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(54) **TETHERED GOLF TEE**

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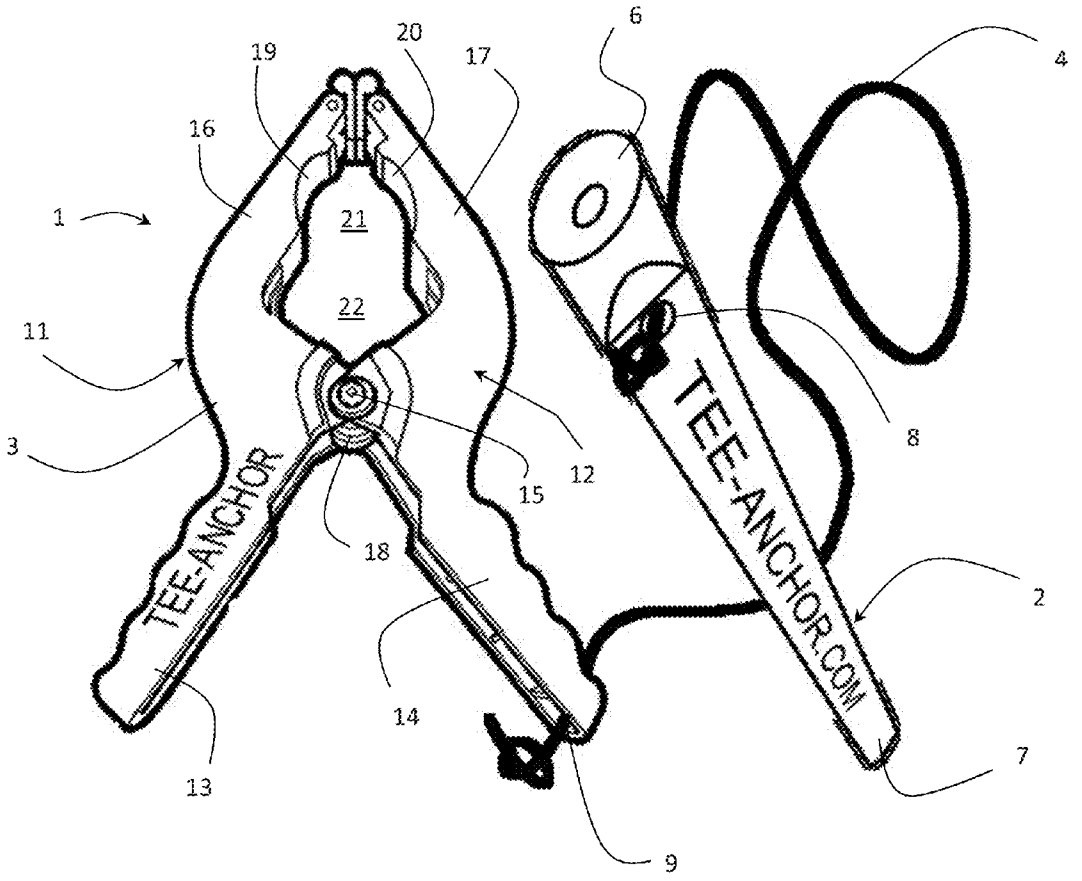
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A tethered golf tee includes a golf tee connected to a clamp via a flexible cord or string. During use, the tee is inserted into the ground for supporting a golf ball, and the clamp is positioned on the ground adjacent the tee. When the ball is struck, the clamp, tethered to the tee, prevents the tee from travelling too far, and facilitates the location and retrieval thereof. During storage, curved jaws of the clamp are closed around and frictionally engage the shaft of a golf club, providing easy access for future use.



