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(54) **PROTECTIVE SOFT HELMET**

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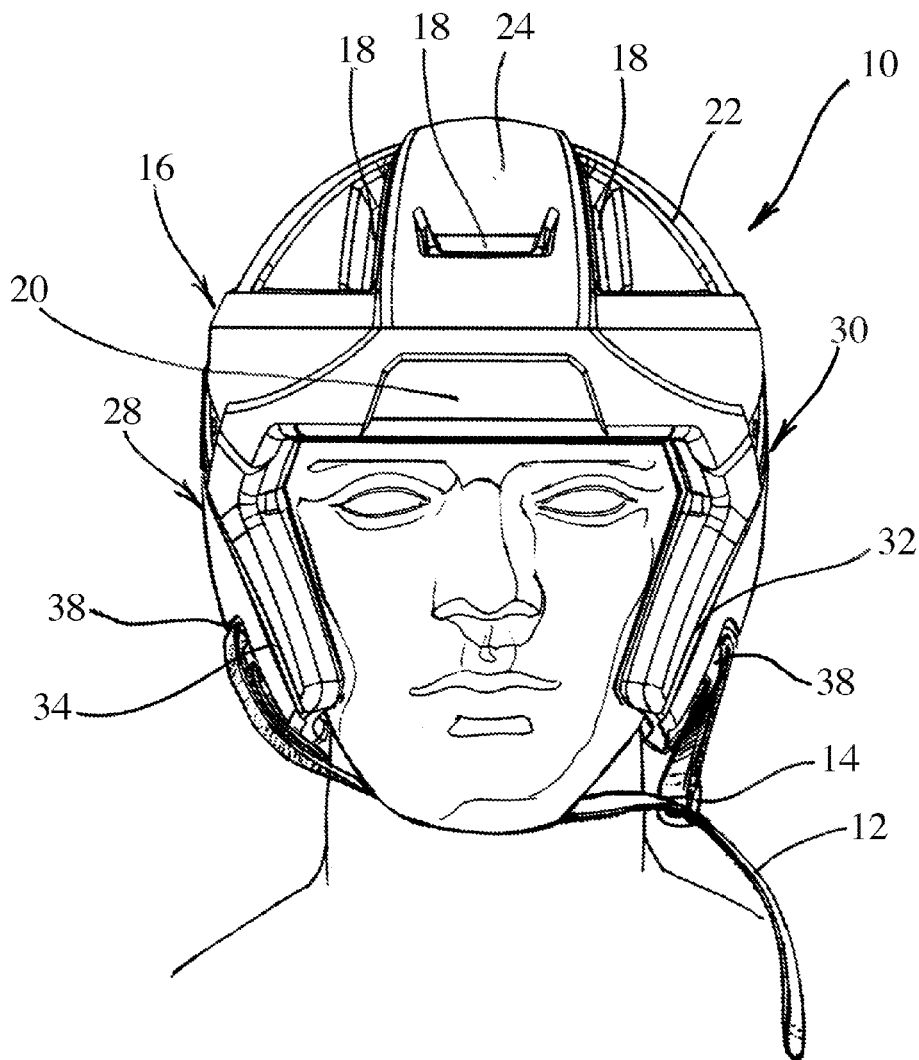
(57) **ABSTRACT**

(22) Filed: **Jan. 16, 2019**

A protective soft helmet integrally formed from a one-piece molded plastic foam for head protection. A gap of variable width is formed at a rear of the helmet to accommodate heads of differing sizes. A tail structure is disposable in overlapping relation to side edges of the gap so as to cover the gap. The soft helmet may include hard snap fasteners for removable attachment of a traditional chin strap to the helmet.

**Related U.S. Application Data**

(60) Provisional application No. 62/618,323, filed on Jan. 17, 2018.



