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(54) **PICKLEBALL NET ADJUSTMENT APPARATUS**

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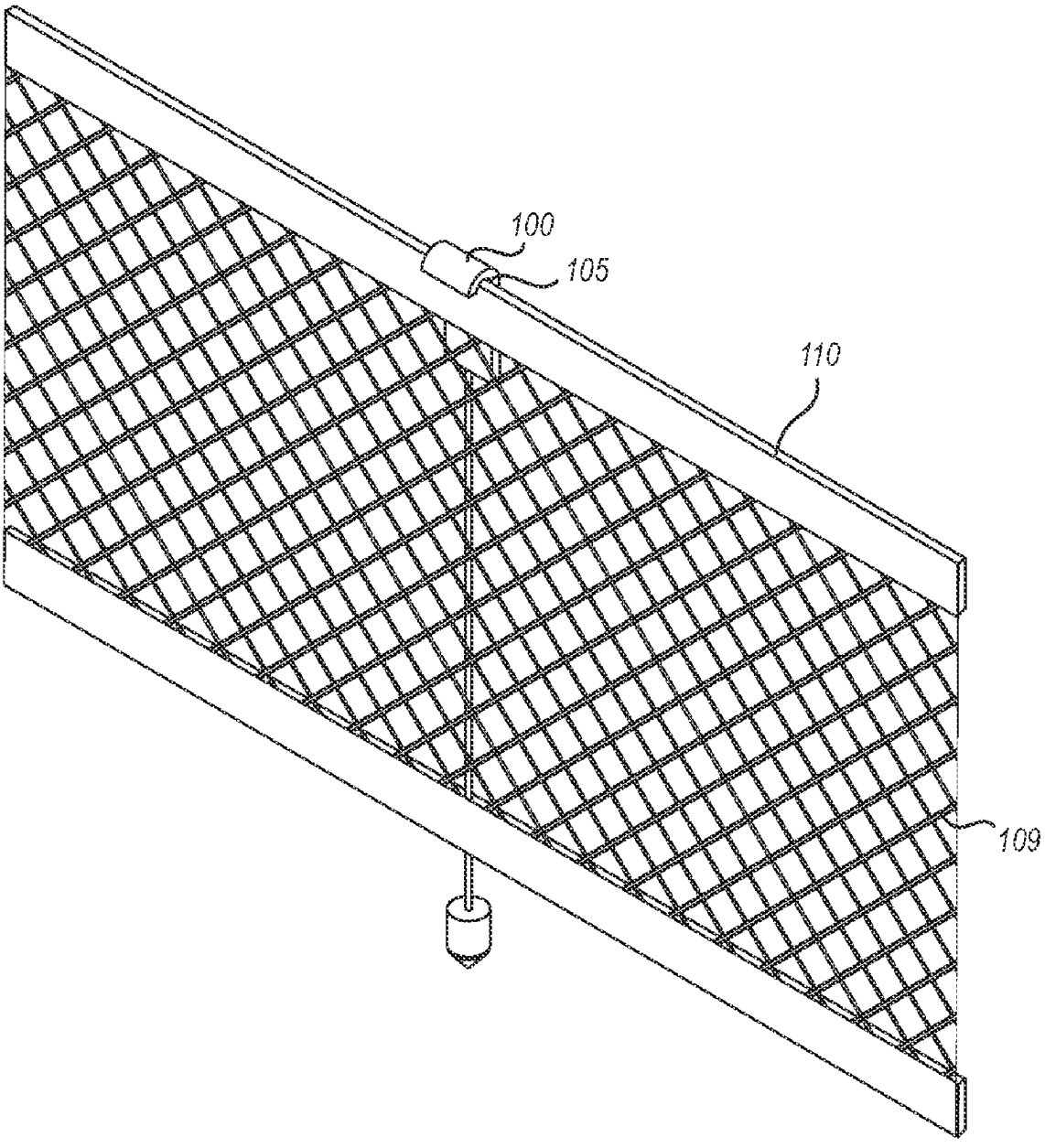
CPC ***A63B 61/04*** (2013.01)

(57) **ABSTRACT**

Disclosed is a net adjustment apparatus adjusting a pickleball net to its regulation height. The net adjustment apparatus allows a player to visualize the regulation height of a pickleball net from the net post of the pickleball net, so that the player can adjust the height of the pickleball net without help from a partner and/or taking measurements using conventional methods such as a measuring tape.