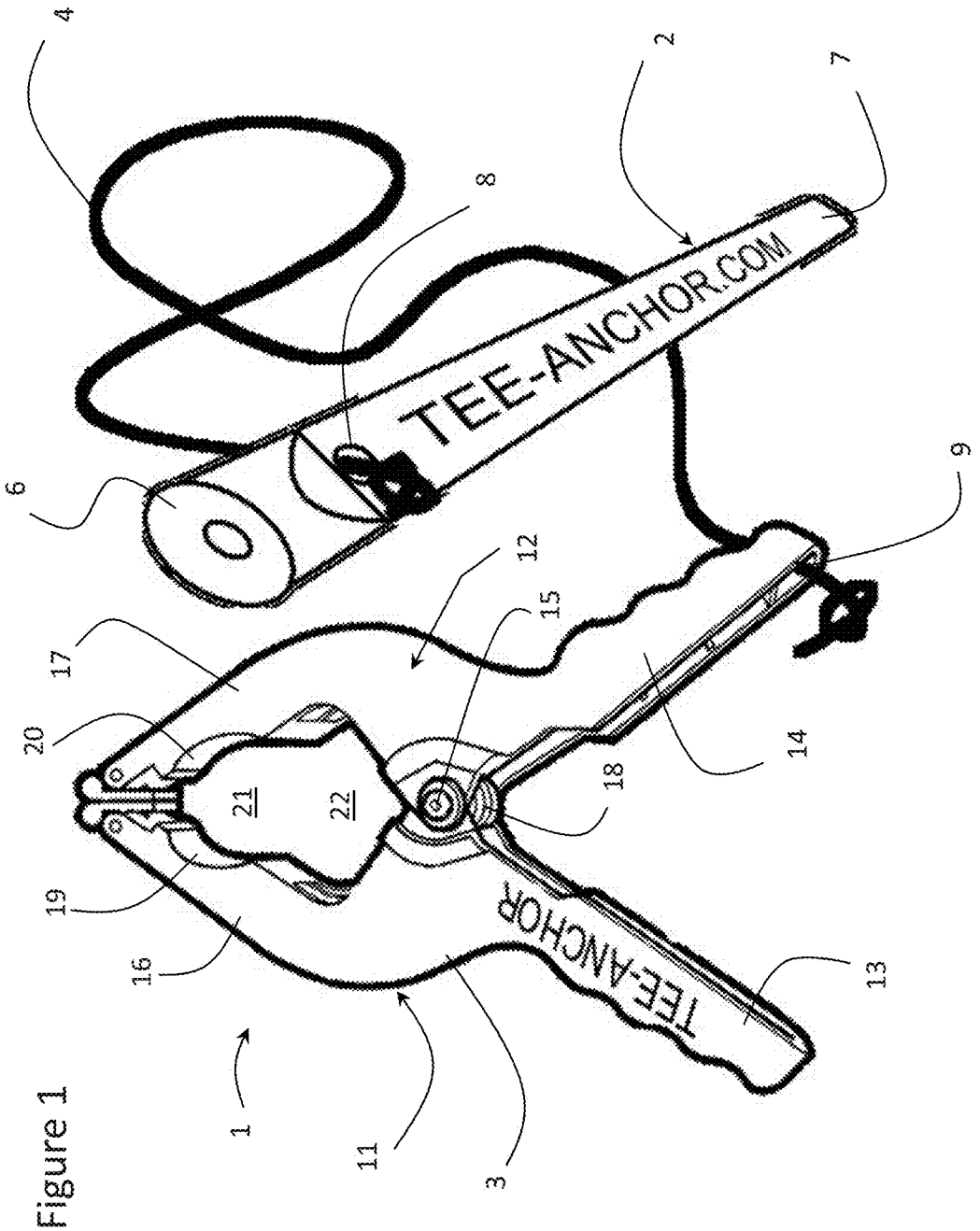

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Figure 1

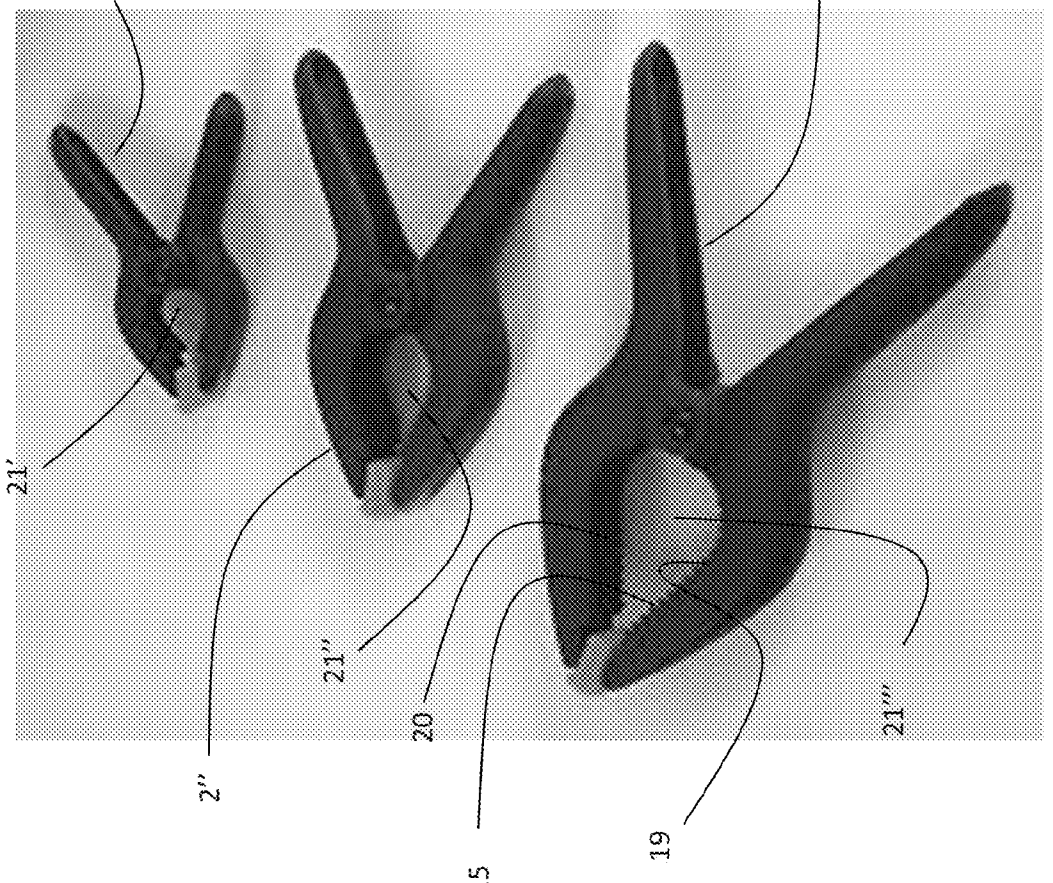

Figure 2a

Figure 2b

Figure 2c

