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(54) **GOLF CLUB COVER APPARATUS AND METHOD OF USE THEREOF**

(57) **ABSTRACT**

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The invention comprises a combination golf club head cover and a golf club head cover pocket configured to hold, transport and/or secure an object, such as a watch, wallet, key, music device, and/or personal item. Optionally, the golf club head cover is configured with an integrated music device or a replaceably attachable music device. For example, a golf club cover and/or a novelty golf club system is configured with one or more music projection elements, such as a power source, receiver, power transmittal line, music source receiver, integrated music source, connector for a replaceably attached music source, music transmittal line, user controller, amplifier, and/or speaker. The system allows a golfer to safely transport and enjoy a music device while playing a round of golf and/or to enjoy the same music source while in an indoor area and/or a refreshment area where a bulky golf bag is not readily transported.

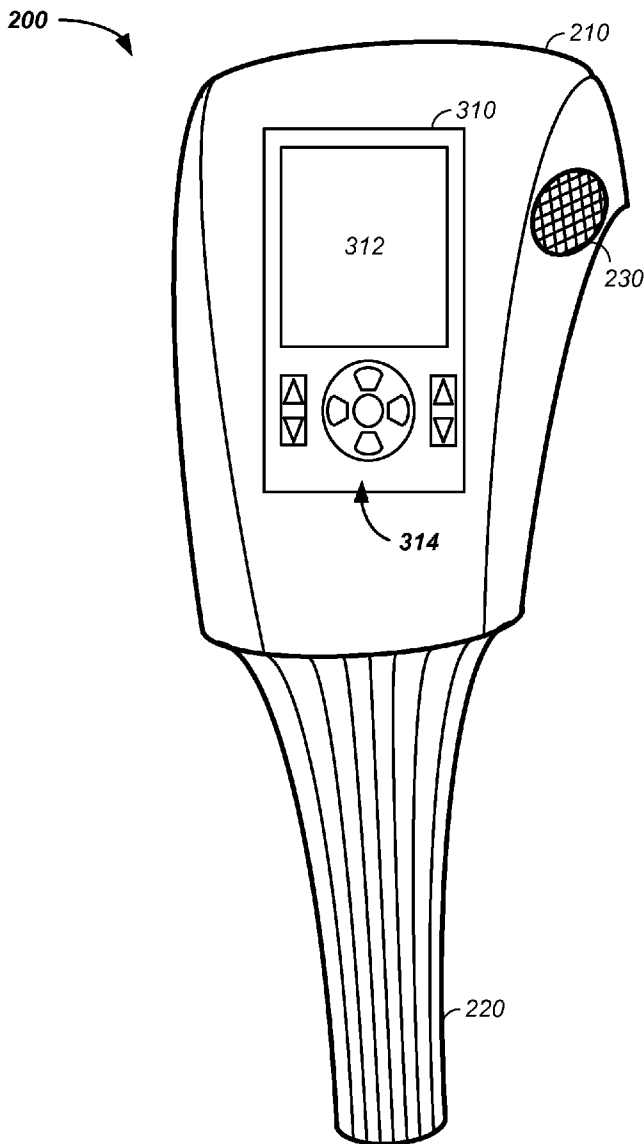
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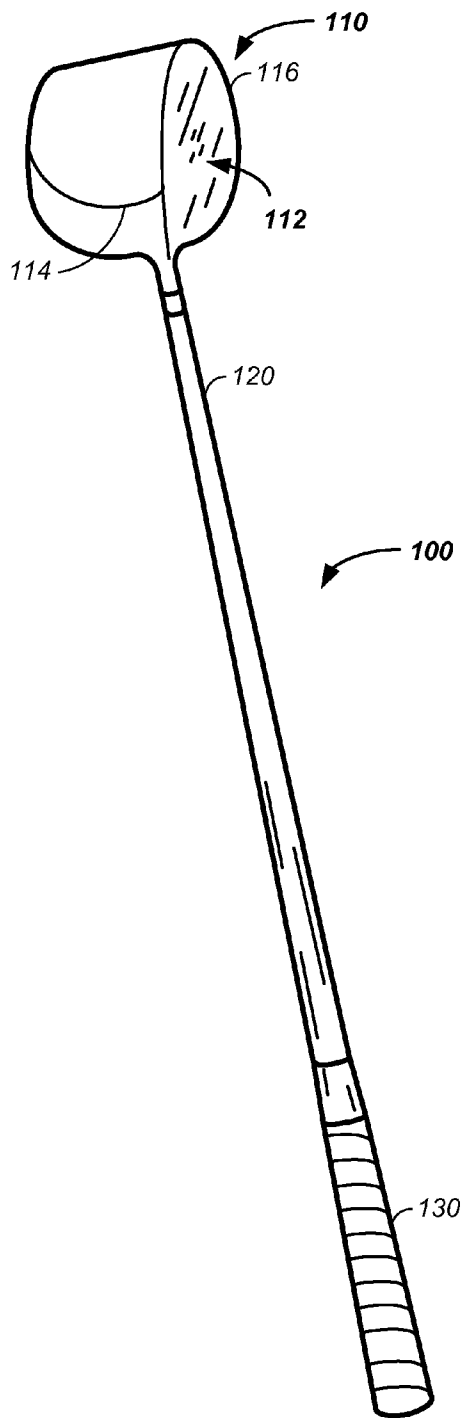