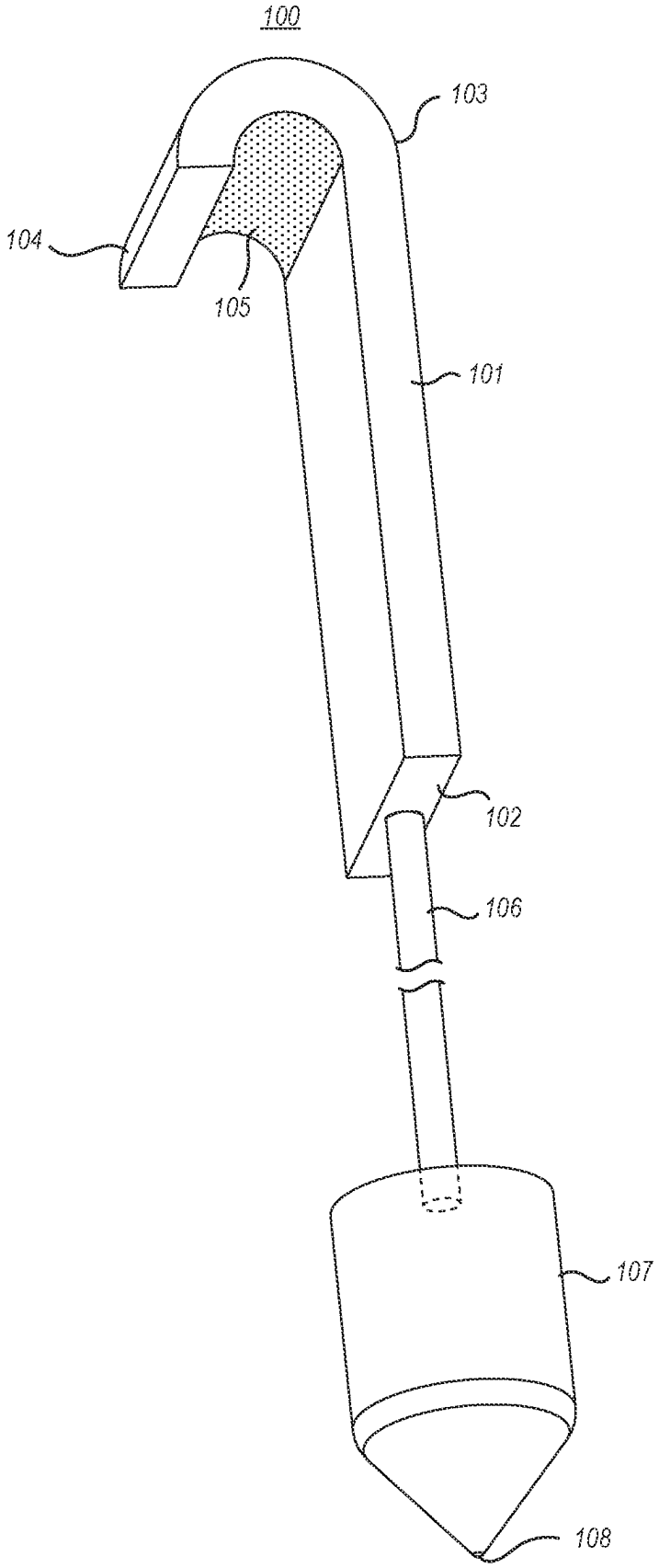


FIG. 1A

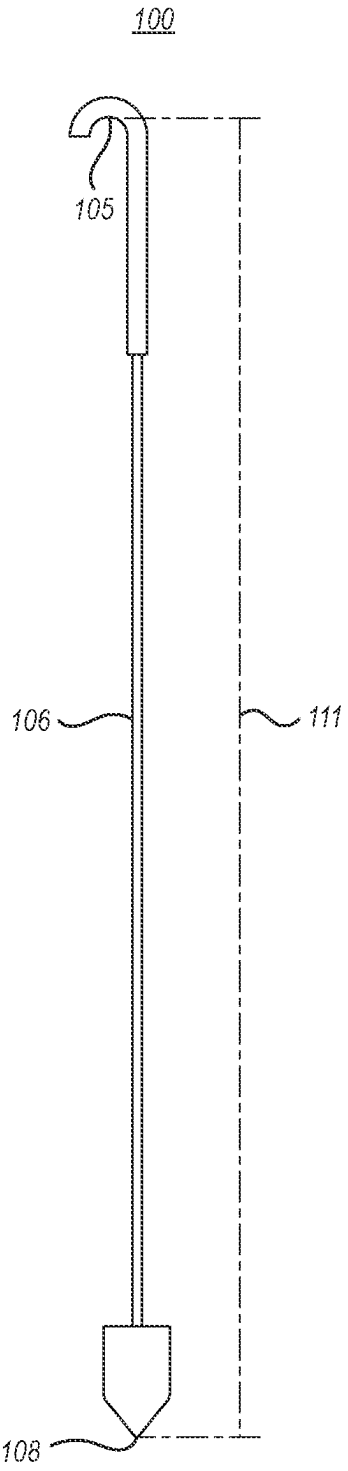


FIG. 1B

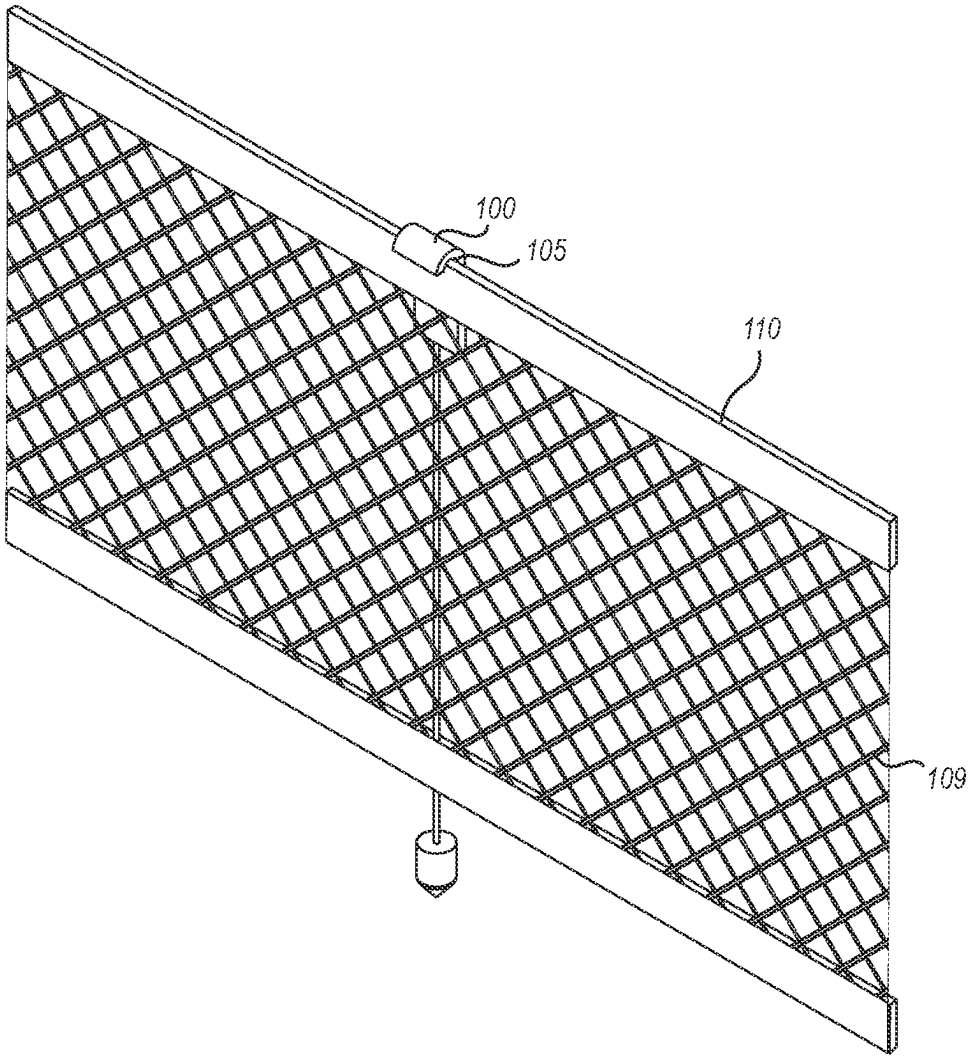


FIG. 1C

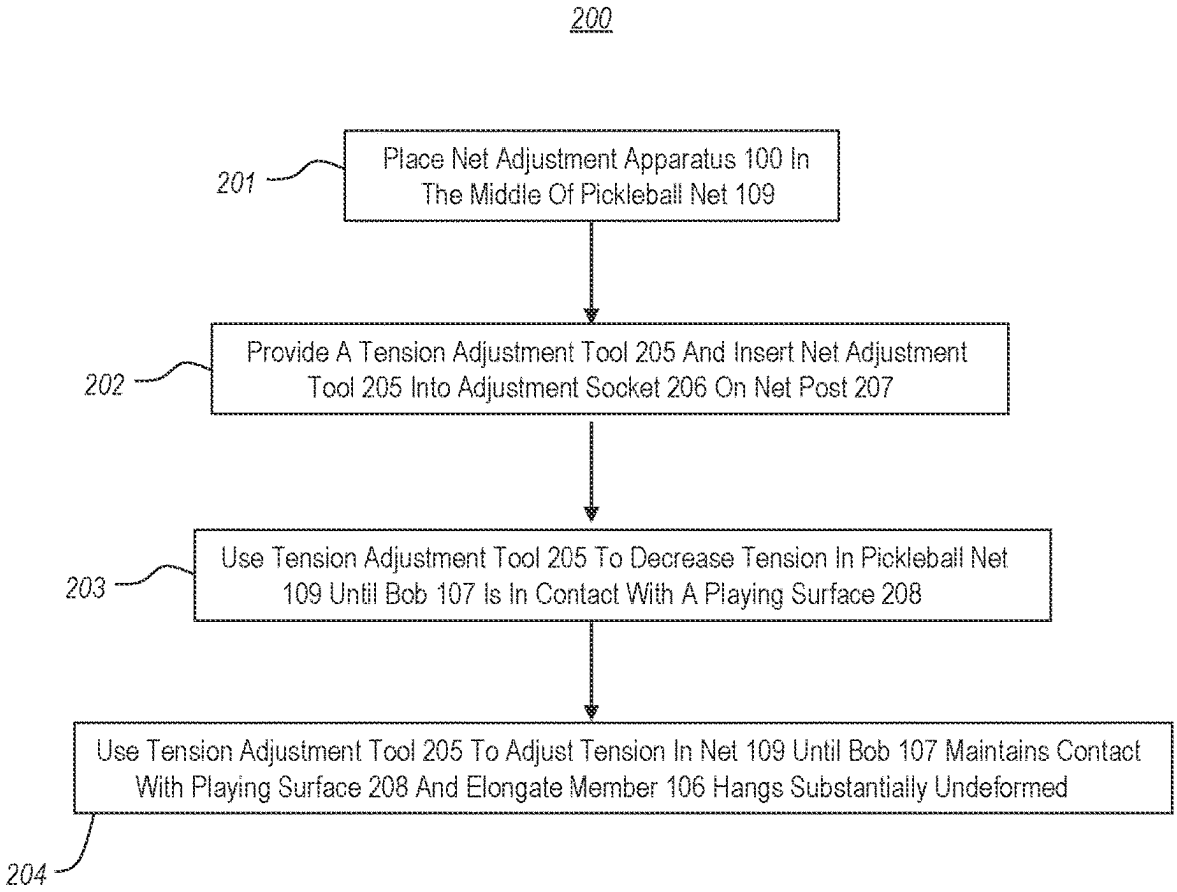

200
201
Place Net Adjustment Apparatus 100 In The Middle Of Pickleball Net 109
202
Provide A Tension Adjustment Tool 205 And Insert Net Adjustment Tool 205 Into Adjustment Socket 206 On Net Post 207
203
Use Tension Adjustment Tool 205 To Decrease Tension In Pickleball Net 109 Until Bob 107 Is In Contact With A Playing Surface 208
Use Tension Adjustment Tool 205 To Adjust Tension In Net 109 Until Bob 107 Maintains Contact With Playing Surface 208 And Elongate Member 106 Hangs Substantially Undeformed
204