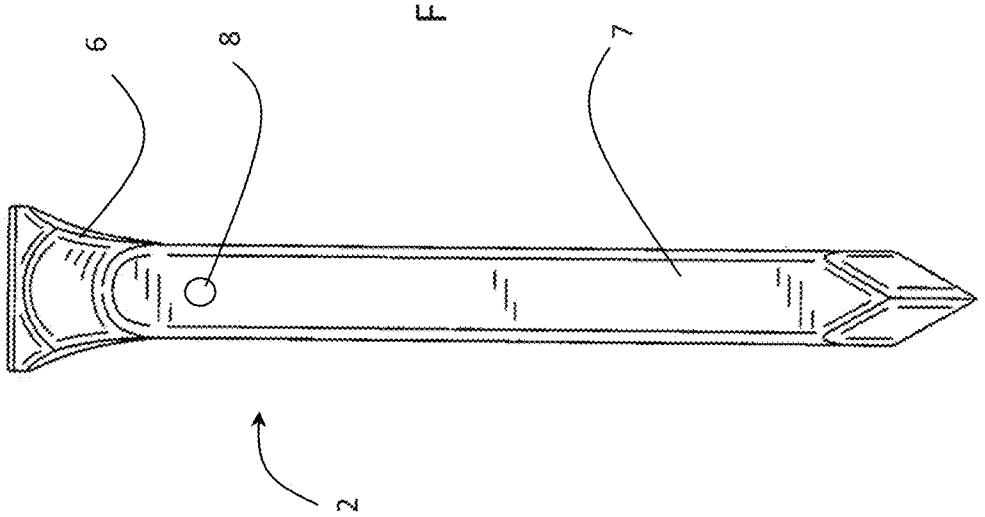

Figure 3b

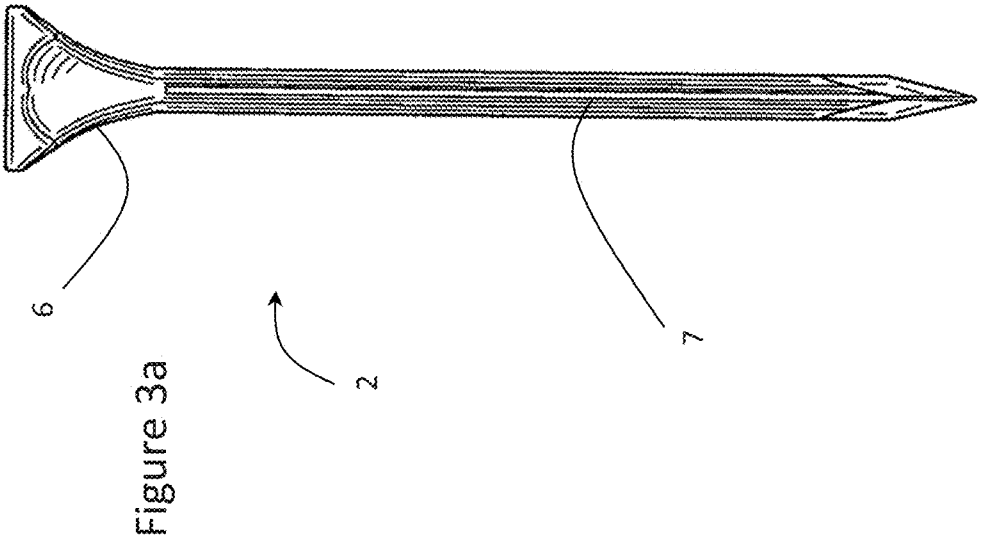

Figure 3a

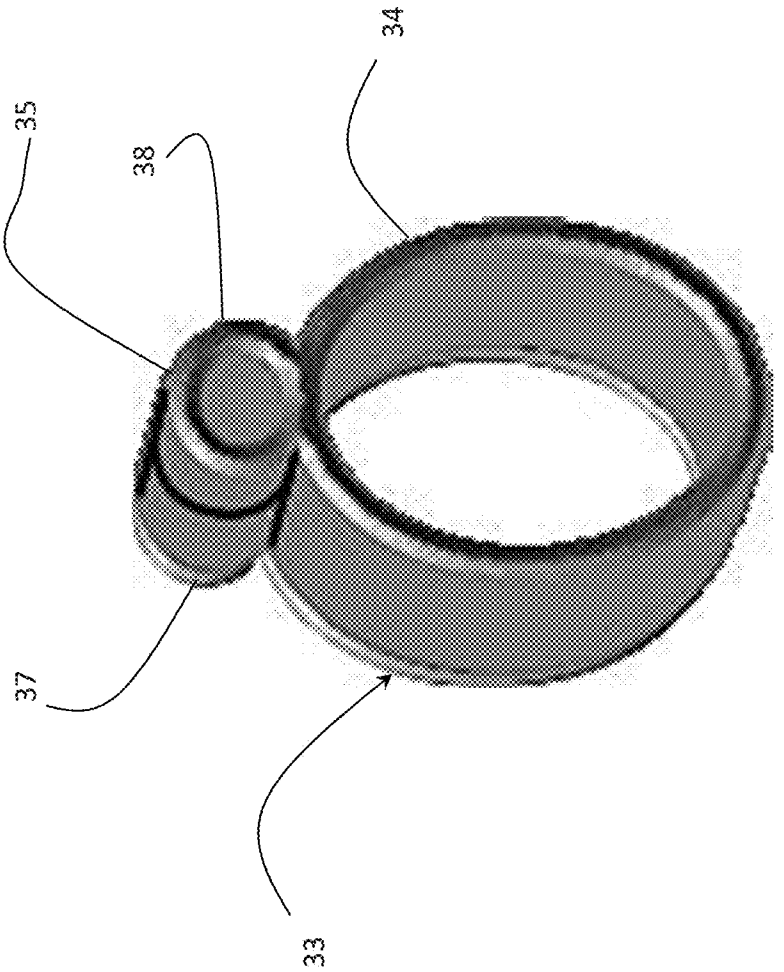

Figure 4

TETHERED GOLF TEE

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] The present invention claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 61/987,609, filed May 2, 2014, which is incorporated herein by reference.