FIG. 1

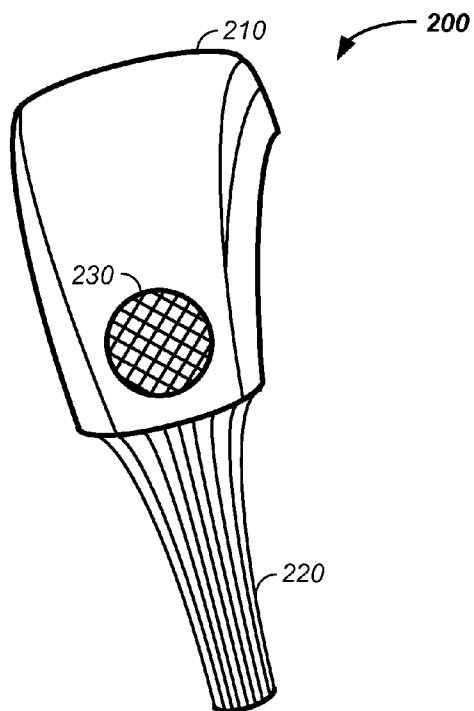


FIG. 2

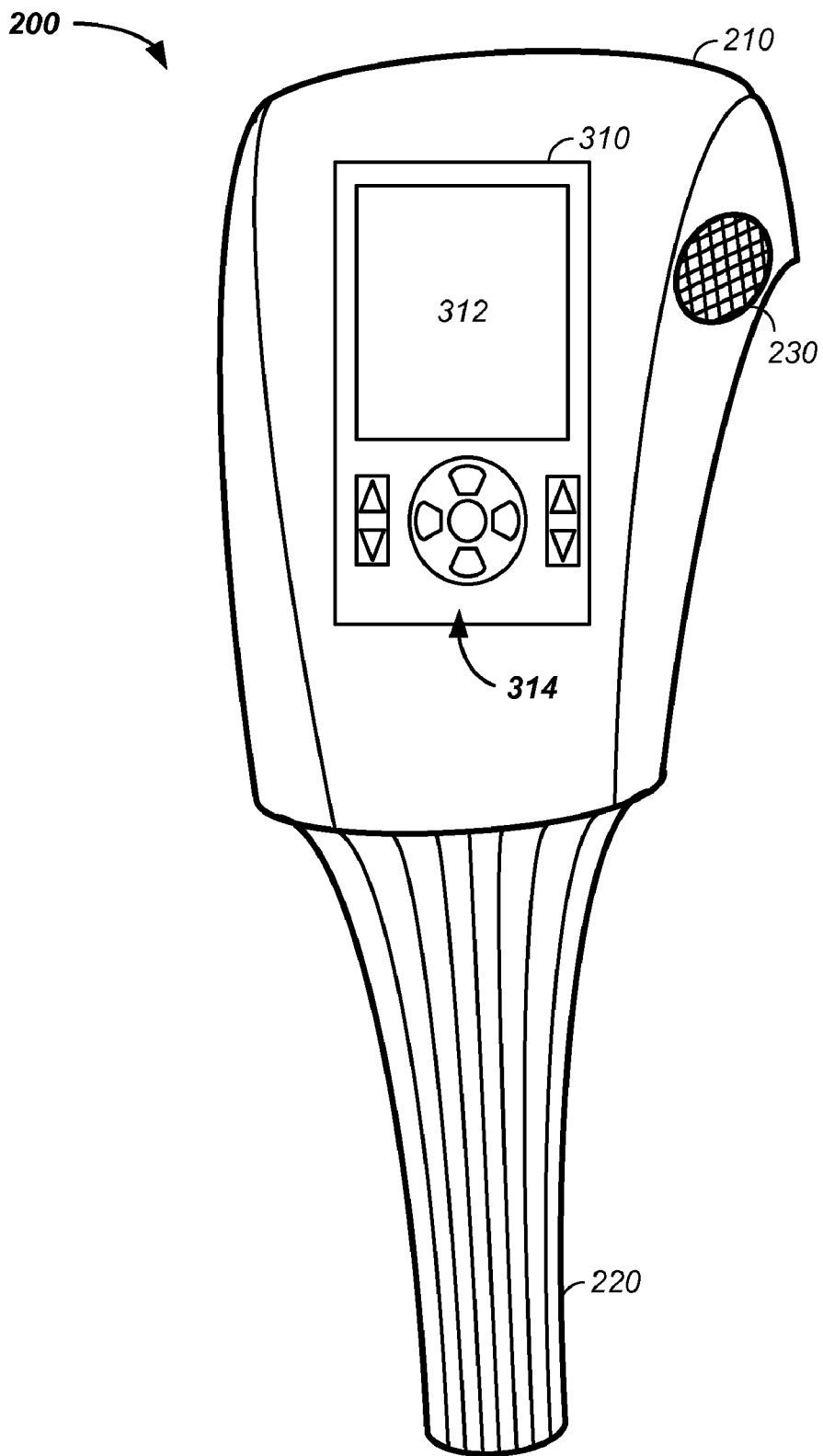


FIG. 3

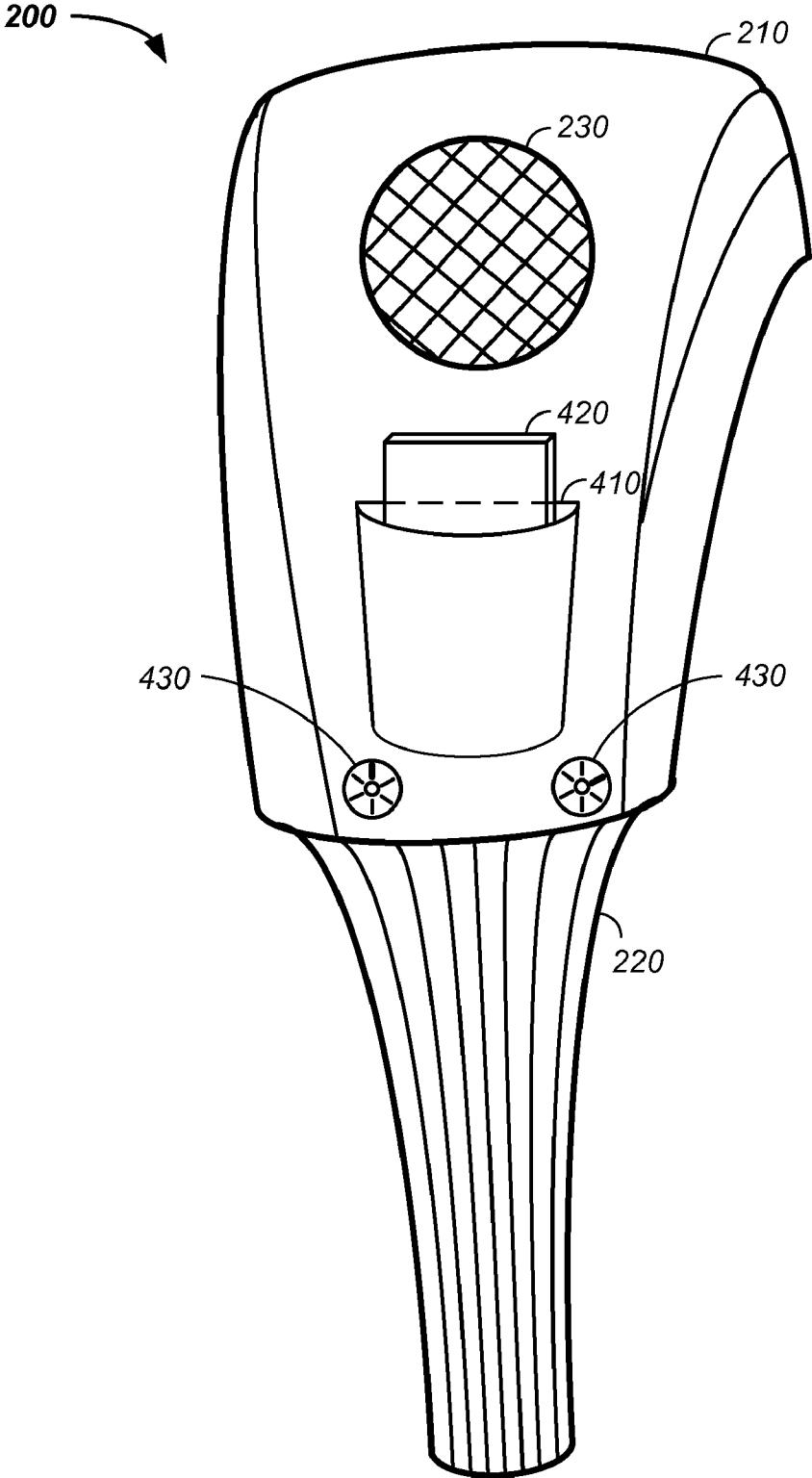


FIG. 4

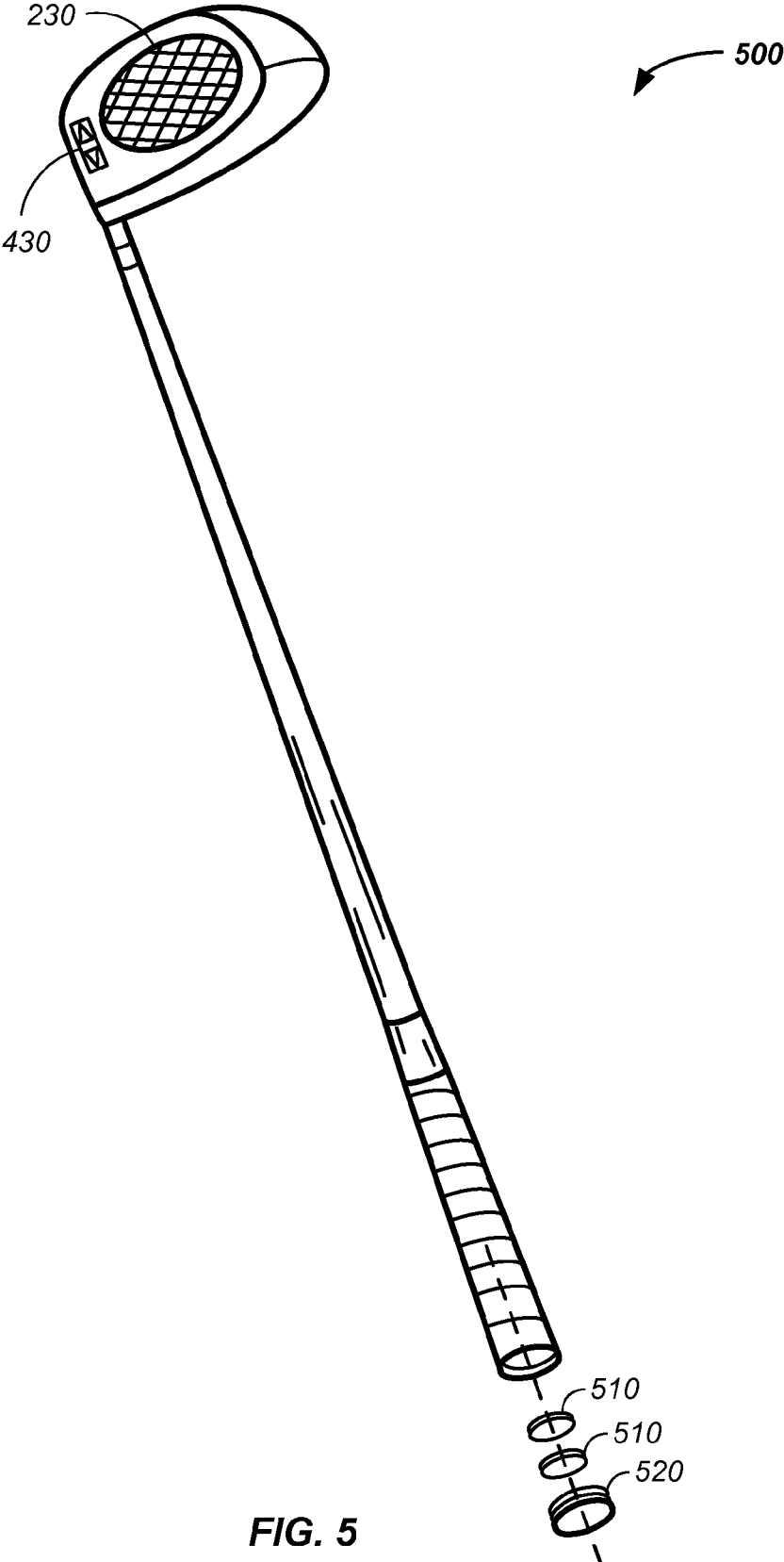


FIG. 5

GOLF CLUB COVER APPARATUS AND METHOD OF USE THEREOF

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates generally to a golf club cover configured with a pocket and/or a golf radio apparatus and a method of use therefor.

[0003] 2. Discussion of the Related Art

[0004] Golf is a popular game. As a result, over the years, golfers and industry have developed a number of accessory products for use: on the golf course, with golf clubs, and with golf bags. These accessories include a number of golf club covers and novelty items.

[0005] No matter what level of golfer skill, most golfers enjoy music on a golf course. However, due to the expansive distances involved, golf courses do not have integrated music. A golfer may carry a music generating device, such as a Walkman® (Sony, Tokyo, Japan). However, the