FIG 2A

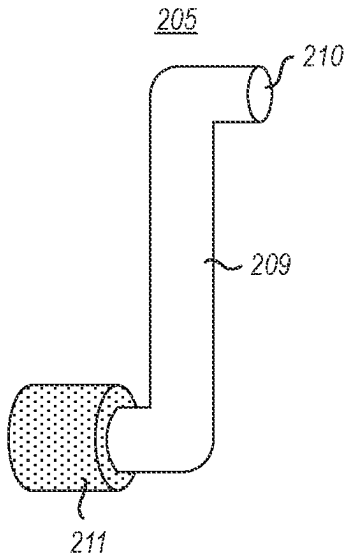


FIG. 2B

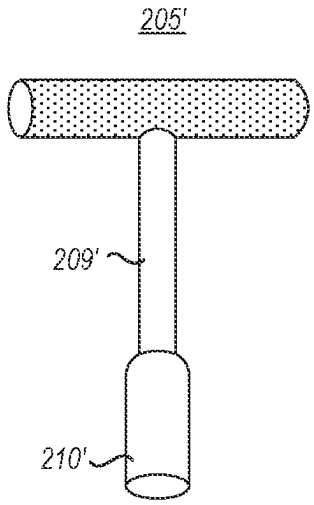


FIG. 2C

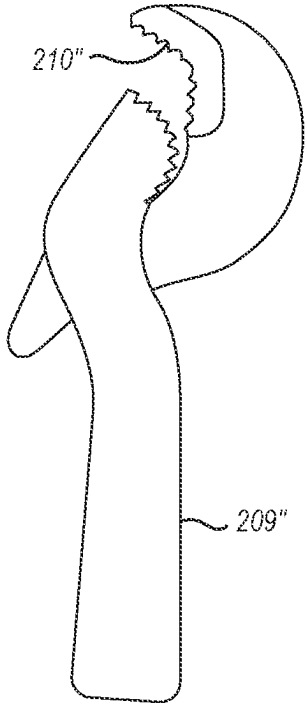


FIG. 2D

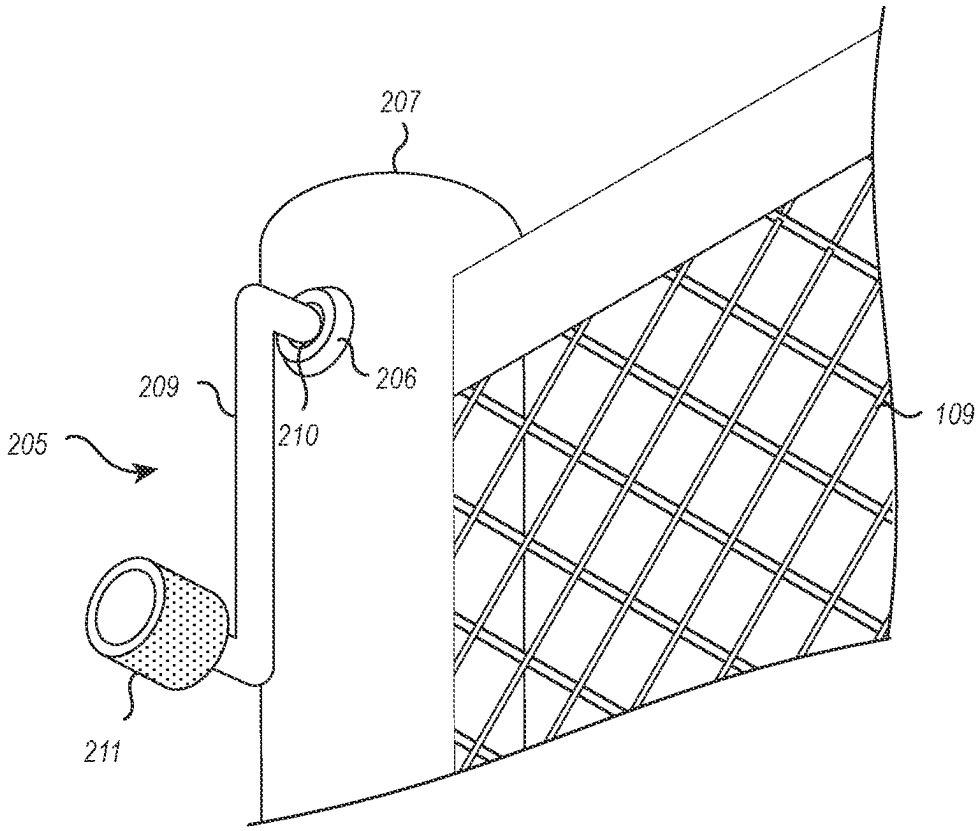


FIG. 2E

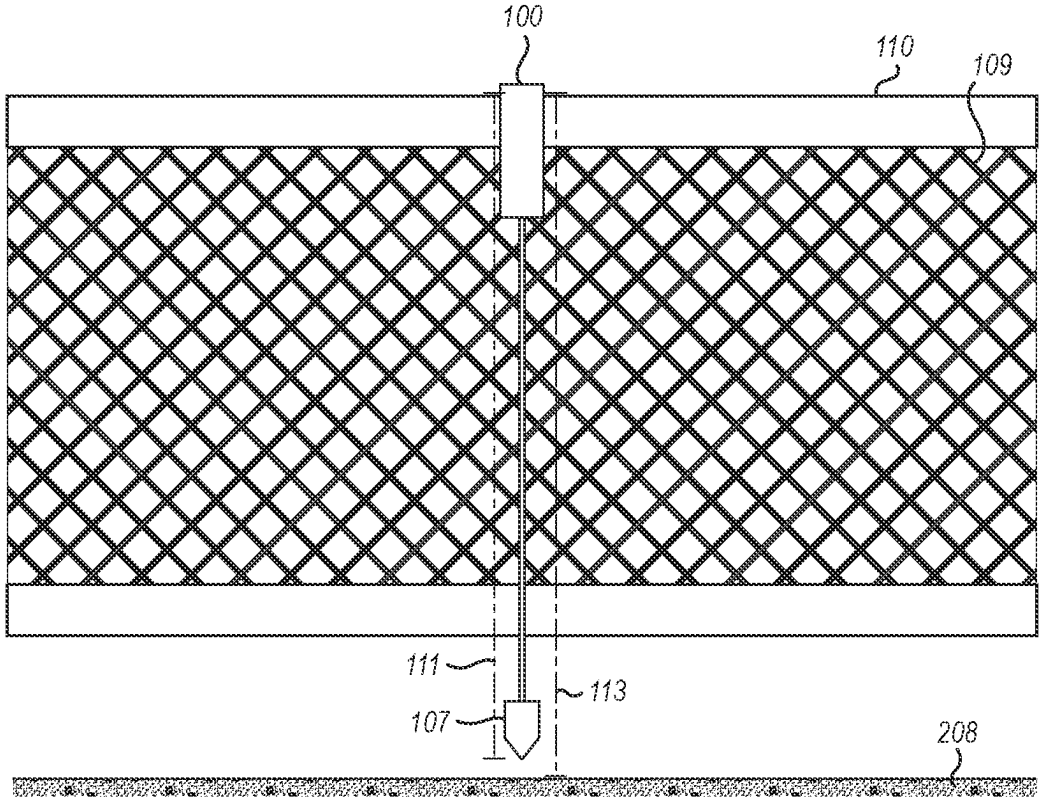


FIG. 2F

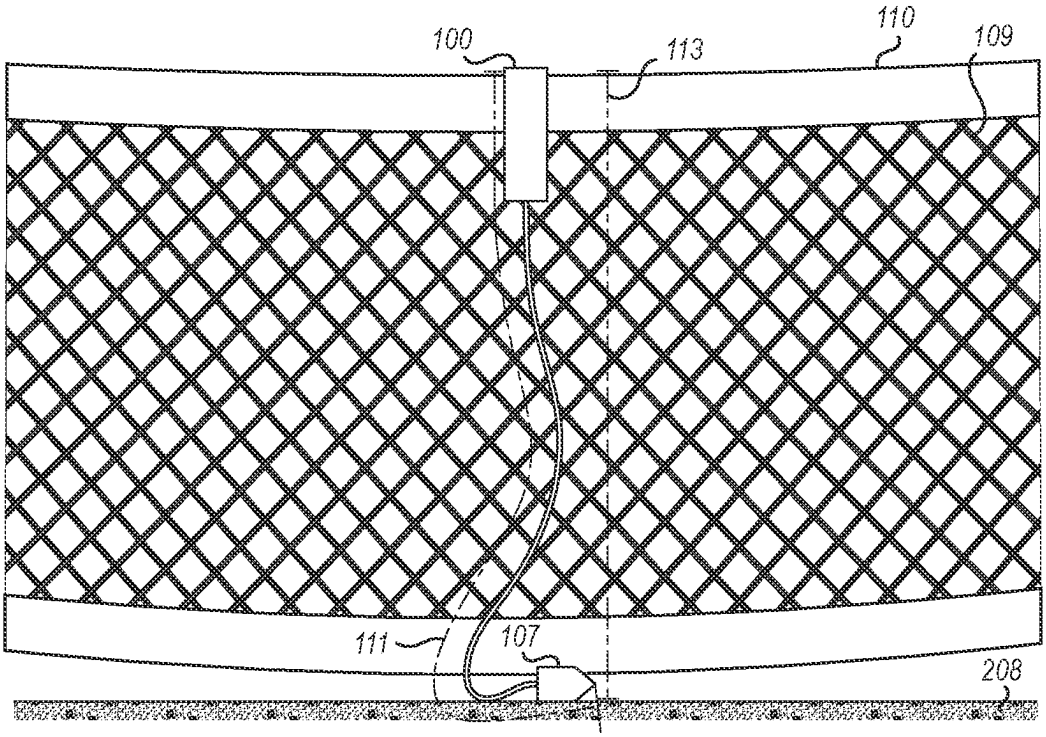


FIG. 2G

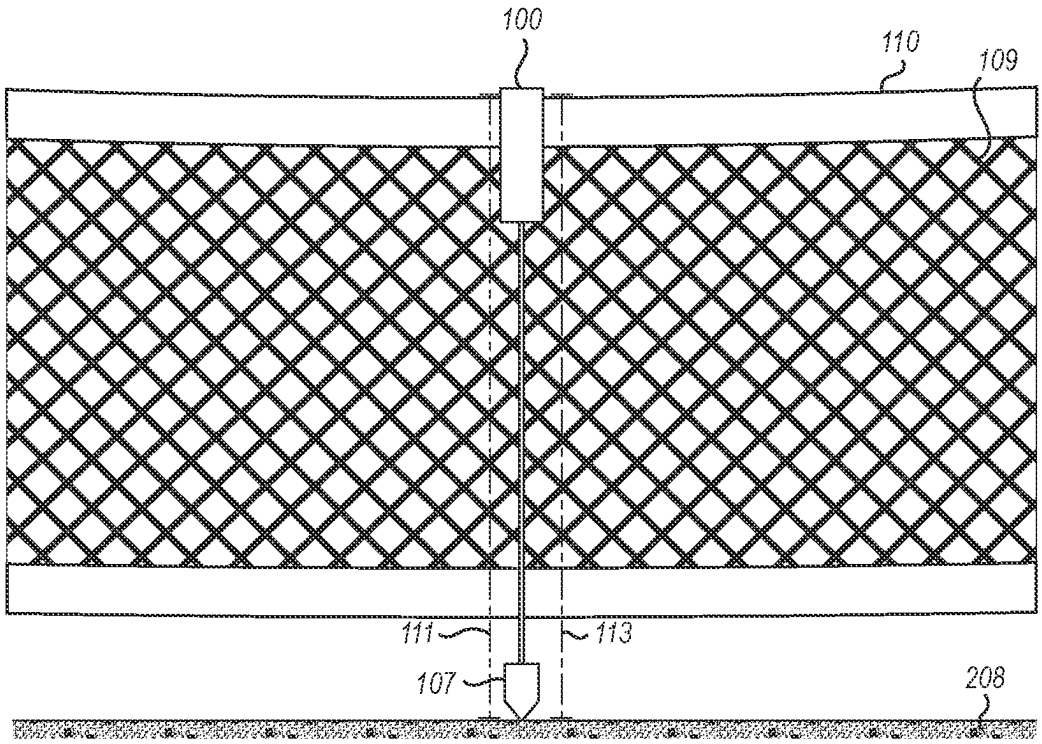


FIG. 2H

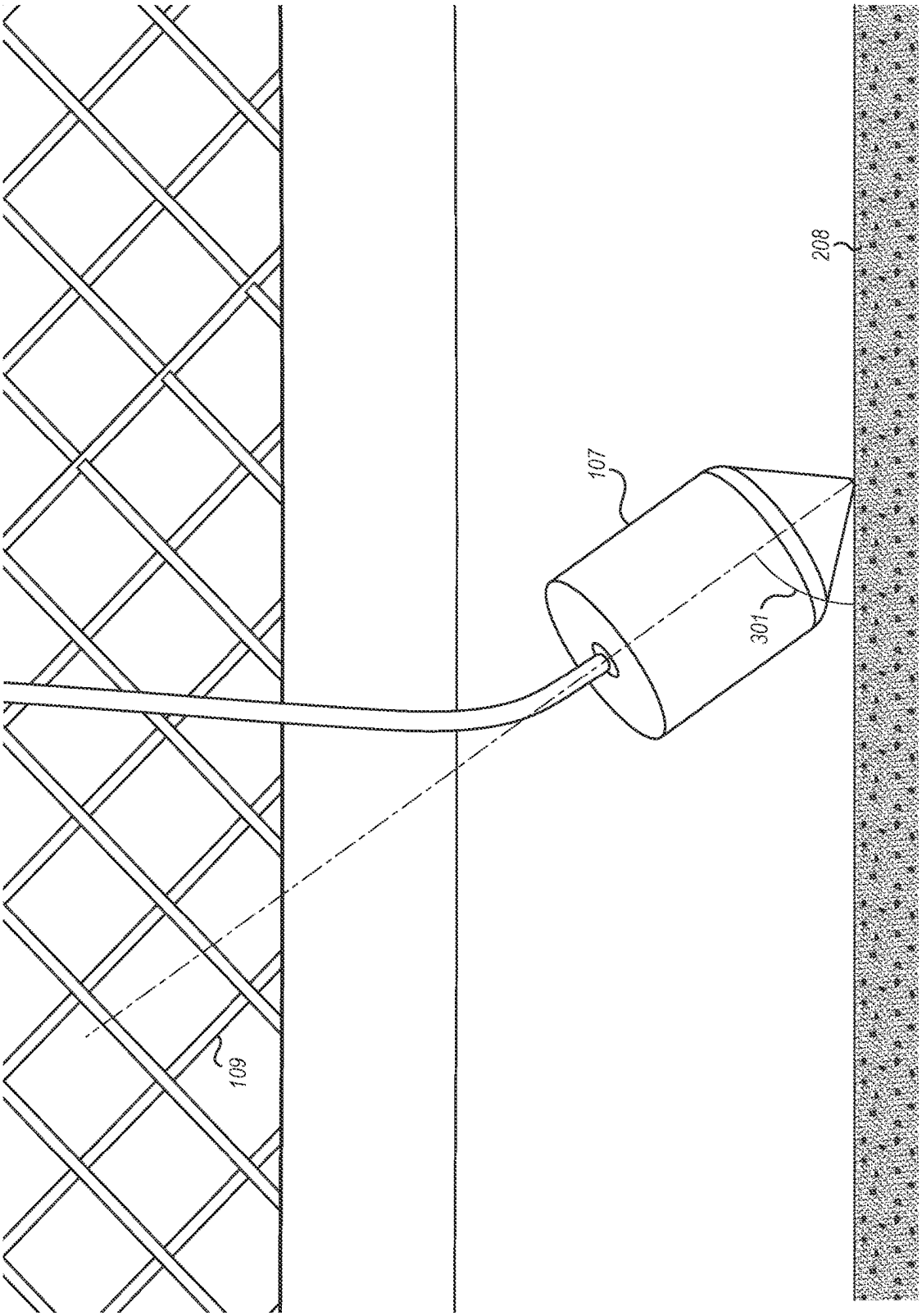


FIG. 3

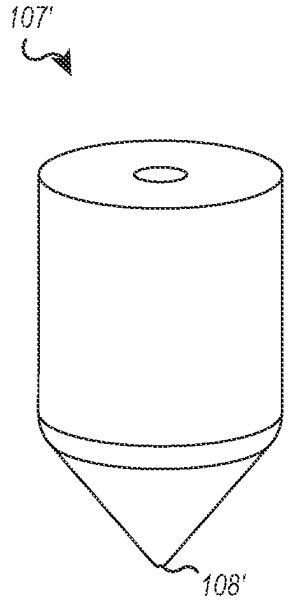


FIG. 4A

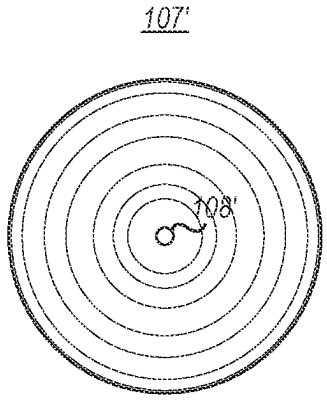


FIG. 4B

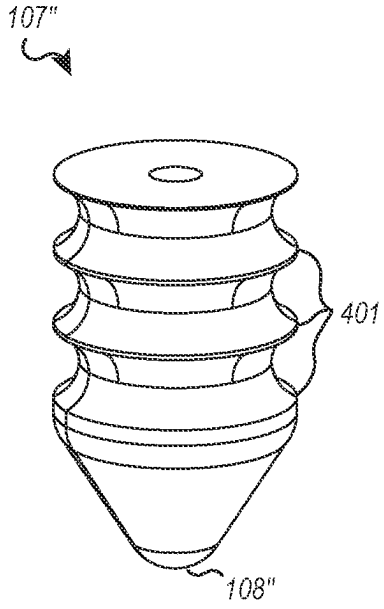


FIG. 4C