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0002] The present invention relates to a tethered golf tee, and in particular to a tethered golf tee that clamps onto a golf club shaft when moving from one tee box to the next.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Golf tees, in one form or other, have been used to prop up the golf ball, almost since the invention of the game of golf. Almost as recently, people have been finding ways to ensure that their golf tees do not get lost, by tethering them to some type of weight or spike.

[0004] U.S. Pat. No. 2,159,893 issued May 23, 1939 to Hansen; and U.S. Pat. No. 4,336,940 issued Jun. 29, 1982 to Sprague disclose tethered golf tees in which a spike at the end of the tether cord is inserted into the ground to ensure the golf tee does not fly too far away and get lost. Unfortunately, these systems require additional time and effort to place the spike in the correct location, and necessitates the storage of a sharp spike in the golfer's pocket or golf bag resulting in damage to both. U.S. Pat. No. 4,114,878 issued Sep. 19, 1978 to Hammond; and U.S. Pat. No. 7,488,263 issued Feb. 10, 2009 relate to tethered golf tees with a simple weight on the end of the tether cord. While these systems avoid the sharp spikes of the former systems, they still require the storage of a bulky weight in the golfer's pocket or the constant storage and retrieval from the golfer's golf bag.

[0005] An object of the present invention is to overcome the shortcomings of the prior art by providing a tethered golf tee with a clamp on the end of the tether cord, which acts as a weight during use and enables the golf tee to be clamped to the shaft of the golfer's club when moving from one tee box to the next.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] Accordingly, the present invention relates to a tethered golf tee and clamp assembly comprising:

[0007] a golf tee for supporting a golf ball above ground level;

[0008] a clamp including opposed first and second jaws biased together; and

[0009] a cord tethering the golf tee and clamp together;

[0010] wherein inner walls of the jaws include rounded or curved sections forming an oval or rounded opening sized for frictionally engaging shafts of golf clubs.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0011] The invention will be described in greater detail with reference to the accompanying drawings which represent preferred embodiments thereof, wherein:

[0012] FIG. **1** is an isometric view of the tethered golf tee assembly in accordance with the present invention;

[0013] FIGS. **2***a*, **2***b* and **2***c* isometric views of various clamps for use in the assembly of FIG. **1**;

[0014] FIGS. **3***a* and **3***b* are side views of the tee for use in the assembly of FIG. **1**; and

[0015] FIG. **4** is an isometric view of an alternative clamp for use in the assembly of FIG. **1**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0016] With reference to FIG. **1**, a tethered golf tee assembly **1** according to the present invention comprises a golf tee **2** tethered to a clamp **3** via a flexible cord or string **4**. The golf tee **2** includes an upper pedestal section **6** for supporting a golf ball, and a lower ground engaging section **7** for penetrating or resting on the ground during use. Ideally, a hole **8** extends through the upper end of the golf tee **2** for receiving an end of the cord **4**. The end of the cord **4** can be knotted to prevent the cord from becoming disengaged from the golf tee **2** or some other means of fastening may be provided. Alternatively, the cord **4** may be attached to the golf tee **2** in some other suitable manner to prevent easy disengagement, such as tied around or looped through the body of the tee **2** or appendages extending therefrom. The other end of the cord **4** extends through a hole **9** in the clamp **3**, and is knotted, as above, to prevent the cord **4** from disengaging from the clamp **3**. Other suitable forms of attaching the cord **4** to the clamp **2** are also within the scope of the invention, such as tied around or looped through the body of the clamp **2** or appendages extending therefrom.