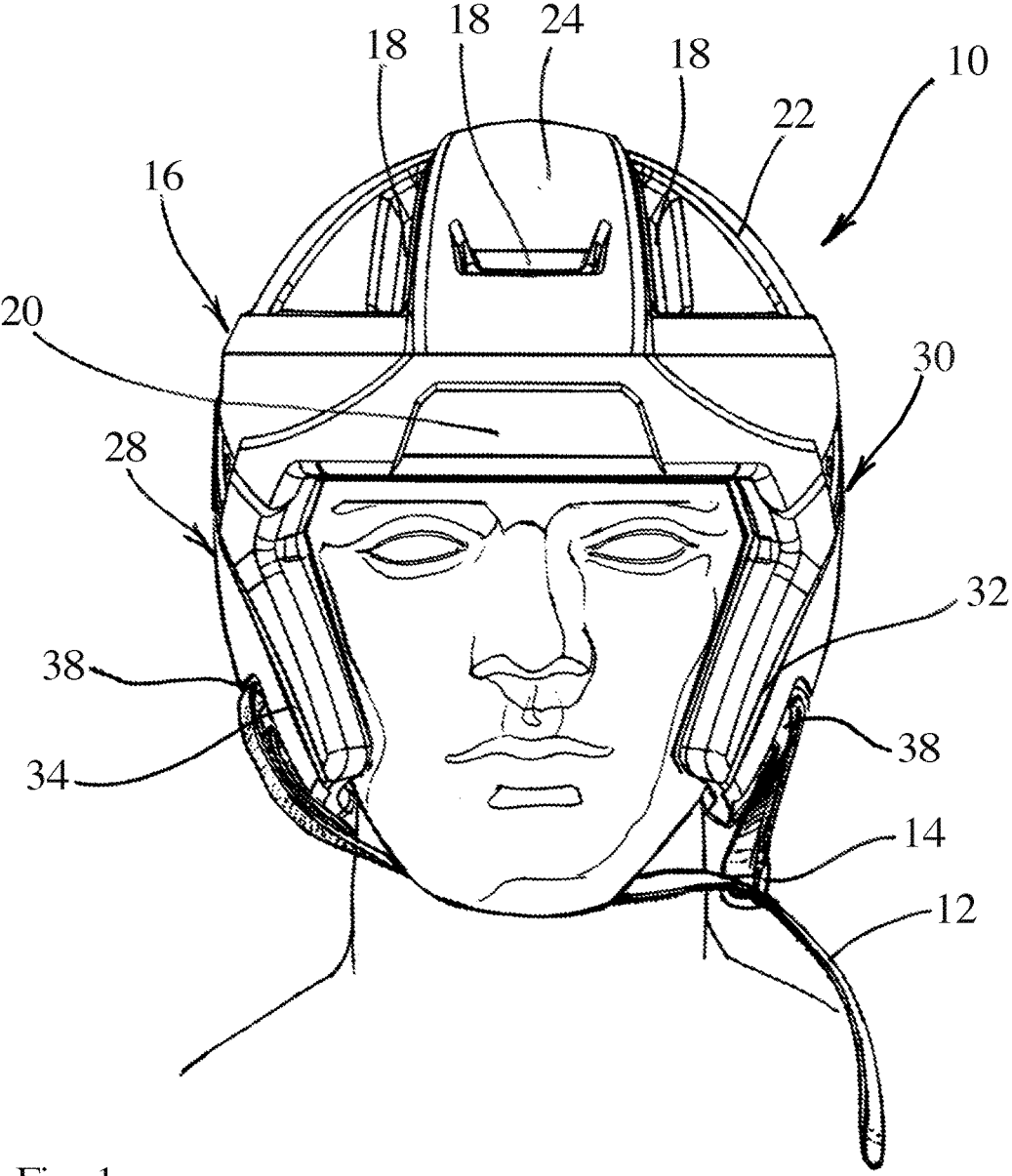


Fig. 1

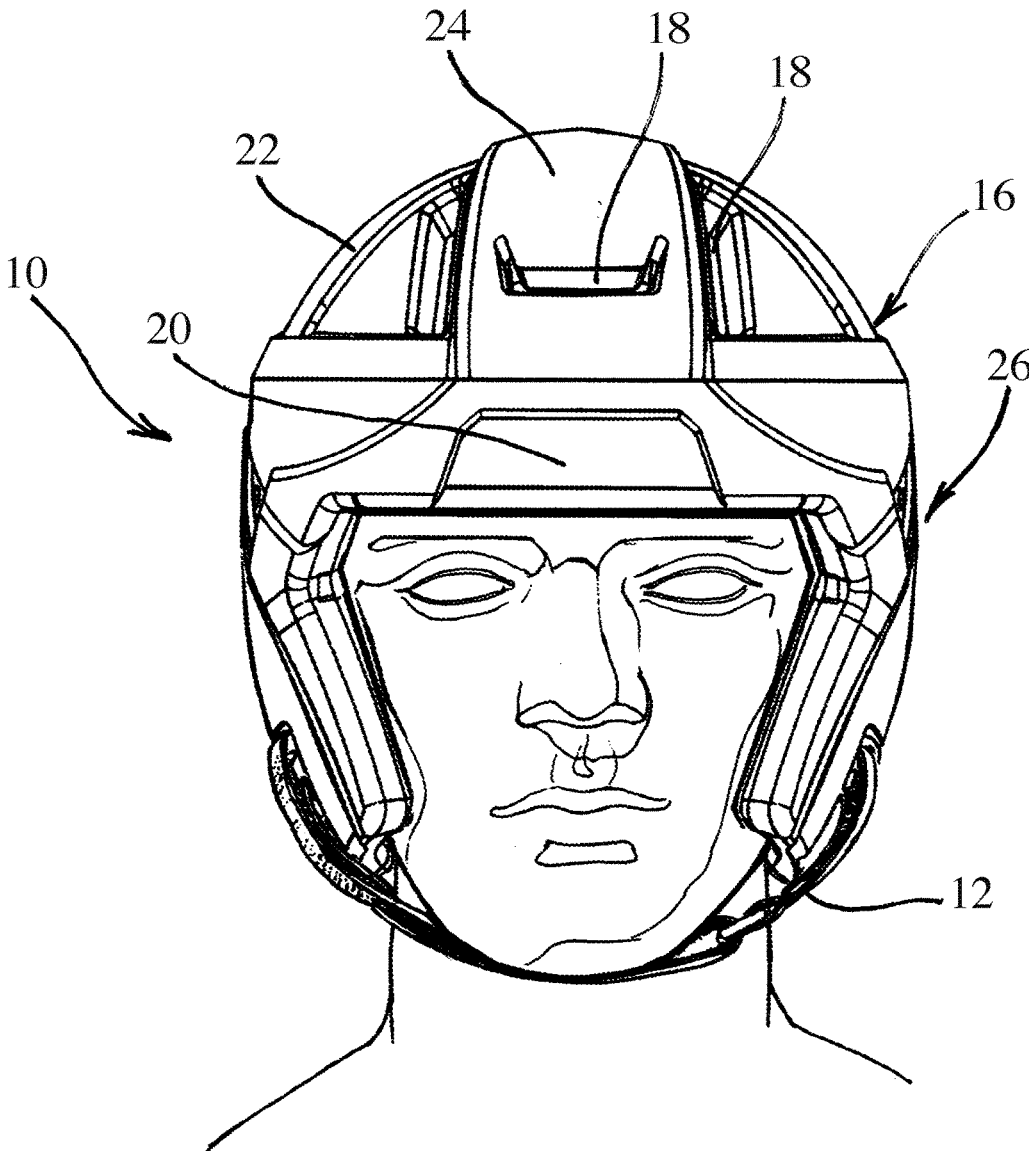


Fig. 2

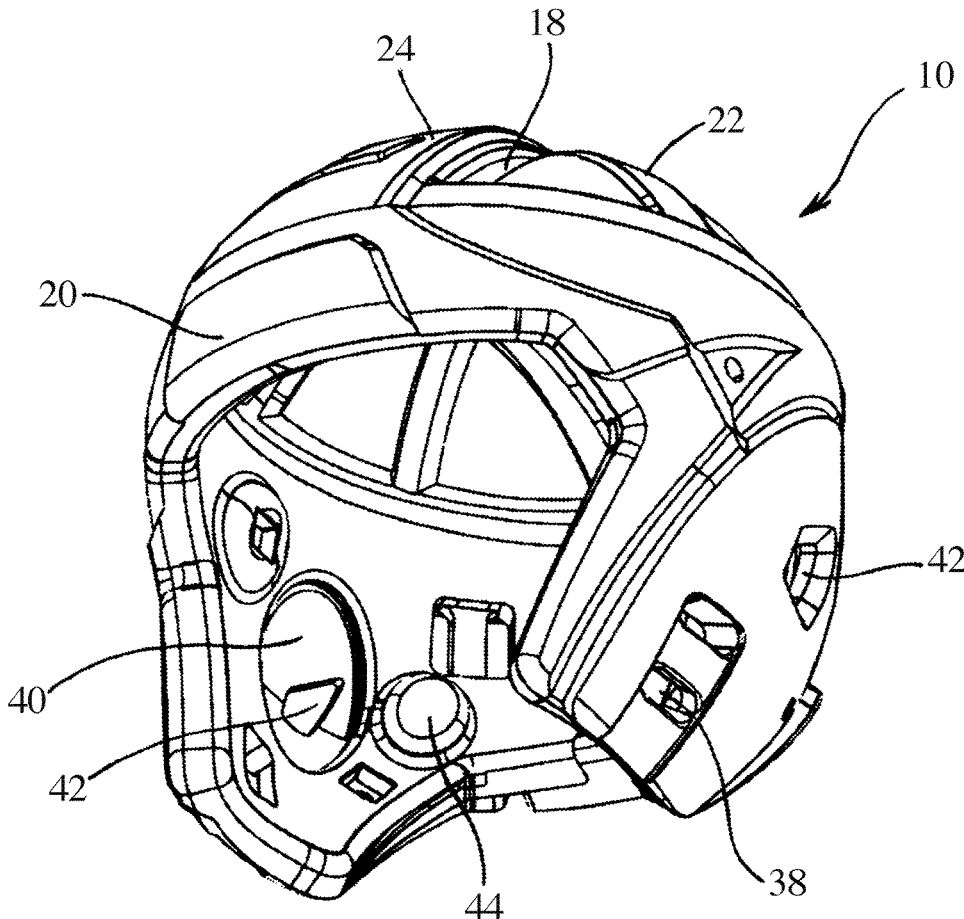


Fig. 3

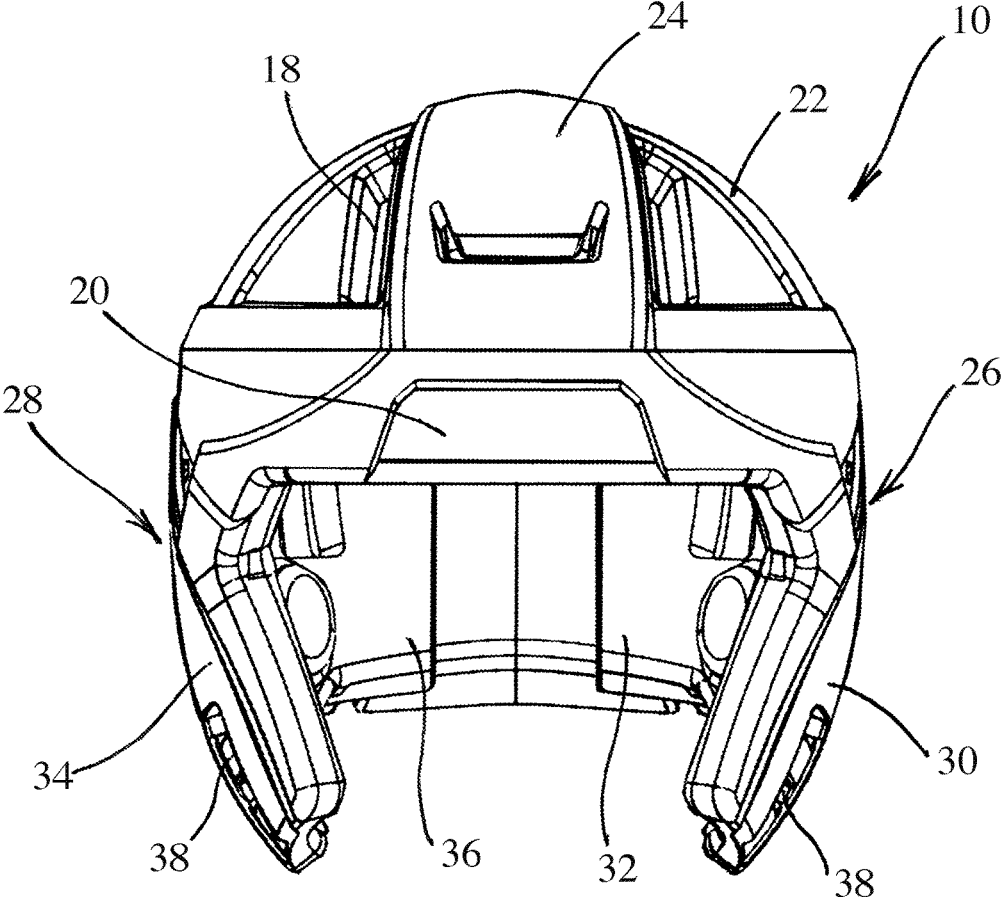


Fig. 4

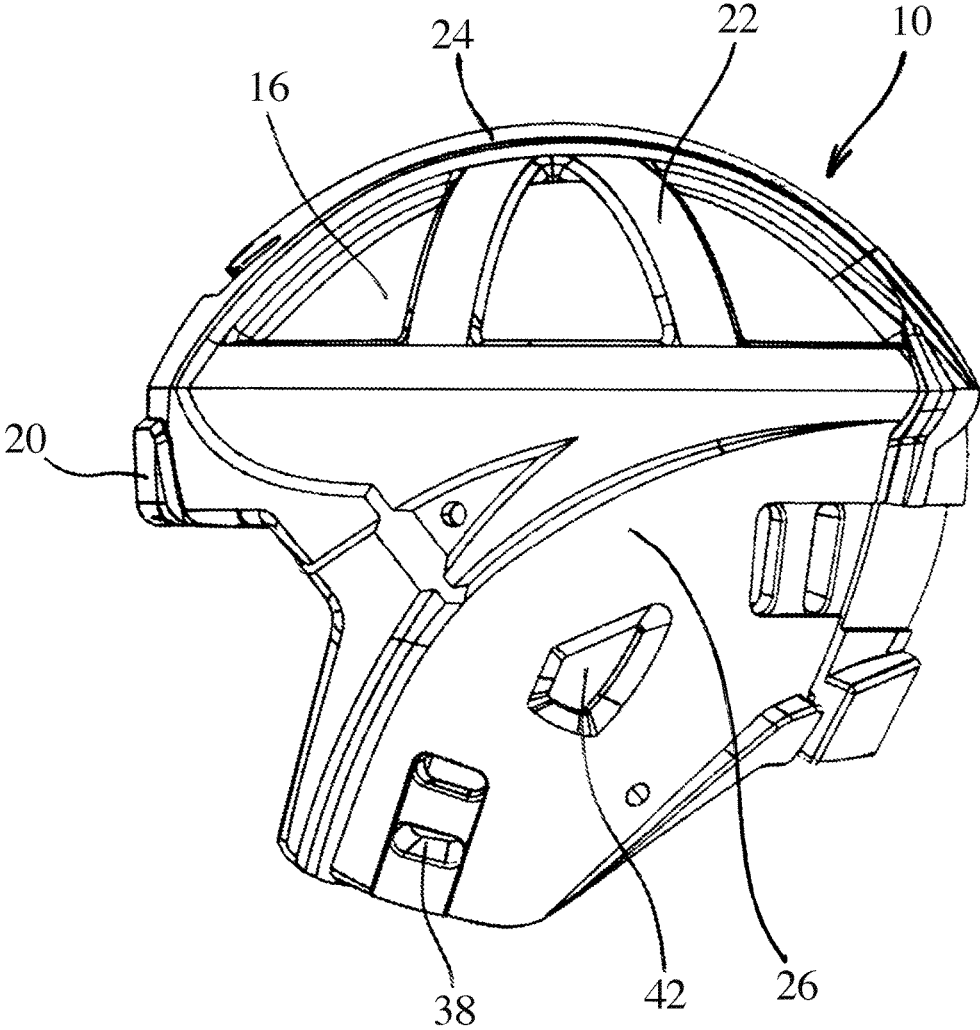


Fig. 5

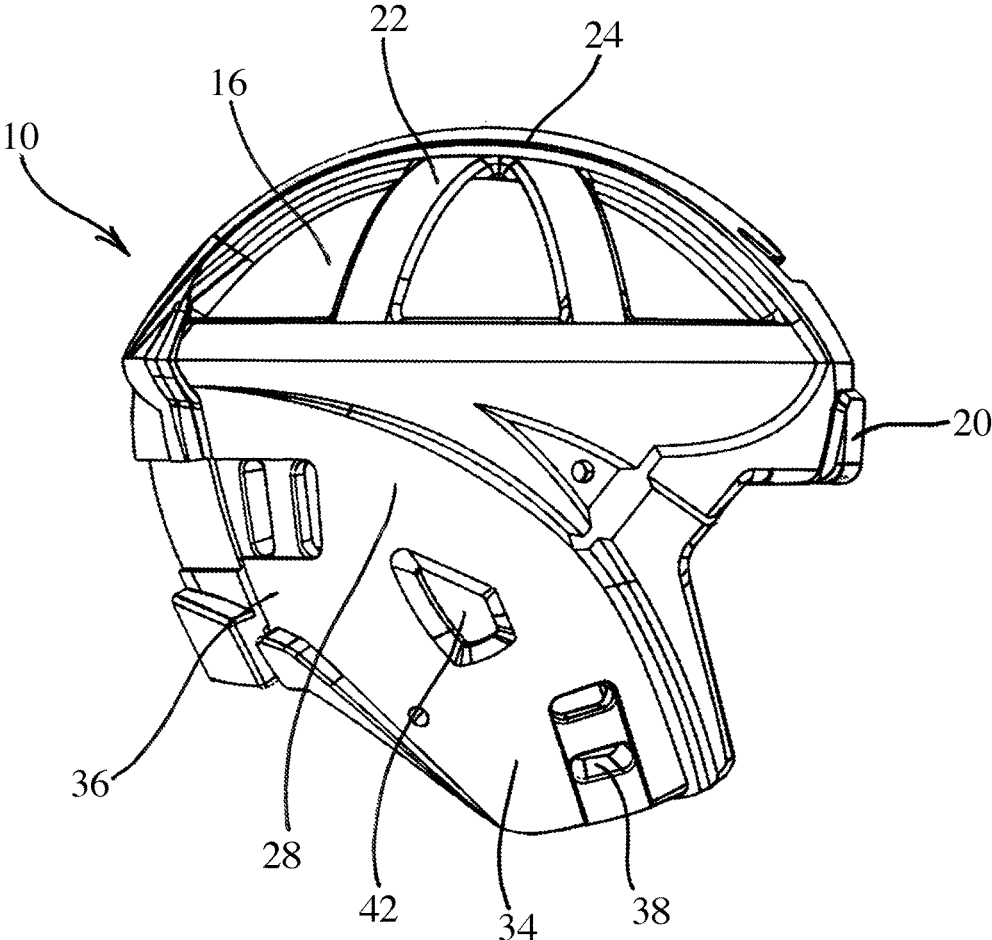


Fig. 6

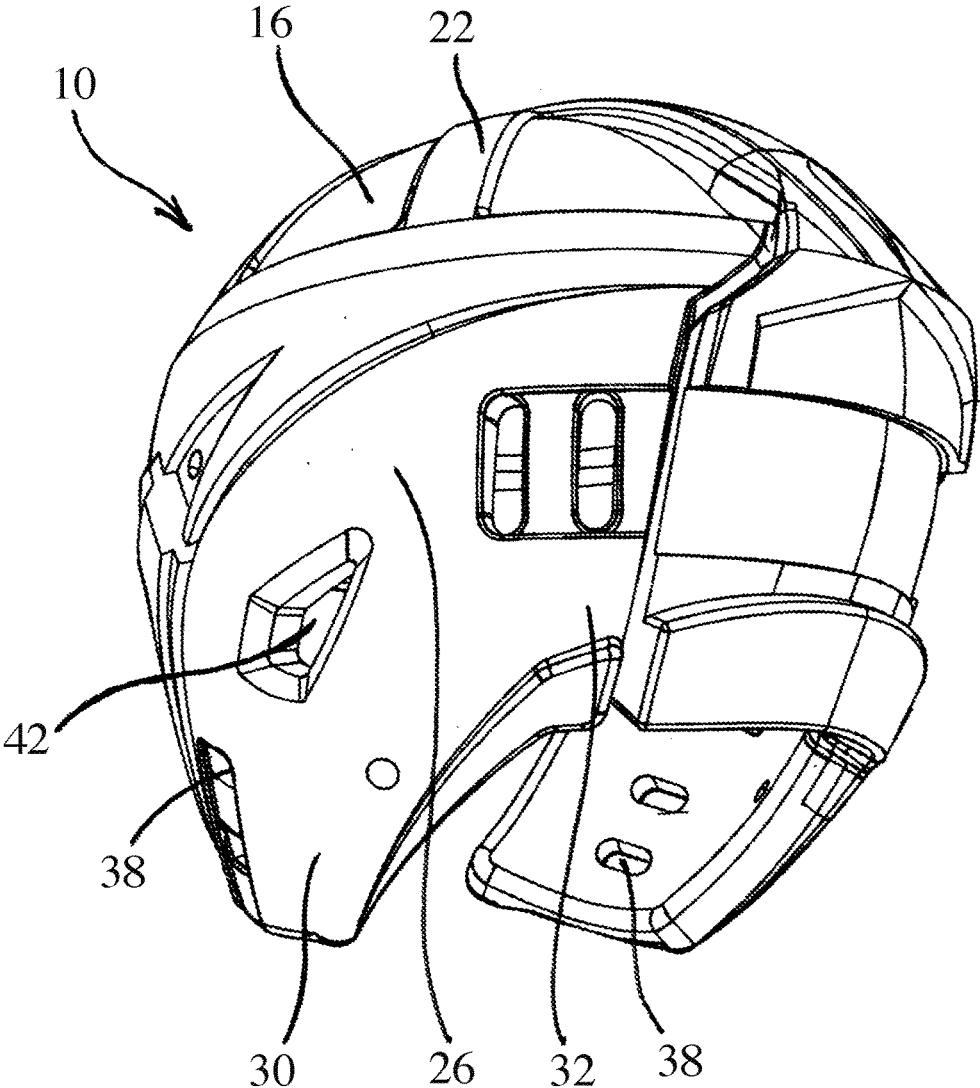


Fig. 7



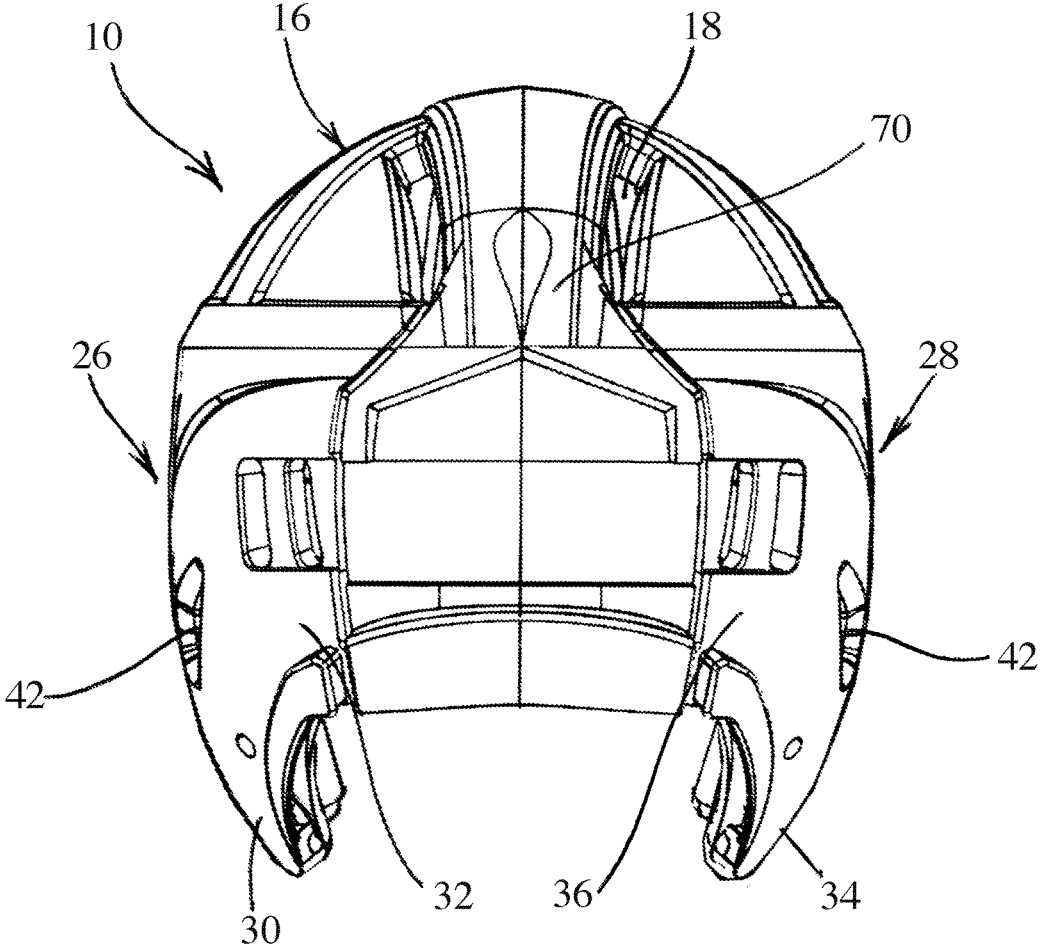


Fig. 8

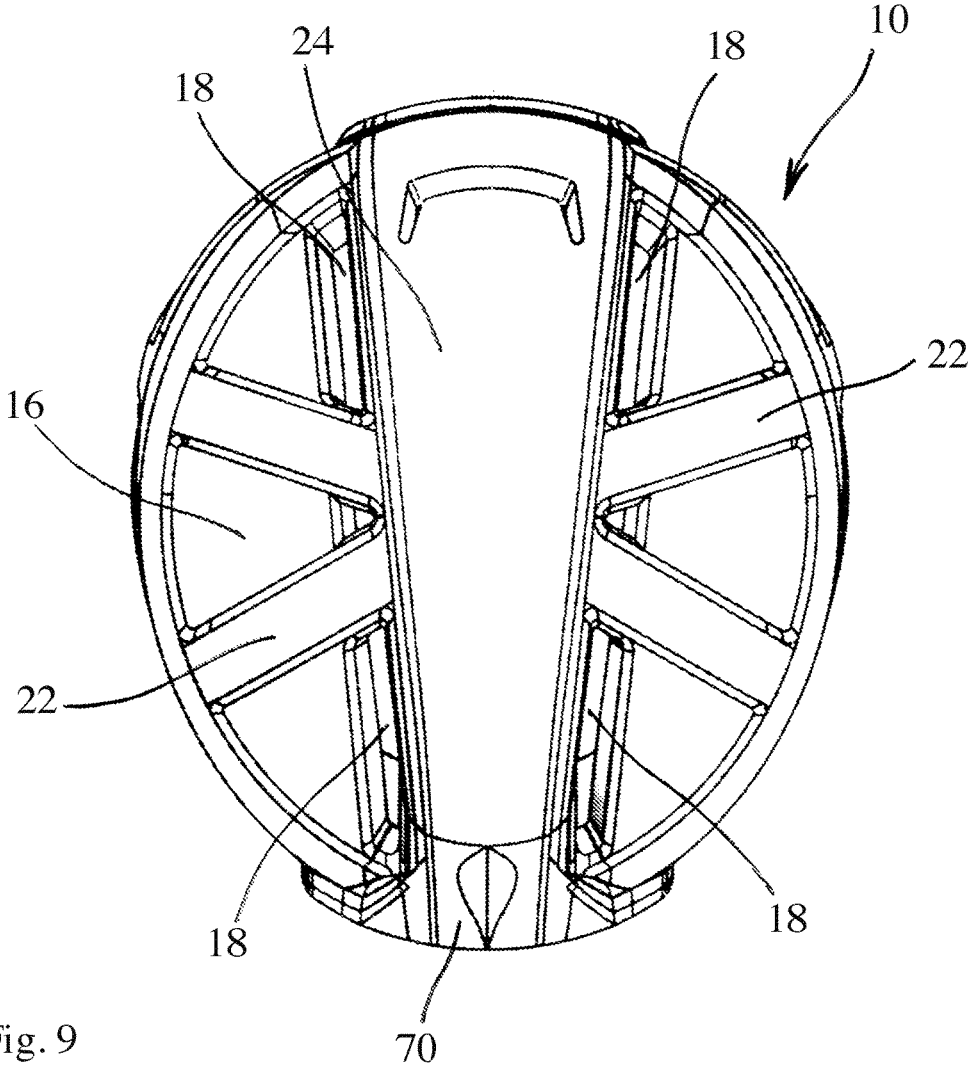


Fig. 9

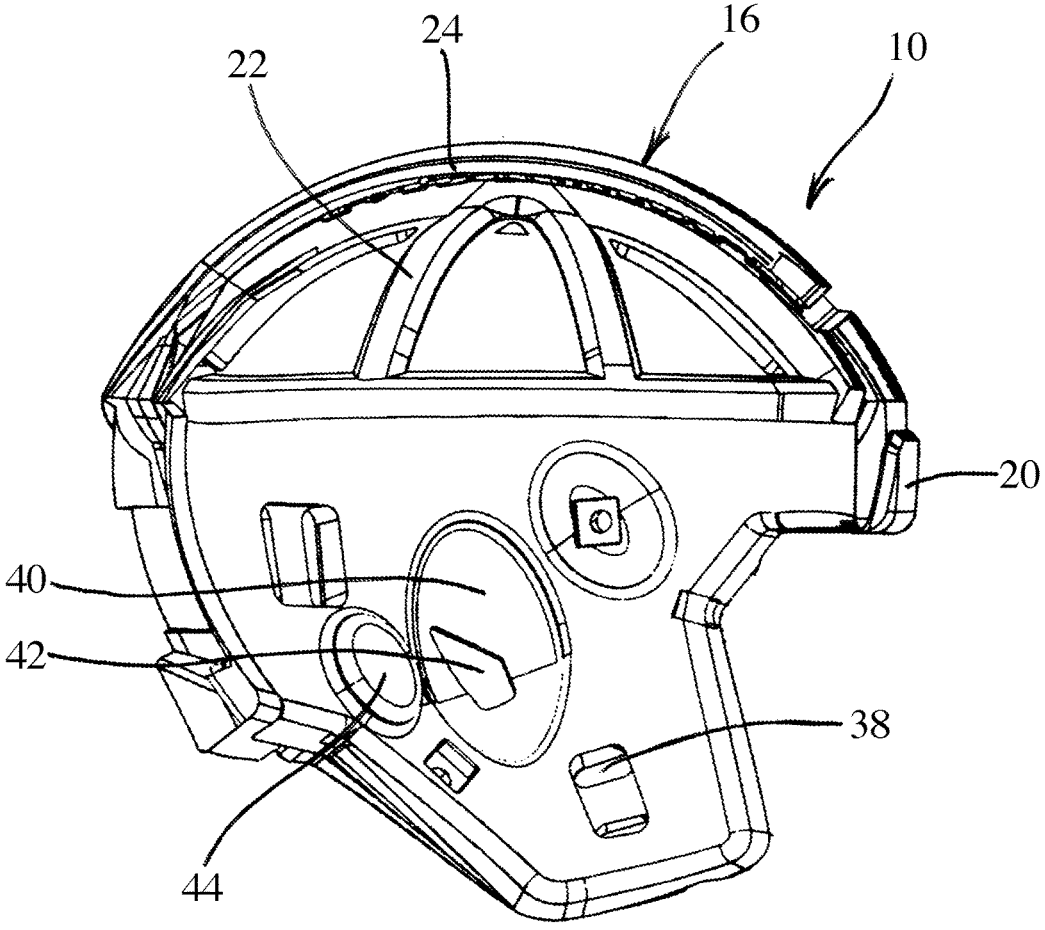