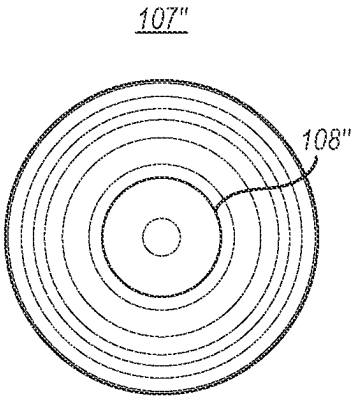


FIG. 4D

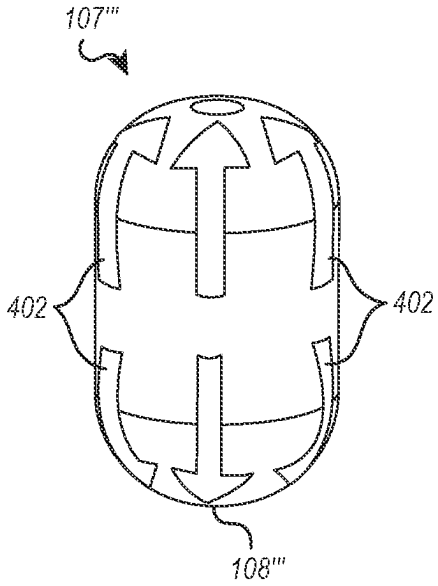


FIG. 4E

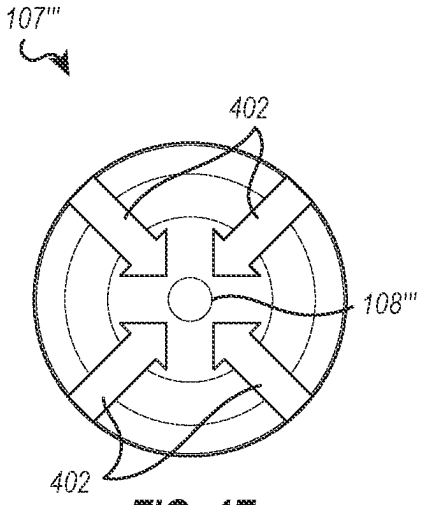


FIG. 4F

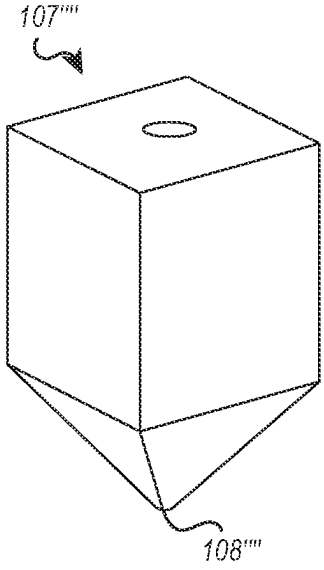


FIG. 4G

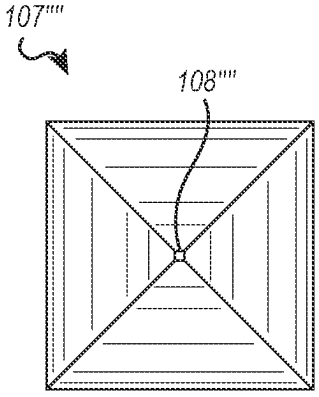


FIG. 4H

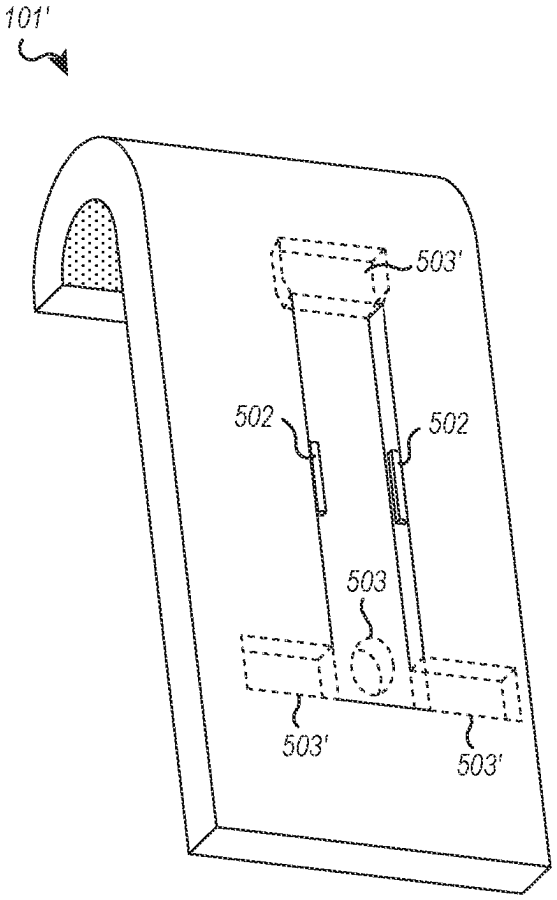


FIG. 5A

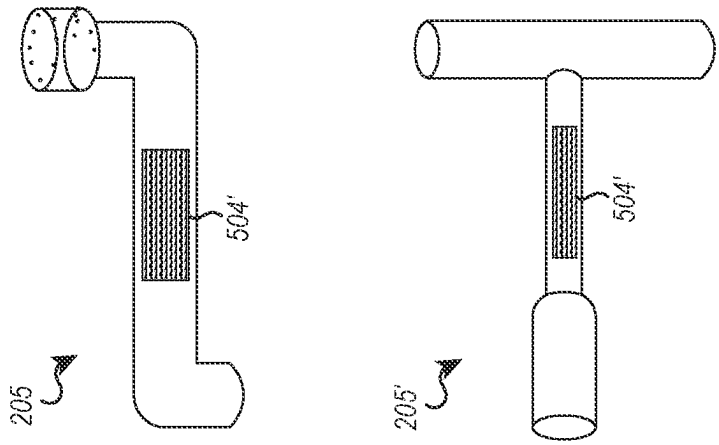
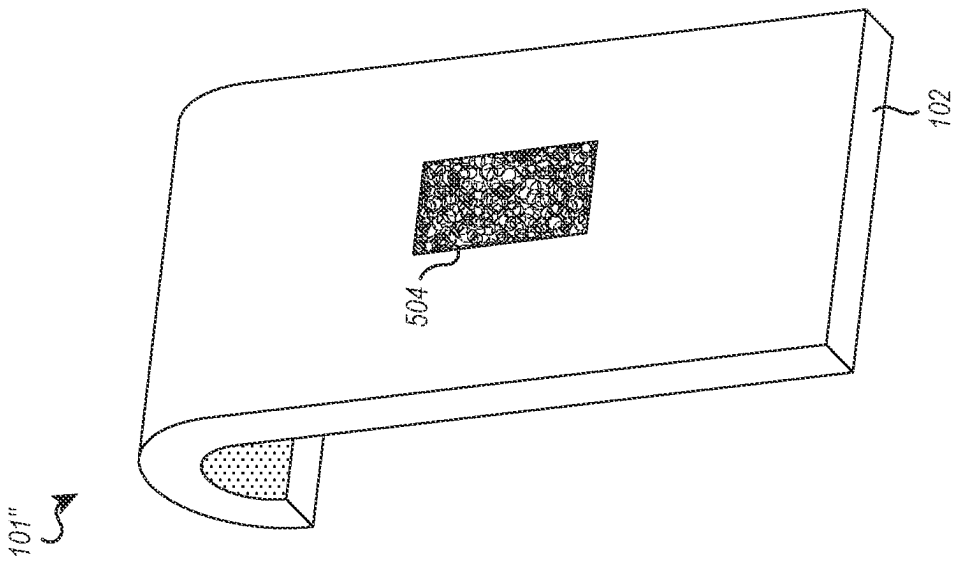


FIG. 5B



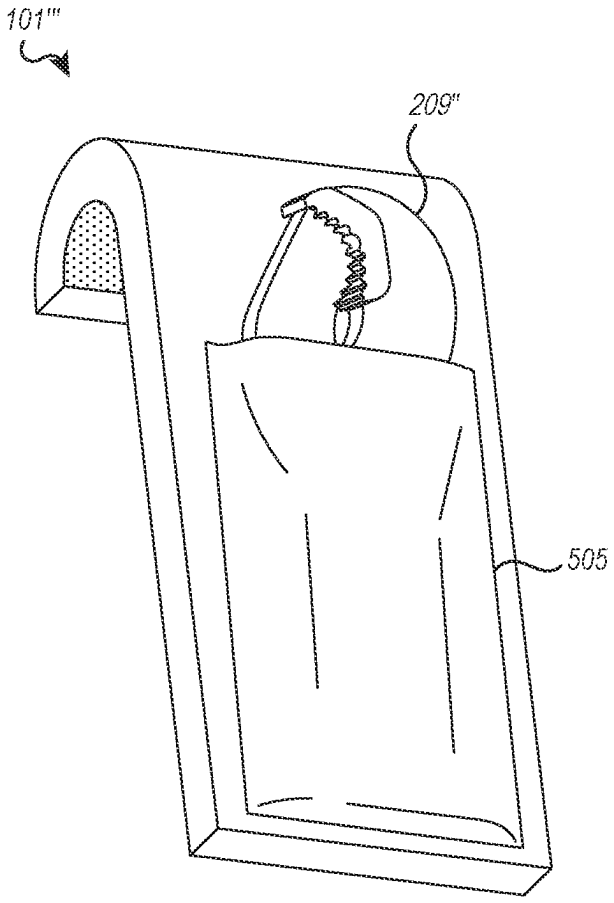


FIG. 5C

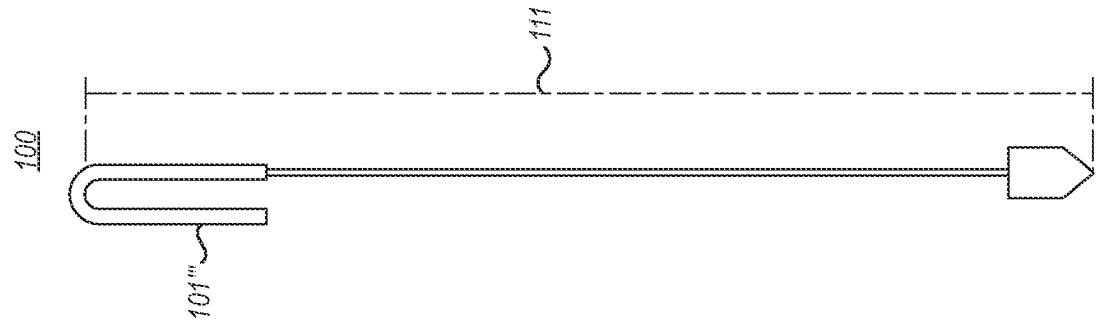


FIG. 6B

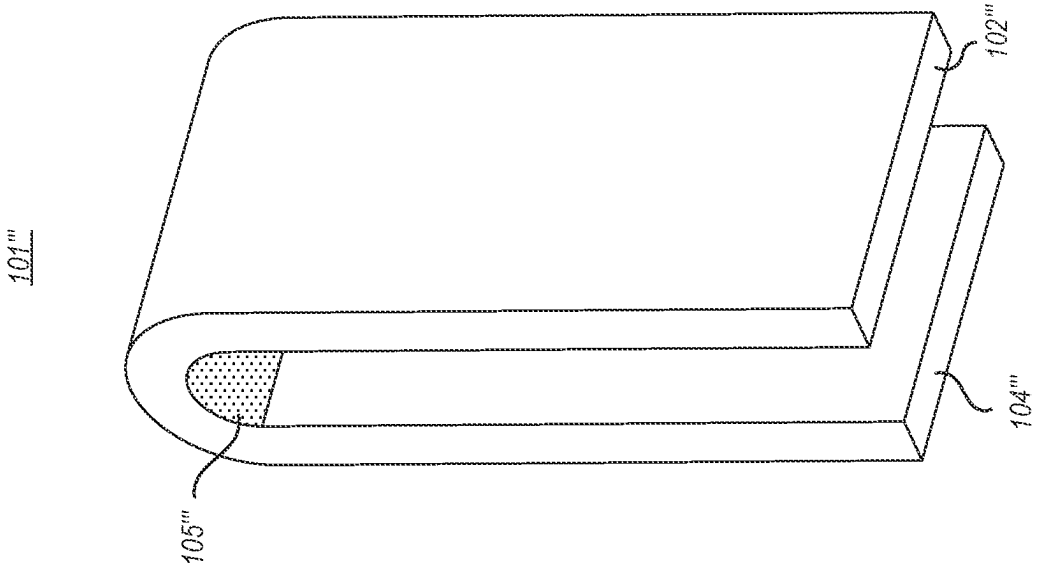


FIG. 6A