weight or wires of the music generating device interfere with the golfer's game, such as with use of a personal music device or a portable audio or video player. Further, an insecurely mounted portable audio player, such as an MP3 player attached to a golfer's belt or shirt, again interferes with the golfer's swing and/or with the golfer's concentration. Patents related to the current invention are summarized herein; however, none of them solve the golfer's portable music requirements.

[0006] Golf Systems

[0007] Several reports of golf club covers and golf radios have been reported.

[0008] Golf Club Cover

[0009] R. Scheurer, "Golfing Equipment", U.S. Pat. No. 3,128,812 (Apr. 14, 1964) describes a golf club head cover and golf bag having coengageable means for releasably securing the head cover to the golf bag to prevent misplacement of the cover.

[0010] D. Hoyt, "Golf Club Iron Cover", U.S. Pat. No. 3,478,799 (Nov. 18, 1969) describes a one-piece slipover cover for the head of a golf club iron.

[0011] E. Price, "Golf Club Head Cover", U.S. Pat. No. 3,965,955 (Jun. 29, 1976) describes a golf club head cover having a three-ply wall construction including a water impervious outer layer.

[0012] D. Miller, et.al., "Combination Golf Club Cover and Beverage Insulator", U.S. Pat. No. 5,099,898 (Mar. 31, 1992) describe a golf club cover and beverage insulator, which comprises a unitary device.

[0013] G. Morley, et.al., "Combination Golf Club Head-cover and Beverage Cooler", U.S. patent application publication no. US 2006/0180254 A1 (Aug. 17, 2006) describe a combined beverage cooler and golf club cover for both covering the head of a golf club or for supporting a drink.

[0014] Golf Bag

[0015] G. Clayton, "Support Assembly for Golfing Accessories", U.S. Pat. No. 4,625,862 (Dec. 2, 1986) describes an accessory support assembly for use with golf bags having a Velcro® (Velcro, Manchester, N.H.) section suspended from a golf bag for engagement with a Velcro® section on an attachable component.