Fig. 10

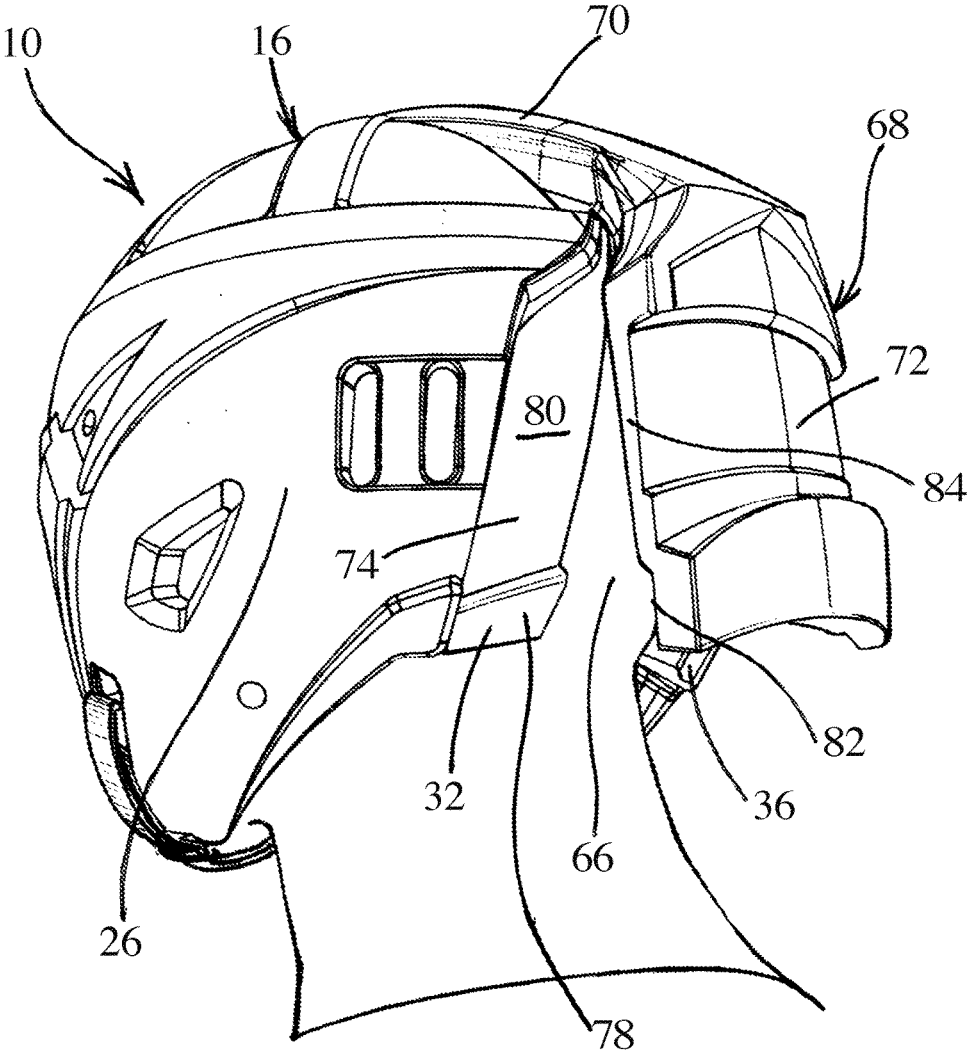


Fig. 11

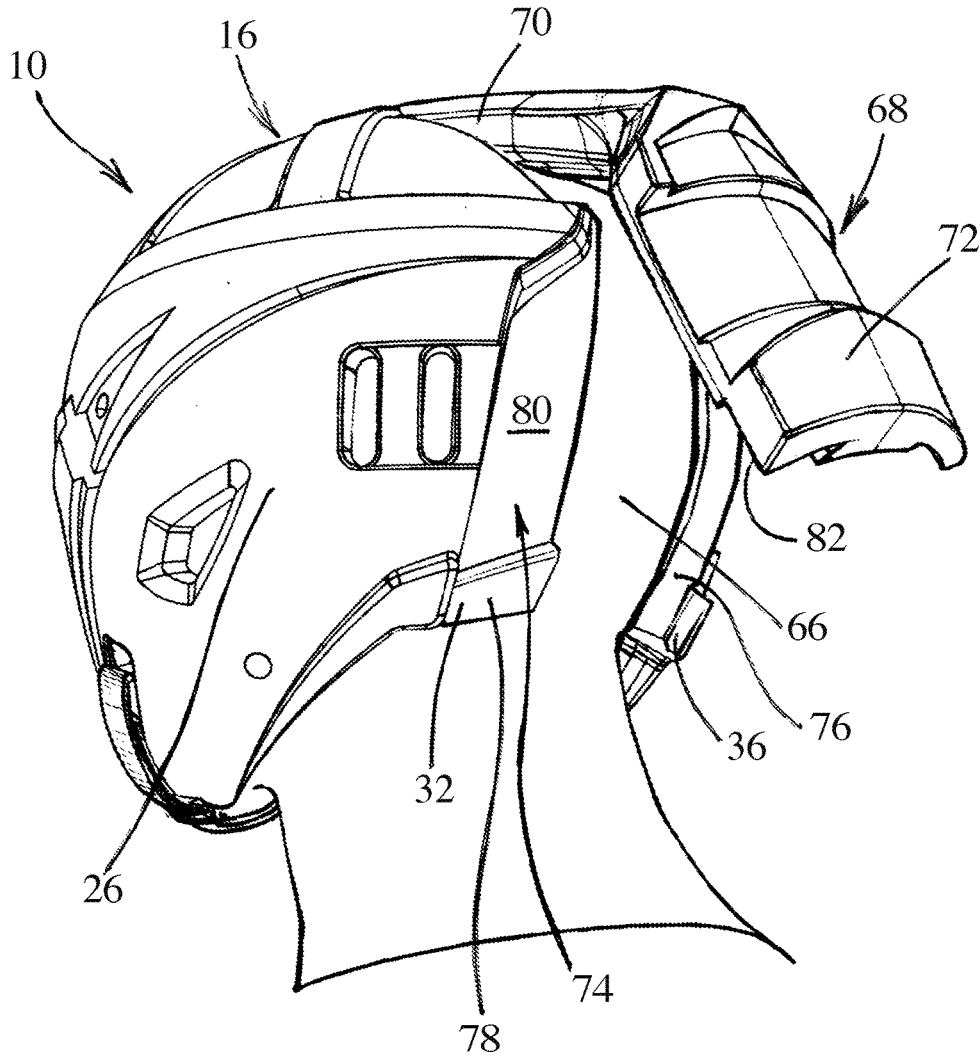


Fig. 12

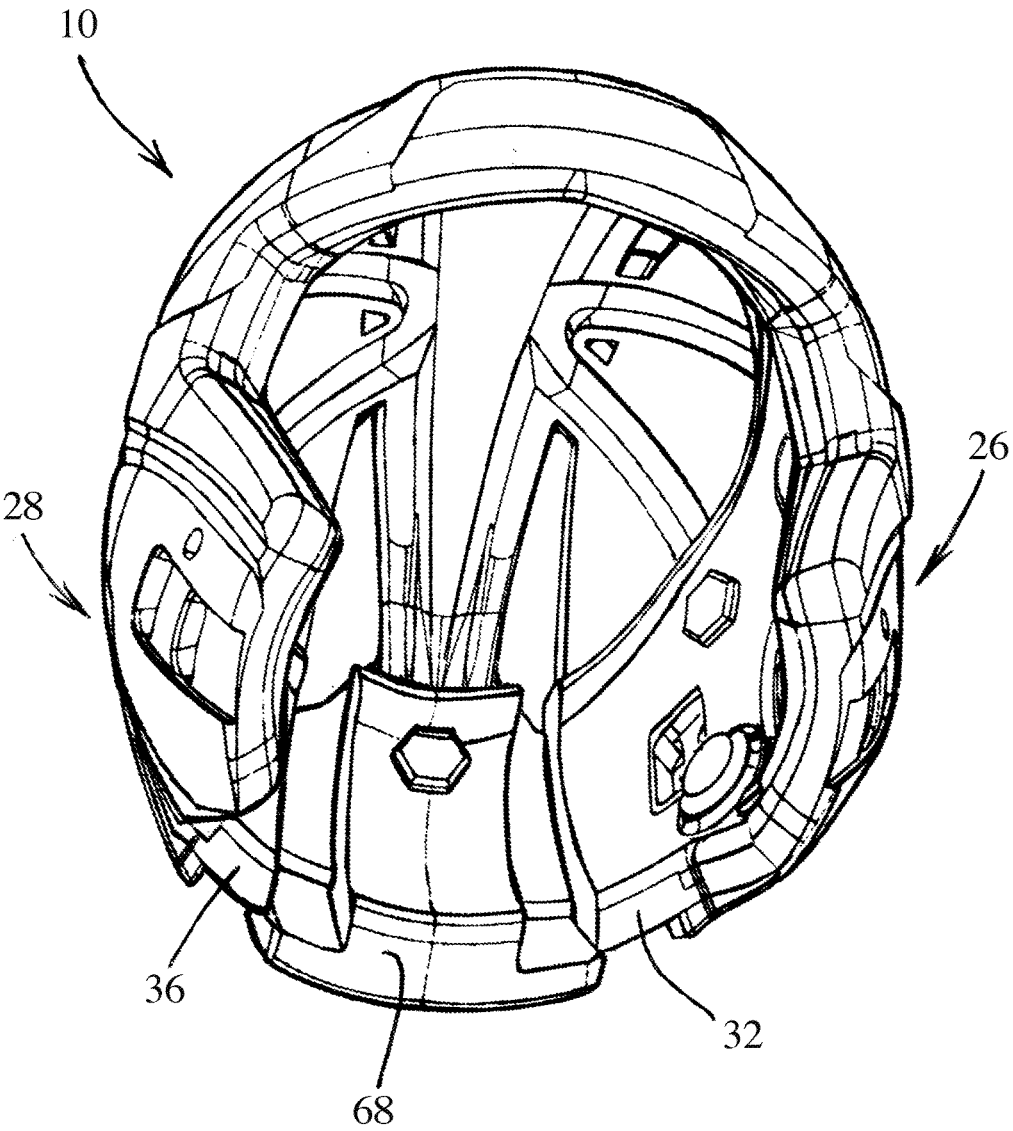


Fig. 13

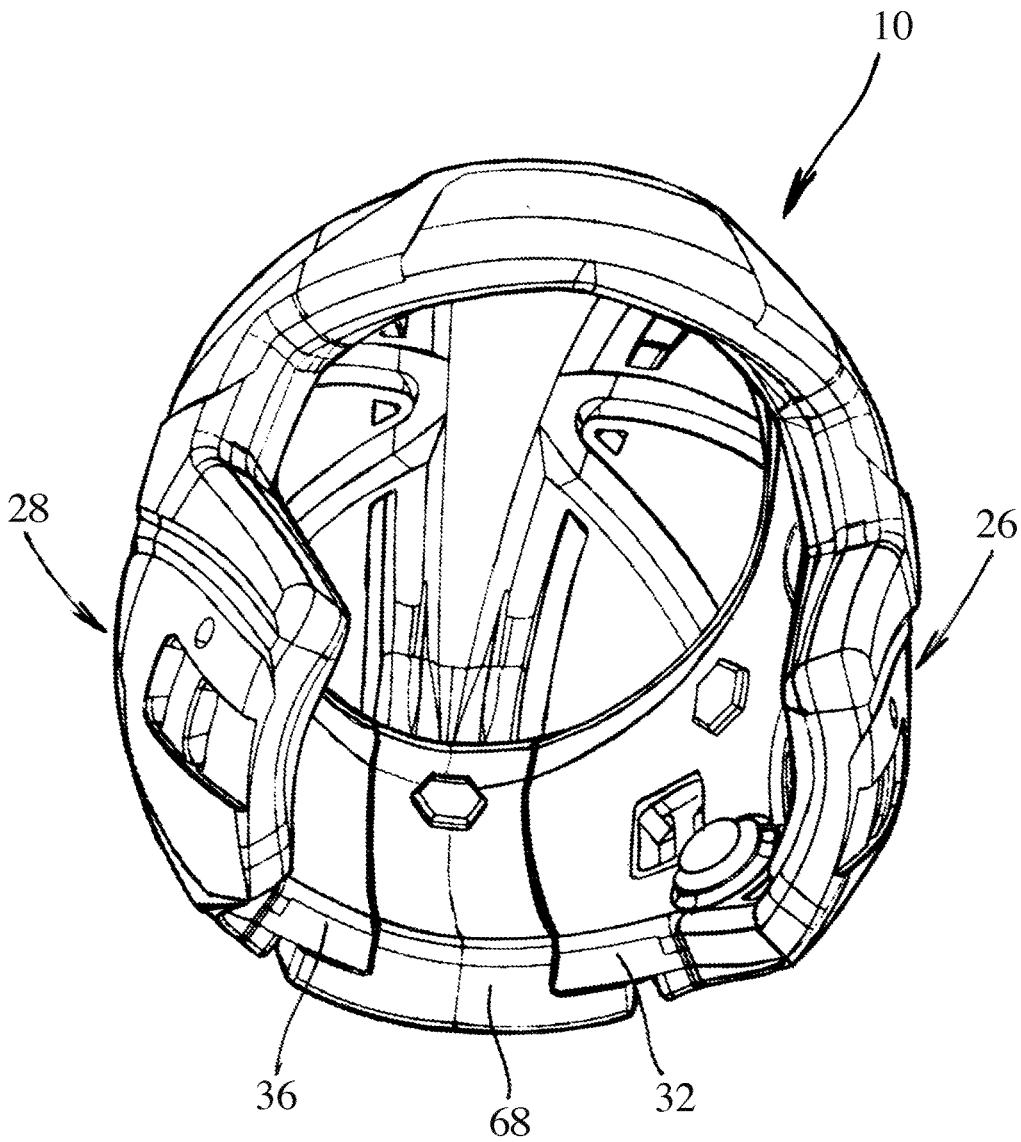


Fig. 14

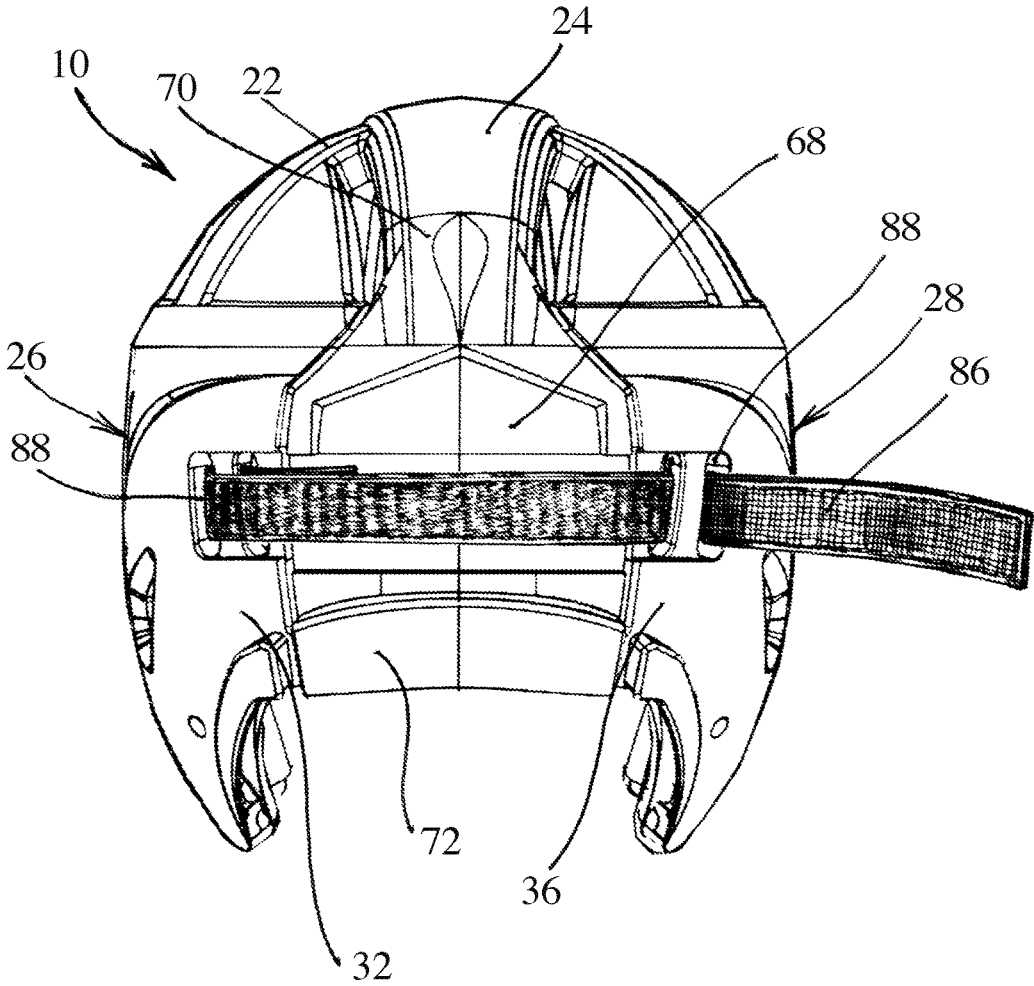


Fig. 15



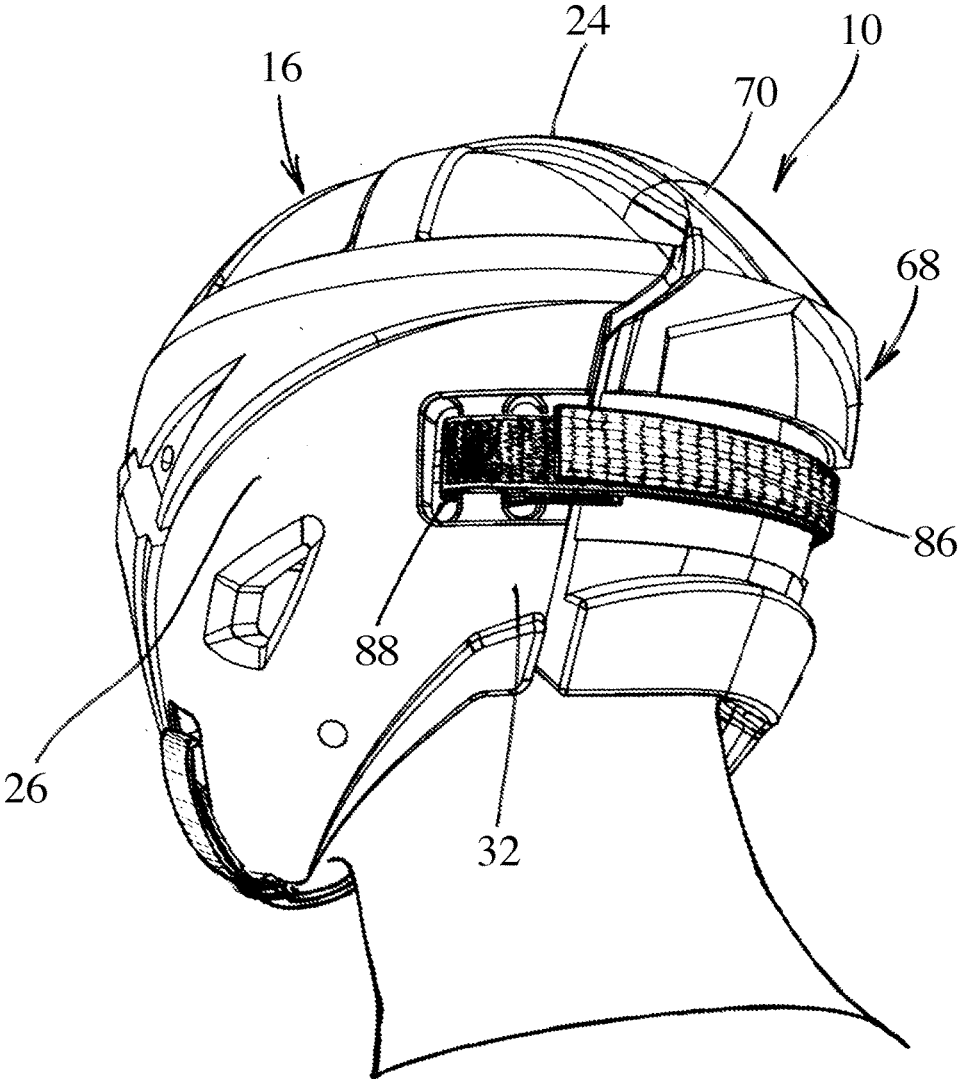


Fig. 16

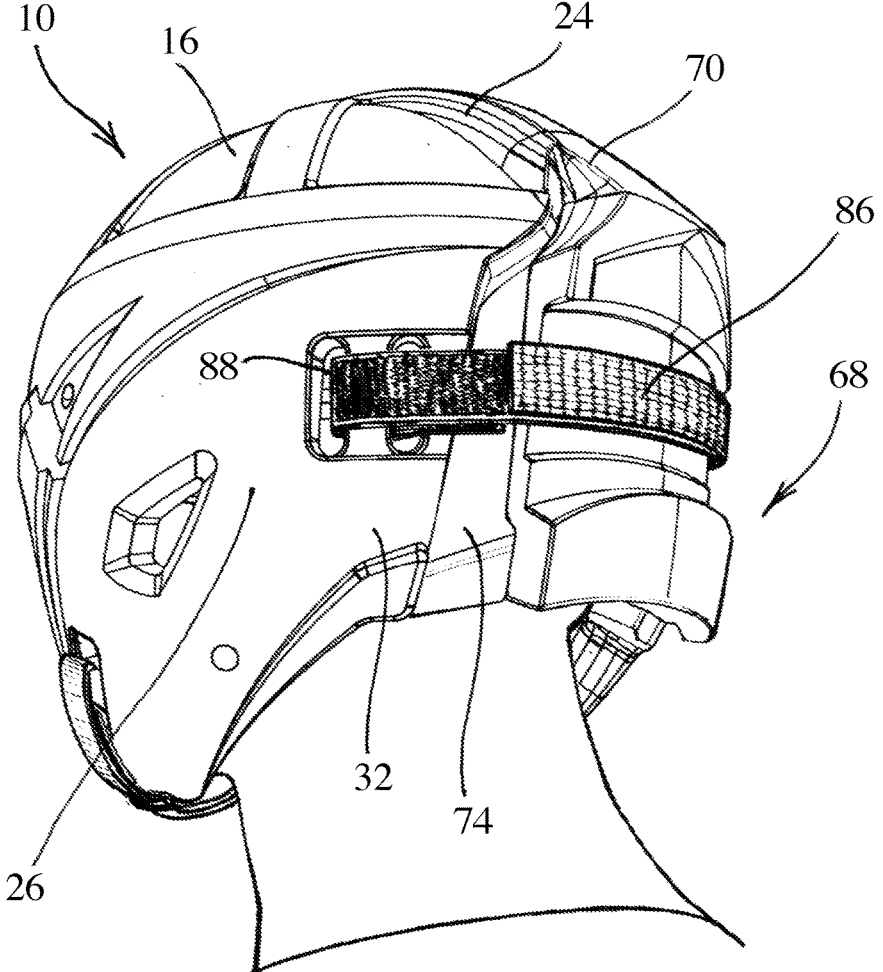


Fig. 17

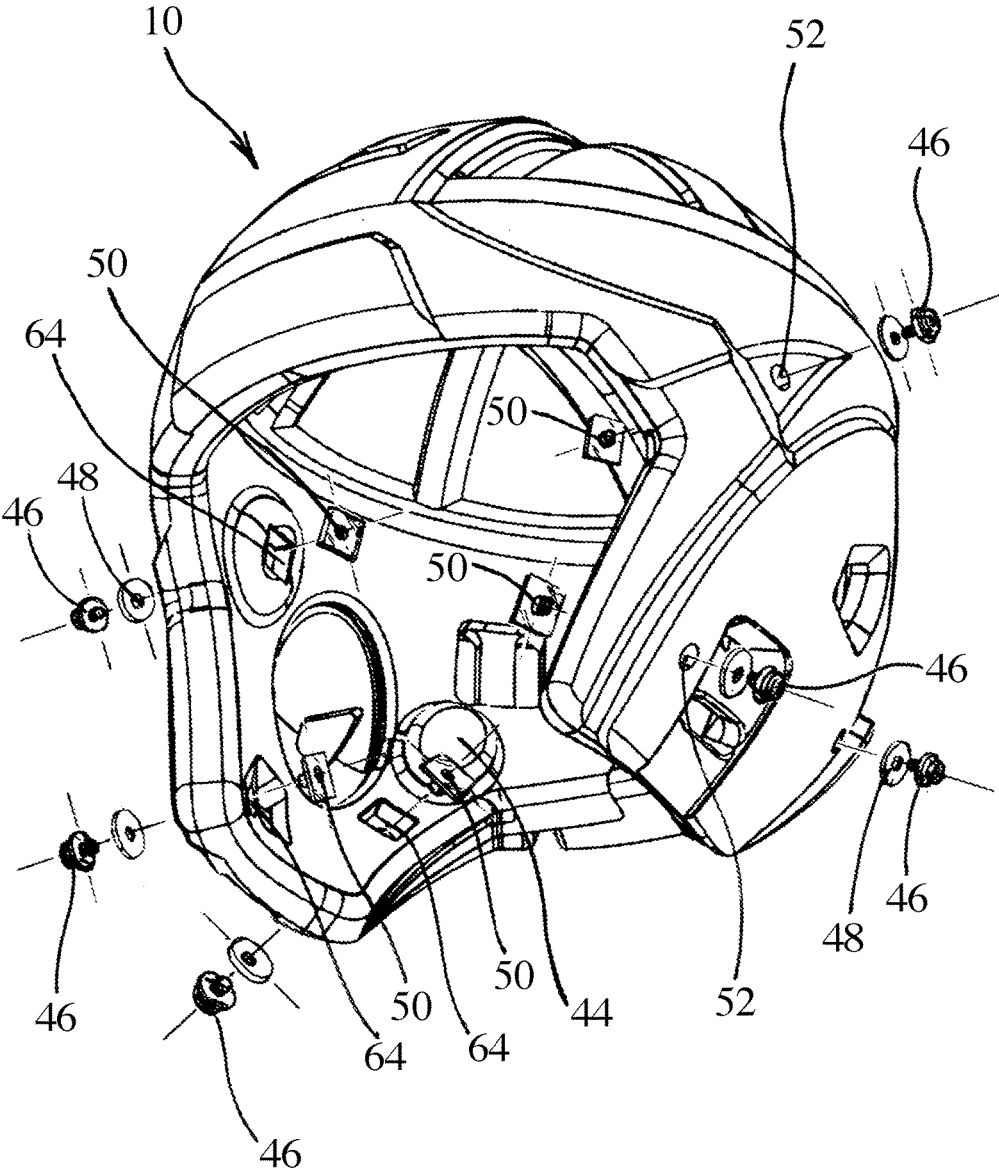


Fig. 18

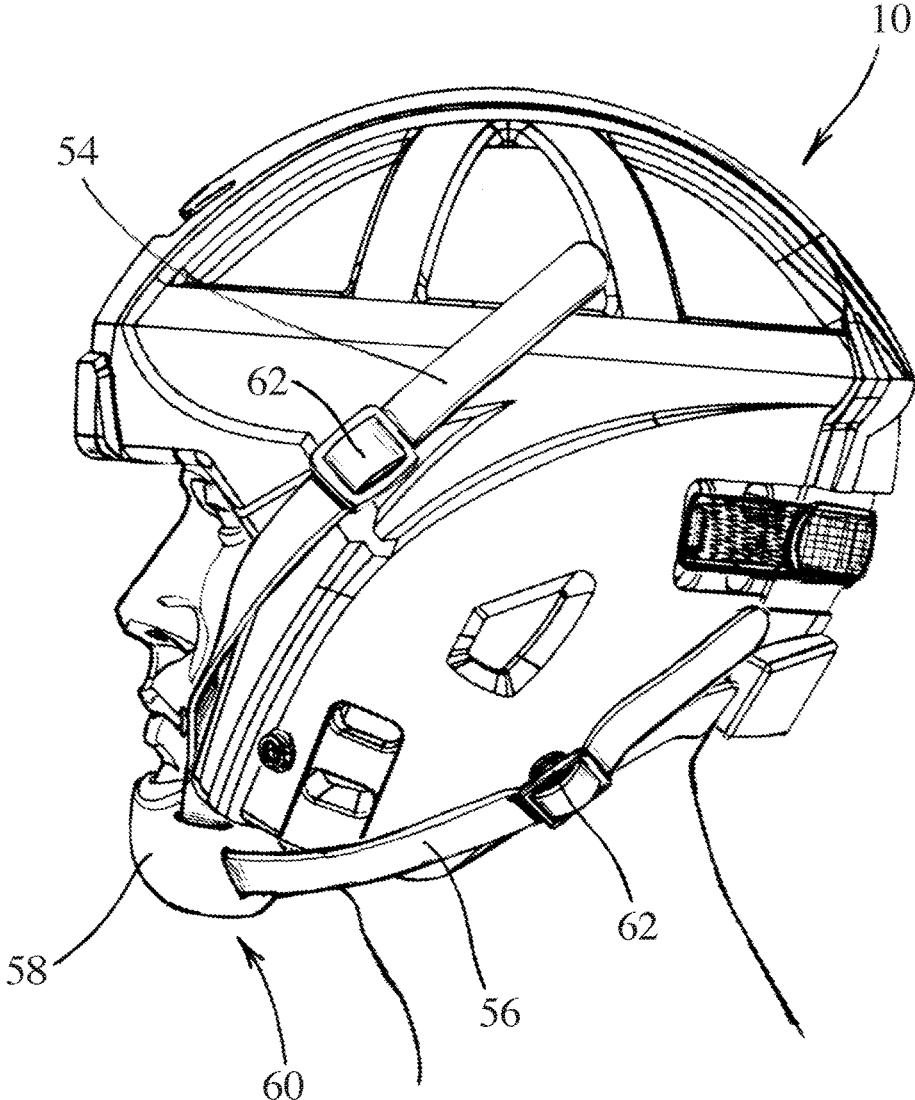


Fig. 19

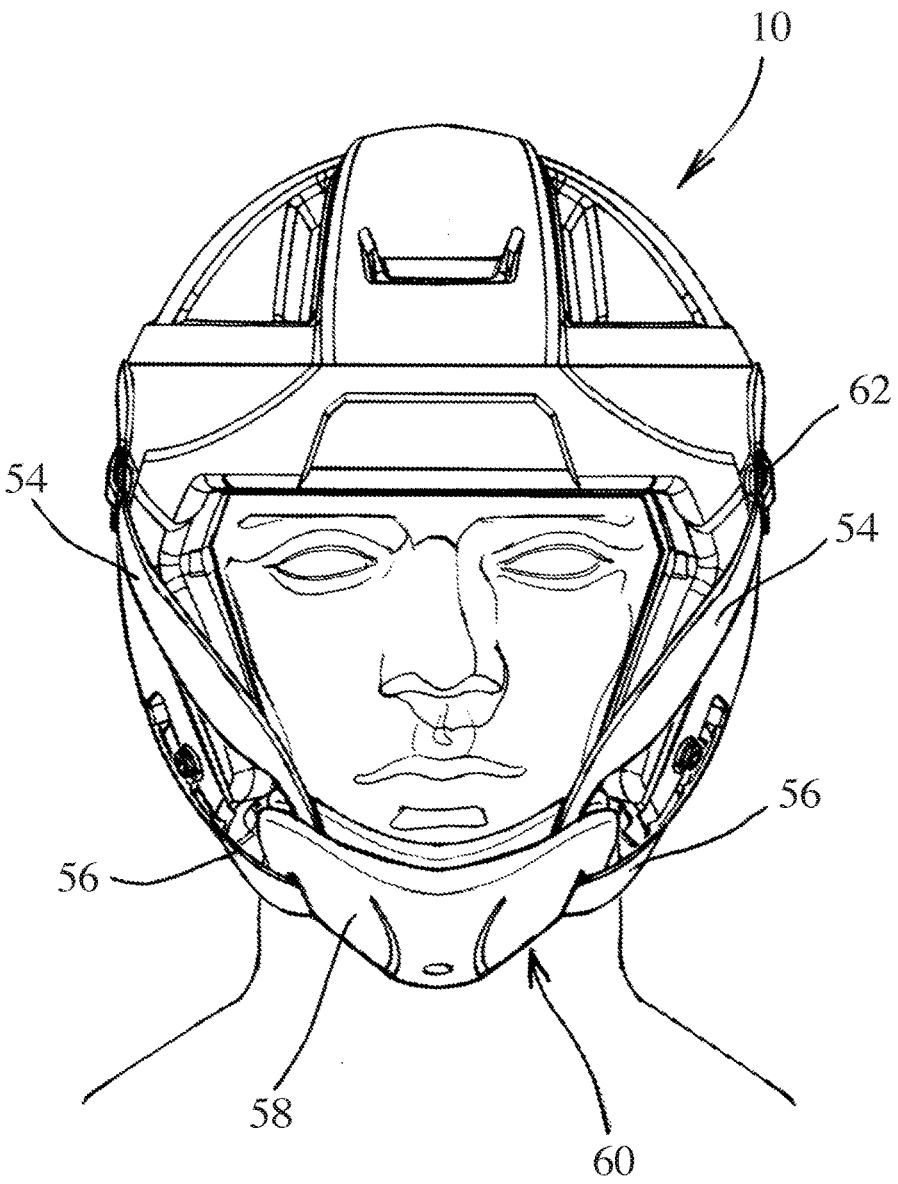


Fig. 20

## PROTECTIVE SOFT HELMET

### RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 62/618,323, filed on Jan. 17, 2018.

### FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention is generally related to sports helmets. More particularly, the present invention is directed to a protective soft helmet for non-tackle football sports and the like.

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Football is a popular sport in the United States and Canada. It involves blocking and tackling which can be very physical and even violent. As such, the players wear protective clothing, including pads as well as a helmet. The helmet consists of a hard plastic shell with thick padding on the inside, a face mask made of one or more plastic-coated metal bars and a chin strap. Some players add visors to their helmets to protect their eyes from glare and impacts. The helmet is intended to provide protection from head injuries, such as concussions.

[0004] However, there are non-tackle American football sports and activities such as touch football, flag football, football passing leagues, 7v7 football and football practice drills. These non-tackle football sports do not require the expensive and heavy traditional football helmets. However, there can be light contact from collisions, blows and contacting the ground. With an ever-increasing emphasis on safety, particularly with respect to head injuries, some of these non-tackle football sports have required protective soft helmets.