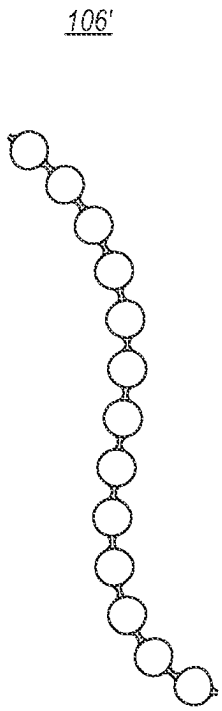


FIG. 7A

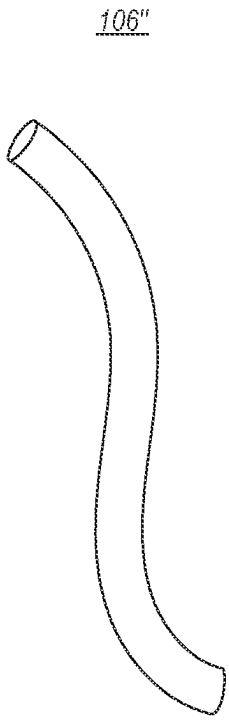


FIG. 7B

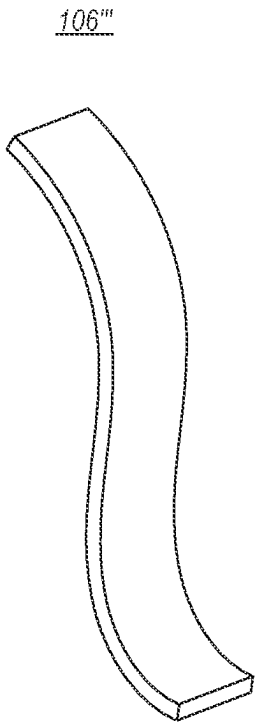


FIG. 7C

PICKLEBALL NET ADJUSTMENT APPARATUS

BACKGROUND

[0001] Pickleball is a sport that has grown in popularity in the United States and abroad. Developed in 1964, pickleball began as a game for children, but has now grown to include professional tournaments around the world. One contribution to the game's popularity is its accessibility—children and the elderly can enjoy the game without investing significant amounts of practice.