[0016] Golf/Sound

[0017] J. Harris, "Novelty Golf Club with Programmed Sound Playing Device", U.S. Pat. No. 4,840,371 (Jun. 20, 1989) describes a novelty golf club including a body made to

resemble a golf club having a head, shaft, and a grip, where the head is hollow and contains a sound producing device powered by batteries contained beneath the handle grips connected via wires contained within the shaft.

[0018] B. Garrett, "Golf Strap Radio Carrier", U.S. Pat. No. 5,644,785 (Jul. 1, 1997) describes a radio carrier facilitating mounting a portable radio on a shoulder strap of a golf bag or to a motorized golf cart.

[0019] T. Keheley, "Lighted Novelty Golf Club With Automated Sound Producing Means", U.S. Pat. No. 5,868,633 (Feb. 9, 1999) describes a novelty golf club having a rigid yet flexible club head and a hand grip with a transparent shaft therebetween. Received within the club head is a digital sound chip in communication with a speaker for emitting any one of a plurality of humorous phrases.

[0020] D. Anderson, et.al., "Golf Bag Having Shoulder Strap with an Electronic Device", U.S. patent application publication no. US 2009/0152144 A1 (Jun. 18, 2009) describe a golf bag having a shoulder strap with a pocket for housing an electronic device, such as an MP3 player, radio, or CD player along with speaker controls and wiring to connect the electronic device to the speaker.

[0021] Novelty Golf Club

[0022] S. Phelps, et.al., "Novelty Golf Club", U.S. Pat. No. 7,127,517 (Feb. 6, 2007) describe a novelty golf club having position dependent graphics on a shaft of the club.

[0023] Statement of the Problem

[0024] Golfers necessarily carry with them a number of items, such as keys, a wallet, a phone, a radio, and/or a personal item. Often, such as with a phone or a radio, the item is necessarily rapidly accessible. Additionally, such as with the keys or wallet, the item needs to be secured. Further, there remains a need in the art for this rapidly accessible and/or secure location to be at a convenient height for the golfer.

[0025] Further, no matter what level of skill a golfer maintains, most golfers enjoy music on the course during a round of golf. However, to date all of the systems for carrying a radio interfere with the golfer's game, are integrated into expensive devices, and/or are inconvenient to carry or operate. Further, numerous systems have been developed for supporting or attaching a portable radio to a person, such as on a belt or on an article of clothing. However, there remains in the art in the field of golfing a need for a portable, detachable, and affordable music source that does not interfere with the play of the game.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0026] The invention comprises a golf club cover, a golf club cover configured with a pocket, and/or a golf club cover configured with a radio apparatus and method of use therefor.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURES

[0027] FIG. 1 illustrates a golf club;

[0028] FIG. 2 illustrates a golf club cover;

[0029] FIG. 3 illustrates a golf club cover configured with an integrated music device;

[0030] FIG. 4 illustrates a golf club cover configured to interface to a removable music device; and

[0031] FIG. 5 illustrates a novelty golf club configured with music capability.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0032] The invention comprises a golf club and/or golf club cover apparatus configured with a pocket. The golf club cover is optionally configured with an integrated music device and method of use therefor.

[0033] There exist no available golf clubs and/or golf club covers configured with a pocket for carrying or holding of personal items, such as keys, a phone, or a personal music device in a secure and accessible location.

[0034] In one embodiment, a golf club cover is configured with a pocket.

[0035] In another embodiment, it is desirable to provide a combination golf club head cover and music device or components utilized to play music, such as a power supply, a receiver, a music memory source, music and/or power controls, interfacing elements, wiring, an amplifier, and/or a speaker. Further, there exist no golf clubs and/or golf club covers configured to replaceably interface with a music source device, such as an MP3 player.

[0036] In still another embodiment, it is desirable to provide a combination golf club head cover and an interface for a replaceably attached music device.

[0037] In yet still another embodiment, it is desirable to provide a novelty golf club configured with an integrated music device.

[0038] In yet another embodiment, it is desirable to provide a novelty golf club configured to interface with a detachable music device.

[0039] For example, a golf club cover and/or a novelty golf club system is configured with one or more music projection elements, such as a power source, receiver, power transmittal line, music source receiver, integrated music source, connector for a replaceably attached music source, music transmittal line, user controller, amplifier, and/or speaker. Optionally, the golf club cover is configured with a pocket and the cover and/or novelty golf club is configured with weather protection means and/or an anti-theft device. The system allows a golfer to enjoy music while playing a round of golf and/or to enjoy the same music source while in an indoor area and/or a refreshment area where a bulky golf bag is not readily transported.

[0040] For clarity, an MP3 player is used in examples herein as a removable, attachable, and/or detachable music source. However, any form of stored music is readily adapted to the apparatus described herein, as further described infra.

[0041] Golf Bag

[0042] Typically, a golfer carries or transports golf clubs in a golf bag. Golf bags are optionally made of any material, such as nylon or leather. Optionally, a golf bag is an open ended cylindrically based container, where golf clubs are inserted into the open end of the upright cylinder or container. Typically, golf bags include a plurality of pockets designed to carry golf equipment, such as golf tees, golf balls, golf clubs, gloves, towels, and golfer aids. Golf bags are optionally carried, pulled on a two-wheel pull cart, and/or are transported by a golf cart driven by a motor or engine during play. Optionally, golf bags include a hand strap, a shoulder strap, and/or foldable or retractable legs that allow the golf bag to stand upright when at rest.

