding target flags on a playing surface to define a series of rounds of play;

taking turns between one or a plurality of players tossing a game ball from said start flag toward a said corresponding target flag;

measuring a radial distance from said target flag to said game ball of each said player;

using said distance to determine scoring between said players.

2) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said game ball is measured immediately after said toss and subsequently removed from said playing surface prior to a next player's toss.

3) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said game balls are kept on said playing surface between said turns, and each said player either attempts to toss said game ball closest to said target flag or attempts to knock an opponent's game ball farther from said target flag.

4) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said scoring is ordered from best to worst, corresponding to shortest to largest said radial distance from said target flag.

5) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said game balls are kept on said playing surface between said player's turns, and each player's game ball may not contact an opponent's game ball on said playing surface.

6) A method as recited in claim 5, wherein said contact is deemed a foul, and constitutes a penalty.

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