[0002] As a result, demand for pickleball courts and nets has grown with the sport's popularity. Many tennis clubs, country clubs, and public parks have installed dedicated pickleball infrastructure. As these courts get more use, the net can either sag or be adjusted away from its regulation height. Existing methods of measuring and adjusting the height of a pickleball net can require multiple rounds of measurement and adjustment to arrive at the desired height. There remains a need for an apparatus and related method that streamlines this process.

SUMMARY

[0003] This summary is provided to introduce a selection of concepts in a simplified form that are further described below in the detailed description. This summary is not intended to identify key features or essential features of the claimed subject matter, nor is it intended to be used as an indication of the scope of the claimed subject matter.

[0004] Adjusting a pickleball net is a process that typically involves using a crank at a side post to increase or decrease the tension in the net. Increasing tension in the net causes the middle to rise with respect to the surface of the court. Decreasing tension causes the net to sag towards the surface of the court. Pickleball nets have a regulation height of 36 inches at the sidelines and 34 inches in the middle of the net. Because the game rules require the net to droop towards the middle of the court, verifying that the middle of the net is the correct height cannot simply be done visually. Current methods of adjusting the net heigh involving conventional tools such as tape measures can effectively measure the height of a pickleball net, but such methods have limitations. For example, these conventional methods either require two people (e.g., one player adjusts the net from the side post while one player takes measurements at the middle of the net) or cumbersome back-and-forth, guess-and-check methods until the net is set at regulation height.

[0005] The present disclosure relates to a net adjustment apparatus and related methods designed to help players quickly and efficiently adjust a pickleball net to the regulation height of 34 inches in the middle of the net. The net adjustment apparatus aids in visualizing how a net should be adjusted (i.e. increasing/decreasing tension), and to what extent, while a player is actively adjusting the net.

[0006] In an exemplary embodiment, the net adjustment apparatus comprises a hook with a top portion and a bottom portion, wherein the top portion comprises an attachment section, wherein the attachment section comprises an inner groove. An elongate member (e.g., a ball chain) is attached to the bottom portion of the hook, and a bob is attached to a bottom portion of the elongate member. The bob includes a distal portion intended to touch the ground to indicate when the net is set at the correct height. The distance between the inner groove of the hook and the distal portion of the bob when the elongate member is fully extended corresponds to a regulation height of a sports net such as a pickleball net.

[0007] In some embodiments, the net adjustment apparatus further comprises an attachable/detachable tool for adjusting the height of the net. The attachable/detachable tool can be configured to attach/detach to the hook component of the net adjustment apparatus, for example.

[0008] A related method comprises providing a net adjustment apparatus as described herein, providing a net adjustment tool to adjust the net, placing the hook of the net adjustment apparatus on a top portion of the sports net, and adjusting the height of the sports net with the net adjustment tool until the bob is in contact with the ground. Adjusting the height of the sports net is carried out using the net adjustment tool until the elongate member hangs substantially undeformed and the bob maintains contact with the ground and is in a vertical position.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0009] Various objects, features, characteristics, and advantages of the invention will become apparent and more readily appreciated from the following description of the embodiments, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and the appended claims, all of which form a part of this specification. In the Drawings, like reference numerals may be utilized to designate corresponding or similar parts in the various Figures, and the various elements depicted are not necessarily drawn to scale, wherein:

[0010] FIGS. **1**A through **1**C illustrate an exemplary embodiment of a net adjustment apparatus, with FIG. **1**A showing a truncated view of the net adjustment apparatus, FIG. **1**B showing a side view of the net adjustment apparatus, and FIG. **1**C showing the net adjustment apparatus placed on a pickleball net.

[0011] FIG. **2**A outlines a related method of using the net adjustment apparatus to adjust a pickleball net to its regulation height.

[0012] FIGS. **2**B through **2**D show exemplary tension adjustment tools that are used in the method outlined in FIG. **2**A.

[0013] FIG. **2**E shows the tension adjustment tool illustrated in FIG. **2**B attached to a pickleball net in order to adjust the height of the pickleball net.

[0014] FIG. **2**F shows the net adjustment apparatus on a pickleball net wherein the pickleball net comprises a height with respect to a playing surface that is greater than the regulation height of the pickleball net.

[0015] FIG. **2**G shows the net adjustment apparatus on a pickleball net, wherein the pickleball net comprises a height with respect to a playing surface that is less than the regulation height of the pickleball net.

[0016] FIG. **2**H shows the net adjustment apparatus on a pickleball net, wherein the pickleball net comprises a height with respect to a playing surface that is equal to the regulation height of the pickleball net.

[0017] FIG. **3** illustrates an embodiment wherein a bob of the net adjustment apparatus is in contact with a playing surface.

[0018] FIGS. **4**A through **4**H illustrate embodiments of the bob of the net adjustment apparatus, wherein the bob includes features that increase the visibility of the bob.

[0019] FIGS. **5**A through **5**C illustrate embodiments of the hook of the net adjustment apparatus, wherein the hook is configured to include an attachable/detachable tension adjustment tool.

[0020] FIGS. **6**A and **6**B illustrate an embodiment of the hook of the net adjustment apparatus, wherein the hook comprises an elongated attachment section, with FIG. **6**A showing a perspective view of the hook, and FIG. **6**B showing a side view of the hook.

[0021] FIGS. **7**A through **7**C illustrate exemplary embodiments of the elongate member of the net adjustment apparatus.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Definitions

[0022] Before describing the present invention in detail, it is to be understood that this invention is not limited to particularly exemplified systems or process parameters that may, of course, vary. It is also to be understood that the terminology used herein is for the purpose of describing particular embodiments of the invention only, and is not intended to limit the scope of the invention in any manner.

[0023] All publications, patents and patent applications cited herein, whether supra or infra, are hereby incorporated by reference in their entirety to the same extent as if each individual publication, patent or patent application was specifically and individually indicated to be incorporated by reference.

[0024] The term "comprising" which is synonymous with "including," "containing," or "characterized by," is inclusive or open-ended and does not exclude additional, unrecited elements or method steps.

[0025] The term "consisting essentially of" limits the scope of a claim to the specified materials or steps "and those that do not materially affect the basic and novel characteristic(s)" of the claimed invention.

[0026] The term "consisting of" as used herein, excludes any element, step, or ingredient not specified in the claim.

[0027] It must be noted that, as used in this specification and the appended claims, the singular forms "a," "an" and "the" include plural referents unless the content clearly dictates otherwise. Thus, for example, reference to a "surfactant" includes one, two or more surfactants.

[0028] Numbers, percentages, ratios, or other values stated herein may include that value, and also other values that are about or approximately the stated value, as would be appreciated by one of ordinary skill in the art. As such, all values herein are understood to be optionally modified by the term "about". Such values thus include an amount or state close to the stated amount or state that still performs a desired function or achieves a desired result. A stated value should therefore be interpreted broadly enough to encompass values that are at least close enough to the stated value to perform a desired function or achieve a desired result, and/or values that round to the stated value. The stated values include at least the variation to be expected in a typical manufacturing or other process, and may include values that are within 10%, within 5%, within 1%, etc. of a stated value.

[0029] Some ranges may be disclosed herein. Additional ranges may be defined between any values disclosed herein as being exemplary of a particular parameter. All such ranges are contemplated and within the scope of the present disclosure.

[0030] As used herein, the term "between" is inclusive of any endpoints noted relative to a described range.

Example Embodiments

[0031] As discussed in the Background section, adjusting the height of a pickleball net can be a cumbersome process that requires multiple measurements and/or help from another player. Quickly adjusting the net to regulation height without having to move back and forth from the center of the net to the post can be done but usually requires assistance from another player. These challenges underline the need for a simple, portable, and reliable tool that allows a player to visualize the regulation height of a net and eliminate the need to take measurements of the net using conventional tools like a tape measure.

[0032] The present disclosure is directed to a net adjustment apparatus that meets one or more of these needs by providing an apparatus that can assist a player in visualizing the height of a pickleball net from a side post (i.e., where the net can be adjusted).

[0033] Additional elements may be provided to the embodiments described herein that aid in visualizing the height of a pickleball net and/or contribute to the portability, and/or reliability of the apparatus.