[0005] Such non-tackle football sports are often played in the warmer spring and summer months. Aside from providing a helmet which is less expensive and heavy than a traditional American football hard-shelled helmet, such soft helmets are not as expensive, lighter, and typically do not include face masks or the like for improved vision.

[0006] Currently known soft football helmets are typically made from EVA foam, covered with fabric. The EVA foam is not an optimal material for providing protection from such collisions and blows. These bonnet-type helmets have no ability to attach a hard-shell tackle football chin strap for additional protection from blows or collisions to the chin area. Moreover, such helmets typically have an open-back for accommodating larger circumferences of skull sizes. However, when a larger sized head is placed into the soft helmet, such open-back helmets can have exposed areas in the rear of the helmet which can potentially create safety hazards if the athlete encounters a collision in that area.

[0007] Soft helmets which offer impact protection are also beginning to be implemented in other sports, including lacrosse, field hockey, rugby and in some cases soccer. These helmets are comprised of impact-absorbing, flexible material which are intended to protect the head of the athlete and prevent concussions which might otherwise occur when the athlete's head contacts the head or other body part of another player, the ground upon falling, or even a playing stick or the like.

[0008] Accordingly, there is a continuing need for an improved protective soft helmet for use in sports, including non-tackle football. The soft helmet should be lightweight

and comfortable to use, provide adequate peripheral vision and air flow. Most importantly, the soft helmet should provide improved safety to the athlete's head. The soft helmet, when used in non-tackle football situations, should also preferably be configured to utilize a protective chin strap. The present invention fulfills these needs and provides other related advantages.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] The present invention is generally related to sports helmets. More particularly, the present invention is directed to a protective soft helmet which may be used in place of hard-shell protective helmets in certain circumstances, such as non-tackle football sports and the like, or in other cases in connection with sports which have traditionally not used helmets but in order to protect the players of these sports from head injuries.

[0010] The protective soft helmet of the present invention generally comprises an upper dome. A first sidewall extends from the upper dome to a jaw portion defined at a front end thereof and to a rear end thereof. A second sidewall extends from the dome to a jaw portion at a front end thereof and to a rear end.

[0011] The soft helmet, including the dome, first wall and second sidewall are integrally formed with one another. The soft helmet is typically comprised of a molded flexible foam material, such as an elastic polyurethane material.

[0012] A gap that may vary in width is formed between the rear ends of the first and second sidewalls. A tail structure is disposable in overlapping relation to at least one of the rear ends of the first and second sidewalls so as to cover the gap. Typically, the tail structure extends from the dome and over the gap. The tail structure is also integrally formed as part of the helmet with the dome, and comprised of a molded flexible foam material, such as elastic polyurethane material. The tail structure may be pivotally movable from an open position disposed away from the rear ends of the first and second sidewalls to a closed position overlapping at least one of the rear ends of the first and second sidewalls. The tail structure may be in overlapping relation to a recessed area of the rear end of the first or second sidewall. The tail structure may be in overlapping relation to a recessed area of the rear end of each of the first and second sidewalls so as to be in overlapping relation to at least a portion of the rear ends of the first and second sidewalls, so as to cover the gap.

[0013] A fastener selectively retains the tail structure in the closed position. The fastener may comprise a hook and loop tape band extending between the first and second sidewalls and over the tail structure.

[0014] Fasteners may be attached to the first and second sidewalls so as to removably receive a chin strap thereto. The chin strap has a pocket portion configured to receive a user's chin therein. The fasteners may comprise hard plastic or metal snap fasteners.

[0015] Other features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following more detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which illustrate, by way of example, the principles of the invention.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0016] The accompanying drawings illustrate the invention. In such drawings:

[0017] FIG. 1 is a front elevational view of a protective soft helmet embodying the present invention disposed on a head of a user;

[0018] FIG. 2 is a view similar to FIG. 1, illustrating a strap thereof fastened;

[0019] FIG. 3 is a lower perspective view of the helmet embodying the present invention;

[0020] FIG. 4 is a front elevational view of the helmet;

[0021] FIG. 5 is a side elevational view of the helmet;

[0022] FIG. 6 is an opposite side view of the helmet;

[0023] FIG. 7 is a rear perspective view of the helmet;

[0024] FIG. 8 is a rear elevational view of the helmet;

[0025] FIG. 9 is a top view of the helmet;

[0026] FIG. 10 is a sectional view of the helmet;

[0027] FIG. 11 is a perspective view of the helmet disposed on a user thereof, illustrating a tail structure at a rear of the helmet;

[0028] FIG. 12 is a view similar to FIG. 11, illustrating the tail structure pivoted upwardly, and showing a slit forming a gap at a rear of the helmet, in accordance with the present invention;

[0029] FIG. 13 is a bottom perspective view of the helmet with the tail structure in an open position;

[0030] FIG. 14 is a bottom perspective view of the helmet, illustrating the tail structure in a closed position;

[0031] FIG. 15 is a rear view of the helmet, illustrating a band fastener extending across the tail structure and rear of the helmet;

[0032] FIG. 16 is a rear perspective view of the helmet illustrating the band fastener and tail structure in a closed position;

[0033] FIG. 17 is a view similar to FIG. 16, with the helmet on a larger head of a user;

[0034] FIG. 18 is a front perspective and exploded view illustrating chin strap fasteners, in accordance with the present invention;

[0035] FIG. 19 is a side view of a helmet on a user's head and incorporating a chin strap, in accordance with the present invention; and

[0036] FIG. 20 is a front view of FIG. 19.

## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0037] The present invention, as shown in the accompanying drawings and photographs, for purposes of illustration, resides in a protective soft helmet, generally referred to by the reference number 10. The helmet 10 of the present invention is particularly useful for non-tackle football sports, such as 7v7 football, football passing leagues, flag football, touch football and football practice drills and the like. Soft helmets are becoming increasingly used in such circumstances where head protection has either not been used in the past, risking head trauma to the players, or in lieu of traditional football helmets which are much larger, heavier, more expensive and restrict the field of vision of the player. It is well known that traditional football helmets are comprised of a hard outer shell, such as being comprised of polycarbonate material or the like and having a metal face mask in front of the user's face. Such helmets are expensive, heavy and cumbersome, and typically reserved for full-

contact football practices and games, whereas the present invention is a soft protective helmet used in non-tackling situations as mentioned above.

[0038] The protective soft helmet 10 is designed and manufactured for head protection from a one-piece molded foam molding of plastic foam material. The molding is typically made of a self-skinning polyurethane integral foam. In a particularly preferred embodiment, the helmet is comprised of a flexible polyurethane material, such as Bayflex™ material. Use of such material absorbs or deflects impacts to the user's head, does not absorb sweat, and may easily be cleaned, such as wiping the surfaces of the helmet with a damp cloth or the like. As shown in various figures, the helmet 10 is configured to surround substantially all of the user's head, other than the face of the user, including the user's forehead, crown of the head, sides of the head including the temples, and at least portions of the user's cheeks and jaws as well as the user's ears. The helmet 10 is lightweight, yet protective, and does not impede the field of vision of the player.

[0039] With reference to FIGS. 1 and 2, the helmet 10 is generally sized and configured to extend over the user's head, as mentioned above. A strap 12, such as of a hook and loop tape material, may be used to secure the helmet 10 to the user's head. An adjustment buckle 14 may be used to adjust the length of the strap 12, as necessary.

[0040] With reference to FIGS. 1-10, the helmet 10 includes an upper dome portion 16 that is generally hemispherical in shape and configuration so as to be placed over the top of the user's head, including the crown and forehead and upper sides of the head of the user. Preferably, apertures 18 and formed in the dome so as to serve as ventilation and allow air to flow through the helmet 10 and keep the user comfortable and cool when using the helmet 10. Preferably, the dome 16 includes areas of increased thickness for added protection. For example, there may be an area 20 of increased thickness at the forehead comprising a forehead bumper 20. The peripheral area extending from the forehead around the head of the user may also be of an increased thickness. Moreover, spaced apart bridges 22 may extend from a lower peripheral portion of the dome to a top skull bar extending from the forehead portion of the dome towards the rear portion of the dome and helmet. The areas of increased thickness typically correspond to areas of the helmet which will typically be contacted and/or areas of the head to have added protection. Providing a varied thickness also provides a desirable appearance to the helmet 10.

[0041] With continuing reference to FIGS. 1-10, first and second sidewalls 26 and 28 extend generally downward from the dome 16 portion of the helmet 10 so as to cover the sides of the user's head as well as the sides of the user's face. More particularly, the first sidewall 26 extends from the dome 16 to a jaw portion 30 at a front end thereof, which covers a portion of the user's cheek and jaw, to a rear end 32 of the first sidewall positioned generally at the rear of the user's head. Similarly, the second sidewall 28 of the helmet extends from the dome 16 to a second jaw portion 34 to a second rear portion 36 on the opposite side of the user's head.

[0042] When molding and forming the helmet 10, means are provided for fasteners, such as the strap 12 illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2. For example, slots 38 may be formed in the helmet, such as in the first and second jaw portions 30 and 34, as illustrated, through which the strap 12 may be

threaded so as to extend between the first and second jaw portions **30** and **34** and under a chin of the user, which when fastened secures the helmet **10** to the user's head, as illustrated in FIGS. **1** and **2**. The strap **12** may be comprised of a hook and loop tape material so as to be adjustable in length.

**[0043]** With reference now to FIGS. **3** and **10**, on an inner surface of the helmet are formed depressions defining ear pockets **40** which can receive the user's ears therein when the helmet **10** is placed upon his or her head. Thus, the user's ears can be comfortably positioned within the ear pockets **40** while still being protected. So as not to impair hearing, openings **42** extending from the ear pockets **40** to the exterior of the helmet **10** are formed in the helmet **10**. These openings **42** enable sounds from outside of the helmet **10** to be heard easily by the user as they are generally positioned at the side of the user's ear in general alignment with the user's ear canal when the helmet **10** is placed upon the user's head. The openings **42** may also provide additional ventilation of air through the helmet **10** when in use.

**[0044]** With continuing reference to FIGS. **3** and **10**, the interior surface of the helmet may be molded such so as to include pads **44**, or pads **44** may be attached to an inner surface of the helmet after molding the helmet **10**, which may provide additional protection to particularly sensitive portions of the user's head and/or for comfort of the user. Such pads **44** may be comprised of a different cushioning material that are adhered to an inner surface of the helmet **10** if such interior pads are not formed as part of the molding process, and may be positioned at such sensitive areas such as the temples, forehead, rear of the head, and the like.

**[0045]** With reference now to FIGS. **18-20**, as previously mentioned, and as shown in the drawings, the helmet **10** provides an opening at the front thereof for the user's face so as not to impede vision. The first and second jaw portions **30** and **34** extend over a portion of the user's cheeks and jaw, but do not extend over the user's chin. This enables the helmet **10** to be easily attached to and removed from the head of the user.

**[0046]** In order to more securely hold the helmet **10** to the user's head, a traditional football chin strap, as illustrated in FIGS. **19** and **20**, may be attached to the helmet **10**. Fasteners **46**, such as snap fasteners extend through apertures **52** formed in the helmet **10**, such as during the molding process, and which may be held in place by user of washers **48** and nuts **50** which threadedly receive the threaded ends of the snap fasteners **46** therein to hold them in place. Other arrangement of such fasteners may be used. The apertures **52** are placed in locations, such as the upper areas of the first and second sidewalls **26** and **28** and the first and second jaw portions **30** and **34**, as illustrated, so that corresponding straps **54** and **56** having mating snap fasteners may be attached. The chin strap defines a pocket **58** configured to receive a chin of the user therein, as illustrated in FIGS. **19** and **20**. Using such a traditional chin strap **60** simulates the feeling of a traditional football helmet, more securely holds the soft helmet **10** of the present invention to the user's head, and provides comfort and protection to the user's chin.