[0043] Golf Club

[0044] Referring now to FIG. 1, a golf club **100** includes at least a head **110**, a shaft **120**, and a grip **130**, described infra.

[0045] Head

[0046] The head **110** of the golf club **100** is optionally any shape. Typically, the head **110** of the golf club includes a striking face **112**, a heel **114**, and a toe **116**.

[0047] Optionally, a bore in the heel receives a hosel, which is a socket in the golf club **100** head **110** that receives the shaft **120**. The head **110** is optionally constructed using any material, such as wood, metal, or a composite material.

[0048] Shaft

[0049] The shaft **120** is rod shaped with a lower end connected to the head **110**, such as via the hosel, and an upper end connected to and/or interfaced with the grip **130**. The rod of the shaft **110** is optionally tubular or solid. The shaft **110** is preferably a rigid and durable material, such as an acrylic or a metal. The length of the shaft is optionally fit to a golfer and ranges from about ten to twenty-six inches.

[0050] Grip

[0051] The upper end of the shaft is either connected to the grip **130** or is wrapped, such as with a leather strip, to form the grip **130** about the upper end of the shaft.

[0052] Golf Club Cover

[0053] A golf club cover **200** is optionally of any geometry or shape that is configured to receive and/or cover all or part of the head **110** of the golf club **100**. For clarity, the cover **200** of a golf club **100** is described that covers at least part of a driver or a wood golf club. However, the cover **200** is readily adapted to cover a putter, sand wedge, iron, or any other club type.

[0054] Referring now to FIG. 2, in one example the golf club cover **200** includes two sections, a first cover section **210** to cover the head **110** of the golf club **100** and a second cover section **220** configured to protect at least a portion of the lower end of the shaft **120** of the golf club **100**. While a two-section cover **200** is described, generally the cover **200** includes any number of pieces and/or sections.

[0055] The first cover section **210** of the cover **200** is designed to receive the head **110** of the golf club **100**. Particularly, the first cover section **210** includes: a semi-flexible curved and/or semi-straight tube with a closed end, a circumferentially encompassing portion, and an open end of the tube, where the semi-flexible tube creates a deformable opening or cavity for receiving the head **110** of the golf club **100** during use. When receiving the head **110** of the golf club **100**, the toe **116** of the head **110** of the golf club **100** proximately contacts the closed end of the cover **200** and the inner sides of the cover defining the internal cavity circumferentially encompass or surround the head **110** of the golf club **100**. The lower end of the shaft **120** of the golf club **100** extends through the open end of the tube.

[0056] The optional second section **220** of the cover **200** is a radially stretchable tube, such as a fabric tube having an upper opening, a riser portion, and a lower opening. The riser portion circumferentially surrounds a portion of the lower end of the shaft **120** when receiving the club head **110**. Preferably, the upper opening of the stretchable tube is attached to the open end of the first cover section **210** of the tube. Combined, the first cover section **210** and second cover section **220** create a deformable central volume for receiving a club head **110** and at least a lower portion of the shaft **120**.

[0057] For clarity, FIG. 2 illustrates a golf club cover **200** designed to receive a driver. However, the golf club cover is readily designed in form to function as a cover for any type of golf club. Further, FIG. 2 illustrates a two piece golf club cover. As described, supra, the cover **200** of the golf club **100** is optionally a single piece or is composed of n pieces, where n is a positive integer, such as 2, 3, 4, or more.

[0058] Generally, the cover **200** of the golf club **100** is made of any material, sections of material, and/or layers of materi-

als. For example, the golf club cover **200** is optionally made of: sections or pieces of leather, plastic, and/or fabric. Optionally, an outer layer of at least the first cover section **210** is made of a weather resistant material. Optionally, an inner layer of the cover **200** of the golf club **100** forms an outer perimeter of the deformable central volume or cavity. The inner layer is optionally a soft material that doesn't scratch or wear the harder materials of the club head **110** or club shaft **120**. The cover **200** of the golf club **100** protects club heads **110** and club shafts **120** from striking each other when in the golf bag.

[0059] Golf Club Cover Pocket

[0060] The golf club cover **200** is optionally configured with one or more pockets **410**. The pockets **410** of the cover **200** of the golf club **100** are optionally configured with a zipper, which when closed prevents loss of an item, functions as a security device by removing stored personal items from sight, and/or functions as a resistance to weather. The one or more pockets **410** of the cover **200** of the golf club **100** optionally contain a transparent plastic cover for viewing of items contained in the pocket **410**. Optionally, the pocket **410** of the cover **200** of the golf club **100** includes an outer mesh side, which is an elastic material or band, which is stretchable and provides a retractive force allowing insertion and holding of items, such as a music player. The golf club cover pocket **410** yields extra storage space for small items needed or desired by the golfer during a round of golf. Further, the pocket **410** of the cover **200** of the golf club **100** provides the golfer ready access to the stored items as the golf club cover **200** supported by a golf club **100** in the golf bag maintains the items in the pocket **410** at an accessible height of about several feet off of the ground. Examples of items desirably stored in a golf club cover pocket include but are not limited to: a key, a wallet, a phone, a music device, a golf tee, and a personal item. In use, the golf club cover optionally resides over a golf club head held in a golf club bag, where the pocket of the golf club cover is at an accessible height off of the ground of about three, four, or five feet.