[0034] FIG. **1**A illustrates a net adjustment apparatus **100** that is used to illustrate the regulation height of a pickleball net. The net adjustment apparatus **100** comprises a hook **101**, wherein hook **101** comprises a top portion **103** and a bottom portion **102**. Top portion **103** comprises attachment section **104** wherein an inner groove **105** is disposed between attachment section **104** and top portion **103**. Net adjustment apparatus **100** further comprises an elongate member **106** and a bob **107**, wherein elongate member **106** is attached to bottom portion **103** of hook **101** and bob **107** is attached to the opposite end of elongate member **106**. Bob **107** further comprises a distal portion **108** configured to just contact the court when the apparatus is in use and the net is properly adjusted.

[0035] Hook **101** and bob **107** can be formed from wood, metal, plastic, and/or a similar rigid and durable material. Elongate member **106** may be formed from metal, plastic, fabric (e.g., yarn and/or polyester) or any other material that hangs substantially straight when bob **107** is not in contact with the ground and may be deformed when bob **107** is in contact with the ground. The term "deformed", in this context, refers to any bending and/or axial collapsing of the elongate member **106**, as opposed to the substantially straight, "undeformed" configuration of the elongate member **106** when gravity pulls the bob **107** and extends the elongate member **106**.

[0036] FIG. **1**B illustrates net adjustment apparatus **100** in a vertical, undeformed configuration, wherein net adjustment apparatus **100** comprises length **111**. Length **111** is defined by the distance between inner groove **105** (i.e., the inner surface of the inner groove **105**) and distal portion **108** when elongate member **106** is in a substantially undeformed (i.e., straight) configuration. In a preferred embodiment, length **111** comprises the regulation height of the middle of the pickleball net (i.e., 34 inches). In other embodiments, the length of the elongate member **106** can be adjusted so that length **111** corresponds to the regulation height of other sports nets.

[0037] FIG. **1**C illustrates net adjustment apparatus **100** placed on pickleball net **109**, such that inner groove **105** of net adjustment apparatus **100** is in contact with a top surface **110** of pickleball net **109**.

[0038] FIG. **2**A illustrates a flowchart of a method **200**, with reference to components illustrated in FIGS. **2**B-**2**G, wherein step **201** comprises placing net adjustment apparatus **100** on pickleball net **109**, step **202** comprises providing a tension adjustment tool **205** and inserting tension adjustment tool **205** into adjustment socket **206** on net post **207**, step **203** comprises using tension adjustment tool **205** to decrease tension in pickleball net **109** until bob **107** is in contact with playing surface **208**, and step **204** comprises using tension adjustment tool **205** to adjust tension in net **109** until bob **107** maintains contact with playing surface **208** and elongate member **106** hangs substantially undeformed. In some embodiments, certain steps may be omitted and/or iterated, depending on whether the net **109** initially sits too low or too high. For example, if the net initially sits too low, the user may skip step **203**. A user may iterate various steps to fine-tune the adjustment until the bob **107** maintains contact with playing surface **208** and elongate member **106** hangs substantially undeformed.

[0039] FIG. **2**B illustrates an embodiment of tension adjustment tool **205**, wherein tension adjustment tool **205** comprises shaft **209**, socket connector **210**, and handle **211**. Socket connector **210** is configured to fit into socket **206** and enable tension adjustment tool **205** to adjust the tension in pickleball net **109**. In most embodiments, increasing the tension in pickleball net **109** will cause the distance between top surface **110** of pickleball net **109** and playing surface **208** to increase. In most embodiments, decreasing the tension in pickleball net **109** will cause the distance between top surface **110** of pickleball net **109** and playing surface **208** to decrease.

[0040] FIG. **2**C illustrates an alternative embodiment of tension adjustment tool **205'**, wherein tension adjustment tool **205'** comprises shaft **209'**, socket connector **210'**, and handle **211'**. Socket connector **210'** is configured to fit into socket **206** and enable tension adjustment tool **205'** to adjust the tension in pickleball net **109**. In most embodiments, increasing the tension in pickleball net **109** will cause the distance between top surface **110** of pickleball net **109** and playing surface **208** to increase. In most embodiments, decreasing the tension in pickleball net **109** will cause the distance between top surface **110** of pickleball net **109** and playing surface **208** to decrease.

[0041] FIG. **2**D illustrates an alternative embodiment of tension adjustment tool **209"**, wherein tension adjustment tool **209"** is configured as a self-adjusting wrench with connector configured to adjustably fit over socket **206** to adjust tension in pickleball net **109**.

[0042] In most embodiments, increasing the tension in pickleball net **109** will cause the distance between top surface **110** of pickleball net **109** and playing surface **208** to increase. In most embodiments, decreasing the tension in pickleball net **109** will cause the distance between top surface **110** of pickleball net **109** and playing surface **208** to decrease.

[0043] FIG. **2**E illustrates an embodiment wherein socket connector **210** of tension adjustment tool **205** is inserted into adjustment socket **206** of net post **207**. In some embodiments, turning tension adjustment tool clockwise causes the tension in net **109** to increase. In some embodiments, turning net adjustment tool counterclockwise cause the tension in net **109** to decrease.

[0044] The shape and/or size of tension adjustment tool **205** and tension adjustment tool **205'** are meant to be illustrative of a few possible embodiments. For example, the shape and/or size of either tool may be modified to increase portability, increase torque applied to socket **206**, and/or correspond to socket **206** of a specific net manufacturer. Changes in the shape, size, and/or general outward appearance of tension adjustment tool **205** and tension adjustment tool **205'** that do not hinder the ability of either tool to fit into socket **206** and adjust the tension in pickleball net **109** are therefore consistent with the embodiments as described herein.

[0045] FIG. **2**F illustrates an embodiment wherein net adjustment apparatus **100** is placed on pickleball net **109** and wherein bob **107** is not in contact with playing surface **208**. Distance **113** is defined as the distance between top portion **110** of pickleball net **109** and playing surface **208**. In FIG. **2**F, distance **113** is greater than distance **111**, indicating to a player that distance **113** is greater than the regulation height of pickleball net **109** (i.e., pickleball net **109** is too high). In such a configuration, a player can see the gap between bob **107** and playing surface **208**, confirming to the player that distance **113** is greater than distance **111**. In such a position, the bob **107** may also freely swing to further indicate to the user that distance **113** is too great. In order to adjust pickleball net **109** to obtain a regulation height relative to playing surface **208** (i.e., distance **111**), the player can carry out step **202** of method **200**.

[0046] FIG. **2**G illustrates an embodiment wherein net adjustment apparatus **100** is placed on pickleball net **109** and wherein bob **107** is in contact with playing surface **208**. In FIG. **2**G, distance **113** is less than distance **111**, indicating to a player that distance **113** is less than the regulation height of pickleball net **109** (i.e., pickleball net **109** is too low). In such a configuration, a player can see the deformed nature of elongate member **106** as well as bob **107** in a configuration other than vertical, confirming to the player that distance **113** is less than distance **111**. In order to adjust pickleball net **109** to a regulation height relative to playing surface **208** (i.e., distance **111**), the player can skip step **203** and carry out step **204** of method **200**.

[0047] FIG. **2**H illustrates an embodiment wherein net adjustment apparatus **100** is placed on pickleball net **109** and wherein bob **107** is in contact with playing surface **208**. In FIG. **2**H, distance **113** is equal to distance **111**, indicating to a player that distance **113** corresponds to a regulation height of pickleball net **109**. In such a configuration, a player can see bob **107** in contact with playing surface **208** wherein bob **107** is in a substantially vertical configuration with respect to playing surface **208** and can see elongate member **106** hanging in a substantially undeformed configuration, confirming to the player that distance **113** is equal to the regulation height of pickleball net **109**.

[0048] In a preferred embodiment, bob **107** comprises an oblong shape. For example, bob **107** may comprise a height to width ratio of about 1.25:1, or about 1.33:1 or about 1.5:1, or about 1.67:1, or about 1.75:1, or about 2:1, or about 2.25:1, or about 2.5:1, or about 2.75:1, or about 3:1, or a height to width ratio within a range with endpoints comprising any of the foregoing values.

[0049] FIG. **3** illustrates an embodiment wherein bob **107** comprises a height to width ratio of about 2.25:1 (i.e., an oblong shape), and wherein the oblong shape of bob **107** causes bob **107** to tip at an angle **301** relative to playing surface **208** when bob **107** is in contact with playing surface **208**. Angle **301** at which bob **107** tips can assist a player in visualizing when height **113** is equal to height **111** (see FIG. **2**G). For example, if bob **107** is tipped at an angle of 45° relative to playing surface **208**, player **107** must increase the tension in pickleball net **109** until bob **107** forms an angle of 90° relative to playing surface **208** and bob **107** maintains contact with playing surface **208**. A bob **107** with a height to width ratio that is too low will be more difficult for the user to visualize the level of tilt from afar while attempting to adjust the tension and height of the net **109**.

[0050] In some embodiments, bob **107** can comprise additional features that increase the visibility of bob **107** and/or the visibility of angle **301**. For example, FIG. **4**A illustrates bob **107'** wherein distal portion **108'** of bob **107'** comprises a point (i.e., where the diameter of the bob **107** tapers, continuously or intermittently, toward the distal portion **108'**). In such a configuration, distal portion **108'** exaggerates angle **301** when bob **107'** is in contact with playing surface **208** (see FIG. **3**), thereby enhancing a player's ability to visualize any tilt and thereby determine if distance **113** is equivalent to distance **111** (see FIG. **2**H). FIG. **4**B illustrates the topography of distal portion **108'**.