**[0047]** The user may be able to detach one set of straps **54** and **56** on one side of the helmet **10** to loosen the chin strap **60** and remove the helmet **10** from the user's head. Adjustment buckles **62** may be used to adjust the length of the straps **54** and **56** for a desired tightness and fit. The snap fasteners **46** are typically comprised of a metal, hard plastic

or other hard and durable material so as to receive the corresponding snap fastener of the strap **54** or **56** thereon in removable fashion by pressing the snap fastener of the strap **54** or **56** onto the snap fastener **46** attached to the helmet **10**, and pulling the strap **54** or **56** to detach the fasteners. Recessed areas **64** may be provided within the inner surface of the helmet **10** for receiving the nuts, and/or pads **44** may be placed over the nuts **50** for the comfort of the user.

**[0048]** With particular reference now to FIGS. **11-17**, the first and second rear ends **32** and **36** of the first and second sidewalls **26** and **28** have a gap therebetween defined by a slit or opening formed at the rear of the helmet **10**. The rear ends **32** and **36** may be moved away from each other as a user places the helmet **10** on his or her head. Incorporating the slit or opening **66** into the helmet **10** enables a helmet **10** to accommodate users having different head sizes. A user with a smaller head will yield a gap or opening **66** between the first and second rear ends **32** and **36** of the sidewalls to be smaller than when a user having a larger head utilizes the same helmet **10**, in which case the gap **66** between the first and second rear ends **32** and **36** will be greater. This makes the helmet **10** adjustable in size so as to accommodate varying sized heads of different users. This enables a smaller number of helmets **10** of different sizes to be produced and purchased and used.

**[0049]** However, it is desirable to protect the back of the user's head to prevent trauma and injury to the user, and thus it is desirable that there be no gap between the first and second rear ends **32** and **36** of the first and second sidewalls **26** and **28** that would expose the user's head. Thus, the invention incorporates a tail structure which is disposable in overlapping relation to at least one of the rear ends **32** and/or **36** of the first and second sidewalls **26** and **28** so as to cover the opening or gap, which may be of variable width depending upon the size of the user's head who is wearing the helmet **10**. While the tail structure **68** may overlap only one of the first or second rear ends **32** or **36** and abut to the other, in a particularly preferred embodiment the tail structure **68** overlaps with at least a portion of both of the first and second rear ends **32** and **36**.

**[0050]** As illustrated, preferably the tail structure **68** is formed integrally with the dome **16** so as to pivot therefrom from a generally open position away from the rear ends **32** and **36** of the sidewalls **26** and **28** to a closed position in abutment with the rear ends **32** and **36**. As mentioned above, preferably the helmet **10** is comprised of an integral structure formed as one-piece in the molding process, which would include the dome **16**, sidewalls **26** and **28**, and tail structure **68** formed as a single one-piece integrally molded unit. The tail structure **68** includes a band **70** which extends from the dome **16**, such as an extension of the top skull bar **24** to the rear expansion tail portion **72**. The rear tail portion **72** may be slightly biased away from the rear ends **32** and **36** of the sidewalls **26** and **28** and/or pivotally moved away therefrom, as illustrated in FIGS. **11** and **12**. However, what is important is that the tail structure **68** be disposed over the opening or gap **66** between the rear ends **32** and **36** of the first and second sidewalls **26** and **28** such that no portion of the user's head is exposed when the helmet **10** is in proper use.

**[0051]** With reference now to FIGS. **13** and **14**, it can be seen in FIG. **13** that in the open or unfastened state, the interior surface of the tail structure **68** may not overlap or form a tight fit with the rear ends **32** and **36** of the first and



second sidewalls 26 and 28. However, as illustrated in FIG. 14, when brought into the closed and fastened state, the tail structure 68 overlaps with the rear ends 32 and 36 covering all gaps at the rear of the helmet 10.

[0052] With reference now to FIGS. 11-13, an outer surface at a portion defined by the rear ends 32 and 36 and an inner surface of the tail structure 68 complement one another or are matingly engageable with one another so as to provide overlap therebetween. For example, as illustrated in FIGS. 11 and 12, recessed wing areas 74 and 76 may be provided at the first and second rear ends 32 and 36 which are adapted and configured to receive the tail structure 68 thereover in overlapping relation. Such wing portions 74 and 76 may be completely covered by the tail structure 68, such as when the helmet 10 is worn by a user having a relatively small head, whereas when the helmet 10 is worn by a user having a larger head the width of the gap 66 increases, and thus the distance between the rear ends 32 and 36 and thus only a portion of the winged areas 74 and 76 are covered by the tail structure 68. However, the entirety of the gap 66 is covered.

[0053] It will be appreciated that the wings 74 and 76 may be comprised of a recessed area and/or an inner surface of the tail structure 68 may have recessed areas or areas of reduced thickness, the important function being achieved is that the tail structure 68 completely cover the gap 66 between first and second rear ends 32 and 36 such that there are no gaps through which a user's head may be struck and potentially injured. For example, FIGS. 11 and 12 illustrate the wing 74 having a ledge portion 78 which is of greater thickness than a recessed portion 80 of the wing, which corresponds to a recessed portion 82 and a non-recessed portion 84 on an inner surface of the tail structure 68, which fit over, respectively, the ledge portion 78 and recess portion 80. Lateral or rotational movement of the rear ends 32 and 36 with respect to one another is still achievable while being in overlapped relation with the tail structure 68, which covers the gap 66 which may be of variable width.

[0054] With reference now to FIGS. 15-17, a fastening means are provided for retaining the tail structure 68 in a closed and overlapping position with respect to the rear ends 32 and 36. One such retaining means is the use of a fastening band 86, which may comprise hook and loop tape, which is threadedly received through slots 88 formed in the first and second sidewalls 26 and 28. When the band fastener 86 is fastened, it pulls rear ends 32 and 36 of the sidewalls 26 and 28 towards one another and retains the tail structure 68 in a closed position overlapping the rear ends 32 and 36, such as wings 74 and 76 of the rear ends 32 and 36. In this manner, as illustrated in FIG. 16, the rear end of the helmet is completely closed and the tail structure 68 covers any gap thereof. When the helmet 10 is placed upon a user who has a larger head, as illustrated in FIG. 17, even after fastening fastening band 86, the rear ends 32 and 36 will be farther apart than they otherwise will be with a user wearing the helmet 10 having a smaller head. However, the tail structure 68 still overlaps the first and second rear ends 32 and 36, such as at least a portion of wing areas 74 and 76, covering the gap at the rear of the helmet 10 so as to provide protection to the user's head while accommodating users of differing head sizes.

[0055] Thus, the helmet 10 can be expanded or contracted, as necessary, to accommodate differing user's head sizes while still providing complete protection to the head of the user. Regardless of the size of the user's head, so long as the

helmet 10 fits the user's head, the gap 66 between the rear ends 32 and 36 will be less than the width or area of the tail structure 68 which overlies and overlaps the rear ends 32 and 36 and there is no gap between the tail structure 68 and other portions of the helmet 10 where the user could experience a hit to the user's head or skull instead of the helmet 10. Thus, the rear of the user's head is protected at all times. The structure and arrangement of the present invention solves the problem of larger circumference heads exposing the rear of an athlete's head in other open-back helmets known in the art, while still allowing an open-back helmet configuration to be utilized which provides the advantages of limiting the number of sizes of helmets to manufacture and teams and players to purchase and providing a dynamic and adjustable fit while still eliminating any gaps and openings at the rear of the helmet so as to protect the user's head which would otherwise be exposed.

[0056] When the helmet 10 is transferred between players, the fastener, such as the hook and loop tape band 86 may be released, and the helmet 10 can be adjustably tightened to the user's head by adjusting the length of the strap 86 and securing it in place when a proper fit is attained, which will retain the tail structure 86 over the gap 66, and in overlapping relation with at least one of the rear ends 32 and 36 of the helmet 10. It will be appreciated that other fastening and adjustment means could potentially be incorporated into the present invention to achieve its intended objectives and purposes, which is providing a soft protective helmet having adjustability of size and convenience of insertion and removal in an open-back configuration with no gaps in the helmet when properly worn which would expose the user's head.

[0057] Although several embodiments have been described in detail for purposes of illustration, various modifications may be made without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. Accordingly, the invention is not to be limited, except as by the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A protective soft helmet, comprising:
  - an upper dome;
    - a first sidewall extending from the dome to a jaw portion defined at a front end thereof and to a rear end thereof;
    - a second sidewall extending from the dome to a jaw portion at a front end thereof and to a rear end;
    - a gap formed between rear ends of the first and second sidewalls; and
    - a tail structure disposable in overlapping relation to at least one of the rear ends of the first and second sidewalls so as to cover the gap.
  2. The helmet of claim 1, wherein the tail structure extends from the dome and over the gap.
  3. The helmet of claim 2, wherein the tail structure is pivotally movable from an open position disposed away from the rear ends of the first and second sidewalls to a closed position overlapping at least one of the rear ends of the first and second sidewalls.
  4. The helmet of claim 1, wherein the tail structure is in overlapping relation to a recessed area of the rear end of the first or second sidewall.
  5. The helmet of claim 4, wherein the tail structure is in overlapping relation to a recessed area of the rear end of each of the first and second sidewalls.
  6. The helmet of claim 3, including a fastener that selectively retains the tail structure in the closed position.

7. The helmet of claim 6, wherein the fastener comprises a hook and loop tape band extending between the first and second sidewalls and over the tail structure.

8. The helmet of claim 1, wherein the dome, first sidewall, second sidewall and tail structure are integrally formed with one another.

9. The helmet of claim 8, wherein the dome, first sidewall, second sidewall and tail structure are comprised of a molded flexible foam material.

10. The helmet of claim 9, wherein the flexible foam material comprises an elastic polyurethane material.

11. The helmet of claim 9, including fasteners attached to the first and second sidewalls so as to removably receiving a strap thereto having a pocket portion configured to receive a user's chin therein.

12. The helmet of claim 11, wherein the fasteners comprise hard plastic or metal snap fasteners.

13. A protective soft helmet, comprising:

an upper dome;

a first sidewall extending from the dome to a jaw portion defined at a front end thereof and to a rear end thereof;

a second sidewall extending from the dome to a jaw portion at a front end thereof and to a rear end; and

hard plastic or metal fasteners attached to the first and second sidewalls so as to removably receiving a strap thereto having a pocket portion configured to receive a user's chin therein;

wherein the dome, first sidewall and second sidewall are comprised of a flexible foam material molded as one piece so as to be integrally formed with one another.

14. The helmet of claim 13, including a gap formed between rear ends of the first and second sidewalls, and a tail structure extending from the dome and disposable in overlapping relation to at least one of the rear ends of the first and second sidewalls so as to cover the gap.

15. The helmet of claim 13, wherein the tail structure is formed integrally with the dome of the helmet.

16. The helmet of claim 15, wherein the tail structure is pivotally movable from an open position disposed away from the rear ends of the first and second sidewalls to a closed position overlapping at least one of the rear ends of the first and second sidewalls.

17. The helmet of claim 16, wherein the tail structure is in overlapping relation to a recessed area of the rear end of each of the first and second sidewalls.

18. The helmet of claim 16, including a fastener that selectively retains the tail structure in the closed position.

19. The helmet of claim 18, wherein the fastener comprises a hook and loop tape band extending between the first and second sidewalls and over the tail structure.

20. A protective soft helmet, comprising:

an upper dome;

a first sidewall extending from the dome to a jaw portion defined at a front end thereof and to a rear end thereof;

a second sidewall extending from the dome to a jaw portion at a front end thereof and to a rear end;

a gap formed between rear ends of the first and second sidewalls;

a tail structure extending from the dome and in overlapping relation to at least a portion of the rear ends of the first and second sidewalls so as to cover the gap;

hard plastic or metal fasteners attached to the first and second sidewalls so as to removably receiving a strap thereto having a pocket portion configured to receive a user's chin therein;

wherein the dome, first sidewall, second sidewall and tail structure are comprised of a flexible foam material molded as one piece so as to be integrally formed with one another.

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