[0061] Music Source/Speaker

[0062] Referring now to FIG. 2, the golf club cover **200** is optionally configured with a speaker **230**. Optionally, the speaker **230** is integrated into the golf club cover **200**, such as having a speaker front, configured for projecting sound, protruding slightly from an outer face or surface of cover **200** of the golf club **100**. In FIG. 2, the speaker **230** is illustrated as being on a plane about parallel with a portion of a bottom of the head **110** of the golf club **100**. The speaker **230** is connected to one or more of a power source, a receiver, signal and/or power lines, an amplifier, and a connector to a music source, which are preferably contained within a portion of the golf club cover **200**, such as between multiple layers of the golf club cover.

[0063] Referring now to FIG. 3, in one example the golf club cover **200** is optionally configured with an integrated music device **310**. The integrated music device **310** is rigidly affixed to the golf club cover **200**. The integrated music device **310** provides at least one of:

[0064] a receiver for broadcast music;

[0065] a receiver for wirelessly transmitted music; and

[0066] a memory device for holding music.

[0067] Optionally, the integrated music device **310** includes one or more of:

[0068] a display screen **312**; and

[0069] user controls **314**.

[0070] Examples of user controls **314** include: an on/off controller, a channel controller, a volume controller, and/or a controller interfacing to visually displayed elements on the display screen **312**. Examples of visually displayed elements include song selection and/or a volume control. In FIG. 3, the speaker **230** is illustrated as being on a plane about parallel with a portion of a striking face **112** of the head **110** of the golf club **100**. Not illustrated is an optional second speaker, such as on a plane about parallel to a portion of a back of the head **110** of the golf club **100**.

[0071] Radio Attachment

[0072] Referring now to FIG. 4, in another example the golf club cover **200** is optionally configured to replaceably attach to a removable music device **420**. In one case, the removable music device includes a first-half of a hook and loop interface and the cover **200** of the golf club **100** includes a second-half of a hook and loop interface that combine to secure the removable music device **420** to the cover **200**. In a second case, the removable music device **420** slides into the pocket **410** affixed to the cover **200**. In either case, the removable music device:

[0073] plugs into a music connector, such as an RCA or USB connector; and/or

[0074] wirelessly transmits a signal to a receiver integrated into the cover **200**.

[0075] In a first instance, the music connector is positioned on a rigid base of the pocket **410** to allow direct connection of the removable music device to the connector. In a second instance, the music connector extends on a connecting communication tether to the removable music device. The communication tether optionally tucks into the cover **200**, such as into or through the pocket **410** or retracts into the cover **200**, such as with an automatic tether retraction element. In a third instance, the connector is a wireless receiver configured to receive a wireless signal from a music source, such as a satellite, personal music player, or a broadcast system.

[0076] In any of the embodiments described herein, controls **430** are optionally integrated into the cover **200** of the golf club **100**. Examples of controls include:

[0077] an analog controller;

[0078] a digital controller;

[0079] a volume controller;

[0080] a music source controller; and/or

[0081] a music selector.

[0082] Novelty Golf Club

[0083] Referring now to FIG. 5, in yet another embodiment a novelty club **500**, also referred to herein as a novelty golf club **500**, includes means for projecting music.

[0084] In a first case, the novelty golf club is integrated with one or more of:

[0085] a receiver;

[0086] a power supply;

[0087] a battery power supply **510**;

[0088] an internal power conductor;

[0089] a speaker **230**;

[0090] an embedded music source **310**; and/or

[0091] a user controller **430**.

[0092] The battery power supply **510** is optionally contained: within the grip **130**, such as under a removable grip cap **520**, in the shaft **120**, and/or is within the head **110** of the novelty club **510**.

[0093] In a second case, the novelty club 500 contains one or more music projection elements and is replaceably interfaced with an external music source 420, such as an MP3 player.

[0094] In any case, generally the novelty club 500 contains any of the music projection, protection, and/or interfacing elements contained in the cover 200 of the golf club 100, as described supra.

[0095] Stored Music

[0096] A music source includes one or more of:

[0097] a music player; and

[0098] a music storage medium.

[0099] In one example, the cover 200 of the golf club 100 includes a port, receptor, and/or wireless receiver for receipt of an MPEG-1 or MPEG-2 Audio Layer 3 (or III), also known as an MP3 signal, which is a digital audio encoding format using a form of lossy data compression. The MP3 encoding is a common audio format for consumer audio storage and is a de facto standard of digital audio compression for the transfer and playback of music on digital audio players.

[0100] As described, supra, an MP3 device as a music source is used for clarity of presentation. However, generally the system works with any digital audio encoding and/or with any digital or analog broadcast or transmitted signal. Further, the system is readily adaptable to operate wirelessly, where the cover 200 of the golf club 100 includes a receiver for the wireless signal.