[0051] FIG. **4**C illustrates another embodiment wherein bob **107"** comprises ridges **401** and wherein distal portion **108"** of bob **107"** comprises a rounded tip. Ridges **401** can increase the visibility of bob **107"** by adding more detail to bob **107"** thereby improving a player's ability to see bob **107"** from a distance such as the distance between net post **207** and pickleball net **109**. The increased detail provided by ridges **401** can therefore assist a player in determine if distance **113** is equivalent to distance **111** (see FIG. **2**H). FIG. **4**D illustrates the topography of distal portion **108"**.

[0052] FIG. **4**E illustrates another embodiment wherein bob **107'"** comprises one or more arrows **404** and wherein distal portion **108'"** of bob **107'"** comprises a rounded tip. One or more arrows **404** can increase the improve a player's ability to visualize angle **301** when bob **107'"** is in contact with playing surface **208** (see FIG. **3**), thereby enhancing a player's ability to determine if distance **113** is equivalent to distance **111** (see FIG. **2**H). FIG. **4**F illustrates the topography of bob **107'"**. In some embodiments, one or more arrows **402** comprise a color that contrasts with the color of rest of bob **107'"**. For example, one or more arrows **402** can be white and the rest of bob **107'"** can be black or vice versa. Such arrows **402** can be included on other bob embodiments as described herein.

[0053] Embodiments of bob **107** can comprise a number of geometric shapes. The embodiments illustrated in FIGS. **4**A-**4**F illustrate bobs that are conical, cylindrical, ovular (i.e., geometric solids that comprise a circular cross section, as illustrated in FIGS. **4**B, **4**D, and **4**F). In some embodiments, bob **107** can comprise other 3-dimensional shapes. FIG. **4**G illustrates an exemplary embodiment, bob **107""**, wherein bob **107""** comprises a prism. FIG. **4**H illustrates the topography of bob **107""**.

[0054] Furthermore, some embodiments of bob **107** may comprise a combination of features illustrated in FIGS. **4**A-**4**H and/or other features that increase the visibility of bob **107** and/or exaggerate angle **103** (see FIG. **3**).

[0055] In preferred embodiments, bob **107** comprises a height that allows a player to see bob **107** when it is placed in the middle of pickleball net **109** from net post **207**. In some embodiments, bob **107** comprises a height of about 1.5 inches, or about 1.75 inches, or about 2 inches, or about 2.5 inches, or about 3 inches, or about 3.5 inches, or a height within a range comprising endpoints defined by any of the foregoing values. In preferred embodiments, bob height does not exceed 3.5 inches, so that net adjustment apparatus **100** retains its portable nature.

[0056] Alternative embodiments of hook **101** can be used to enhance the portability and convenience of using net adjustment apparatus **100**. FIG. **5**A illustrates such an embodiment, wherein hook **101'** further comprises recess **501**, and wherein recess **501** is configured to receive a tension adjustment tool **205** (see FIG. **2**B), tension adjustment tool **205'** (see FIG. **2**C), and/or tension adjustment tool **209"**. Cutout **503** is configured to house socket connector **210** of tension adjustment tool **205** if tension adjustment tool **205** is provided, and cutout **503'** is configured to house handle **211'** and socket connecter **210'** of tension adjustment tool **205'** if tension adjustment tool **205'** is provided. The shape and/or size of cutout **503'** can be modified to fit tension adjustment tool **209"**. Tabs **502** can be provided in order to secure tension adjustment tool **205**, tension adjustment tool **205'**, and/or tension adjustment tool **209"** via snap fit. Alternatively, recess **501** can be configured to secure tension adjustment tool **205**, tension adjustment tool **205'**, and/or tension adjustment tool **209"** via friction fit. The shape and size of recess **501**, tabs **502**, cutout **503**, and cutout **503'** are illustrative of one exemplary embodiment of hook **101'**. Their shape and size can be altered according to the shape and size of tension adjustment tool **205**, tension adjustment tool **205'** and tension adjustment tool **209"**.

[0057] FIG. **5**B illustrates another embodiment wherein hook **101"** comprises VELCRO® patch **504** configured to attach to VELCRO® patch **504'**, wherein VELCRO® patch **504'** is disposed on tension adjustment tool **205** (or **205'**). VELCRO® patches **504** and **504'** are configured to secure tension adjustment tool **205** and/or tension adjustment tool **205'** to hook **101"**.

[0058] FIG. **5**C illustrates an additional embodiment wherein hook **101'"** comprises pouch **505**, wherein pouch **505** is configured to secure tension adjustment tool **209"** (as pictured), tension adjustment tool **205**, and/or tension adjustment tool **205'** to hook **101'"**, wherein tension adjustment tool **205**, tension adjustment tool **205'**, and/or tension adjustment tool **209"** are easy to remove from pouch **505** during use and wherein tension adjustment tool **205**, tension adjustment tool **205'**, and/or tension adjustment tool **209"** are easy to stow in pouch **505** after use.

[0059] Including hook **101'** and/or hook **101"** in net adjustment apparatus **100** can increase the ease with which a player can adjust pickleball net **109**. For example, hook **101'** can increase the likelihood that a player brings all of the required tools to effectively carry out method **200** (see FIG. **2**A). Hooks **101'** and **101"** are exemplary embodiments that allow hooks **101'** and **101"** to include and attachable/detachable tension adjustment tool. Other embodiments of hook **101** may include different that enable hook **101** to include an attachable/detachable tension adjustment tool.

[0060] Other embodiments of hook **101** can be used to improve the security of the attachment of net adjustment apparatus **100** to pickleball net **109** (see FIG. **1**C). For

example, in some embodiments, inner groove **105** comprises a frictional material, wherein the frictional material can be leather, rubber, vinyl, and/or any material that increases friction between inner groove **103** and the top portion **110** of pickleball net **109**. Such an embodiment can improve the attachment of net adjustment apparatus **100** to pickleball net **109** by preventing net adjustment apparatus **100** from slipping along the top portion **110** of pickleball net **109**.

[0061] FIG. **6**A illustrates another embodiment that improves attachment of net adjustment apparatus **100** to pickleball net **109**, wherein hook **101'''** comprises attachment section **104'''** wherein attachment section **104'''** extends past inner groove **105'''** and terminates at or near bottom portion **102'''**. Such an embodiment can improve the attachment of net adjustment apparatus **100** to pickleball net **109** by preventing net adjustment apparatus **100** from falling off pickleball net **109**.

[0062] FIG. **6**B illustrates a side view of net adjustment apparatus **100** including hook **101'''**. The inclusion of an alternative embodiment of hook **101** such as hook **101'''** does not change distance **111**.

[0063] Preferred embodiments of elongate member **106** comprise an elongate member of fixed length with no axial stretch when elongate member **106** is weighted with by bob **107** and wherein elongate member **106** is deformable under pressure (see FIG. **1**E). Elongate member **106** may be formed from metal, plastic, fabric, string, or other material that comprises a fixed length, is substantially free of elastic stretch when weighted under gravity by bob **107**, and has sufficient bending flexibility to be deformable, as that term is defined herein.

[0064] FIG. **7**A illustrates a portion of elongate member **106'**, wherein elongate member **106'** comprises a ball chain.

[0065] FIG. **7**B illustrates a portion of elongate member **106"**, wherein elongate member **106"** comprises a string.

[0066] FIG. **7**C illustrates a portion of elongate member **106'''**, wherein elongate member **106'''** comprises a strap.

[0067] The embodiments illustrated in FIGS. **7**A-**7**C are exemplary embodiments of elongate member **106** that accord elongate member **106** with a fixed length and no practical axial strain when fully weighted by bob **107**. Other embodiments that accord elongate member **106** with the same properties can be included in net adjustment apparatus **100**.

1. A net adjustment apparatus comprising:

a hook comprising a top portion, a bottom portion, and an attachment section, wherein an inner groove is disposed between the top portion and the attachment section,

an elongate member attached to the bottom portion of the hook, and

a bob attached to a bottom portion of the elongate member, the bob comprising a distal portion,

wherein the distance between the inner groove of the hook and the distal portion of the bob when the elongate member is fully extended corresponds to a regulation height of a sports net.

2. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the sports net has a regulation height of 34 inches.

3. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **2**, wherein the sports net is a pickleball net.

4. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the hook includes a tool attachment portion configured to receive a tension adjustment tool for adjusting the height of the sports net.

5. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the bob comprises an oblong shape.

6. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **5**, wherein the bob has a height to width ratio of 1.25:1-3:1.

7. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the bob has a height of 1.5-3 inches.

8. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the distal portion of the bob comprises a point.

9. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the elongate member comprises a chain.

10. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **9**, wherein the chain is a ball chain.

11. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the hook is formed from wood, plastic, metal, leather, or a combination thereof.

12. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the bob is formed from wood, plastic, metal, leather, or a combination thereof.

13. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the inner groove of the hook further comprises a frictional coating.

14. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **13**, wherein the frictional coating comprises leather.

15. The net adjustment apparatus of claim **1**, wherein the attachment section extends from the top portion of the hook to the bottom portion of the hook.

16. A method of adjusting a sports net, the method comprising:

providing a net adjustment apparatus;

providing a tension adjustment tool to adjust the tension in the net;

placing the hook of the net adjustment apparatus on a top portion of the sports net and adjusting the height of the sports net with the net adjustment tool until the bob is in contact with a playing surface;

adjusting the tension in the sports net with the tension adjustment tool until the elongate member hangs substantially undeformed and the bob maintains contact with the ground and is in a vertical configuration with respect to the playing surface.

17. The method of claim **16**, wherein the sports net is a pickleball net.

18. The method of claim **16**, wherein the sports net has a regulation height of 34 inches.

19. The method of claim **16**, wherein the tension adjustment tool is attachable to the net adjustment apparatus.

20. The method of claim **19**, wherein the tension adjustment tool is attached to the hook of the net adjustment apparatus and is detached therefrom prior to adjusting the height of the sports net with the tension adjustment tool.

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