[0101] Radio Protection

[0102] In another embodiment, a rain guard or weather protection cover is used to protect exposed areas of the radio elements, such as a cover over the speaker 230, pocket 410, embedded radio system 310, and/or the external music source 420. For example, the weather protection cover is a waterproof or water resistance flap secured with a flap control, such as a zipper or a hook and loop fastener.

[0103] In still another embodiment, the cover includes a security line tethering the cover 200 and or the external music source 420 to the bulk of the golf bag, which prevents a walk by theft without carrying the golf bag or taking time to cut the security line. In one case, the security line is secured with an anti-theft lock and key.

[0104] In yet still another embodiment, the cover 200 of the golf club 100 contains a pocket 410 sized and/or configured to accept a cell phone.

[0105] Method of Use

[0106] In practice, the cover 200 of the golf club 100 holds and/or replaceably attached to a music source. The cover 200 of the golf club 100 is transported by the golfer through transport of the golf bag or through transport of the cover 200 without the golf bag or associated golf club 100. Hence, the golfer, using the system, can enjoy a music experience while playing a round of golf and/or while simply carrying the golf club cover 200, such as in a refreshment area.

[0107] Although individual elements are herein described for clarity, any permutation and/or combination of the elements described herein are optionally included in the golf club cover/music apparatus and method of use therefor.

[0108] Although the invention has been described herein with reference to certain preferred embodiments, one skilled in the art will readily appreciate that other applications may be substituted for those set forth herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. Accordingly, the invention should only be limited by the Claims included below.

1. An apparatus configured to provide accessible storage on a golf course, comprising:

a golf club cover; and
at least one pocket integrated with said golf club cover.

2. The apparatus of claim 1, said pocket further comprising any of:

a zipper configured to open and/or close said pocket;
a mesh comprising an outer surface of said pocket; and
a clear plastic comprising an outer surface of said pocket.

3. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said pocket comprises at least one of:

an elastic material configured to provide a stretchable and elastic retractive force about an opening of said pocket.
a stretchable band configured to retractively close an opening of said pocket.

4. The apparatus of claim 1, said pocket configured to hold at least one of:

a phone, golf tees, and a golfer aid.

5. The apparatus of claim 1, said pocket configured to snugly secure a music playing device.

6. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising:
at least one music element integrated into said golf club cover.

7. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said at least one music element comprises:

a speaker partially embedded in said golf club cover.

8. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said at least one music element comprises at least three of:

an integrated music source embedded into said golf club cover;
an audio communication line attached to said integrated music source;
an amplifier configured to amplify signal running in said audio communication line; and
a speaker affixed to said golf club cover, said speaker configured to broadcast music originating in said integrated music source, said music running to said speaker via said audio communication line.

9. The apparatus of claim 6, wherein said at least one music element comprises at least three of:

a connector embedded in said golf club cover, said connector configured to replaceably connect to an external music source;
an audio communication line attached to said connector;
an amplifier configured to amplify signal running in said audio communication line; and
a speaker connected to said audio communication line, said speaker partially embedded into said golf club cover, said speaker configured to broadcast music provided by said external music source.

10. The apparatus of claim 9, said golf club cover further comprising:

a first cover section comprising:
a curved, semi-flexible tube comprising a closed end and a lower end, said curved, semi-flexible tube configured with a deformable cavity for receiving a head of a golf club.

11. The apparatus of claim 10, said golf club cover further comprising:

a second cover section, said second cover section comprising a radially stretchable tube, said stretchable tube comprising both an upper end affixed to said lower end of said first cover section and a lower end configured to

circumferentially surround at least a portion of a shaft of said golf club affixed to said head of said golf club.

12. The apparatus of claim **11**, wherein said first cover section and said second cover section combine to form a deformable central volume configured to receive both:

said head of said golf club; and
said at least a portion of said shaft of said golf club.

13. A method for providing accessible storage on a golf course, comprising the steps of:

providing a golf club cover configured with a pocket, wherein during use said pocket is supported by a golf club in an upright golf bag above a top of said golf bag.

14. The method of claim **13**, further comprising the step of playing music using a music producing element, said music producing element integrated into said golf club cover.

15. The method of claim **14**, wherein said music element comprises at least three of:

an integrated music source embedded into said golf club cover;

an audio communication line attached to said integrated music source;

an amplifier configured to amplify signal running in said audio communication line; and

a speaker partially embedded in said golf club cover, said speaker configured to broadcast music originating in said integrated music source and running to said speaker via said audio communication line.

16. The method of claim **14**, wherein said music producing element comprises a wireless receiver.

17. An apparatus, comprising:

a golf club head cover configured with a pocket; and
means for generating music on a golf course, said means comprising a speaker partially embedded in said golf club head cover.

18. The apparatus of claim **17**, wherein said means for generating music comprises any of:

a power source providing power to said speaker;

a broadcast signal receiver configured to relay received signal to said speaker;

a music line connector configured to interface with a replaceably attached music source providing music signal to said speaker; and

an amplifier connected to said speaker.

19. The apparatus of claim **17**, said golf club head cover further comprising:

a receiver connected to said speaker, said receiver configured to receive at least one of:

a broadcast music signal; and

a wireless music signal.

20. The apparatus of claim **17**, further comprising:

weather protection means configured to replaceably cover at least a portion of said means for generating music.

* * * * *