[0017] Ideally, the clamp **3** is comprised of first and second lever arms **11** and **12**, including first and second handles **13** and **14**, respectively, spaced apart at one end of the clamp **3**, pivotally connected to each other proximate the middle via a pin **15** or some other rotatable connection. The first and second lever arms **11** and **12** also include first and second jaws **16** and **17**, respectively, spring biased together at the other end of the clamp **3**. In the illustrated embodiment, a coil spring **18** is provided, wrapped around the pin **15**, for spring biasing the jaws **16** and **17** together; however, any suitable form of spring biasing the jaws **16** and **17** together, including a material property of the lever arms **11** and **12** themselves, is within the scope of the invention. By manually applying opposed forces to the ends of the first and second handles **13** and **14**, the biasing force of the spring **18** may be overcome, so that the jaws **16** and **17** may be forced apart for receiving the shaft of a golf club. Removing the forces on the first and second handles **13** and **14** enables inner opposing walls **19** and **20** of the jaws **16** and **17** to frictionally engage the shaft of the golf club.

[0018] Typically, golf clubs, such as a driver, include a shaft with a tapering diameter. The inner opposing walls **19** and **20** of the jaws **16** and **17**, respectively, include rounded or C-shaped sections, whereby, in the closed position, the jaws **16** and **17** form an oval, circular or pear-shaped opening **21** for frictionally engaging the shaft of a golf club, e.g. at a section of a shaft with a relatively wider diameter. Ideally, the opening **21** includes a diameter larger than a section of the shaft with a relatively smaller diameter, whereby the outer free ends of the jaws **16** and **17** may be biased together enabling the opening **21** formed by the jaws **16** and **17** to totally encircle the shaft during initial engagement with the golf club shaft. The jaws **16** and **17** of the clamp **2** may then slide down the shaft until the diameter of the opening **21** matches the diameter of the shaft, thereby frictionally engaging the shaft and preventing further movement therebetween. In a preferred embodiment, the inner walls **19** and **20** include a plurality of rounded sections, with different radiuses of curvature suitable, forming adjacent oval or circular openings **21** and **22**

for frictionally engaging golf clubs shafts of different radiuses, e.g. different brands of golf clubs and different numbered clubs in the same set.

[0019] As illustrated in FIGS. **2***a* to **2***c*, the clamp **2'**, **2"** and **2'"**, respectively may be provided in various sizes, which results in various sizes of openings **21'**, **21"** and **21'"** to fit various sizes of golf club shafts. Ideally, the inner walls **19** and **20** of the jaws **16** and **17** may also include small teeth **25** or other frictional structures or material for engaging the golf club shaft and minimizing relative movement therebetween.

[0020] In the illustrated embodiment, the golf tee **2**, more clearly illustrated in FIGS. **3***a* and **3***b*, may include a ground penetrating spike as the lower ground engaging section **7**. The spike **7** may be relatively thin in a first dimension, see FIG. **3***a*, defined by first and second rounded sides, which facilitate penetration into the ground. The second dimension of the spike **7** may be relatively thicker (2× to 4× wider than first dimension), see FIG. **3***b*, defined by first and second flat sides, providing additional strength, i.e. resistance to breakage. Moreover, the wider flat sides facilitate the provision of the hole **8** or other suitable fastening structures to be formed therethrough or thereon.

[0021] FIG. **4** illustrates an alternative clamp **33** constructed out of a band of resilient material, e.g. metal or plastic, formed into a FIG. **8** with a large hollow cylindrical section **34** and a smaller hollow cylindrical section **35** with parallel axes of symmetry. The sides of the large hollow cylindrical section **34** can be squeezed together, i.e. acting like lever arms, which forces the smaller hollow cylindrical section **35** to separate into first and second C-shaped jaws **37** and **38**, which have a radius or sufficient size to partially surround and frictionally engage the shaft of a golf club. Accordingly, the resiliency of the material provides the spring force necessary to hold the jaws **37** and **38** together, which can be overcome by pinching the sides of the large hollow cylindrical section **34** together.

We claim:

1. A tethered golf tee and clamp assembly comprising:

a golf tee for supporting a golf ball above ground level;

a clamp including opposed first and second jaws biased together; and

a cord tethering the golf tee and clamp together;

wherein inner walls of the jaws include rounded or curved sections forming an oval or rounded opening sized for frictionally engaging a shaft of a golf club.

2. The assembly according to claim **1**, wherein the golf club shaft includes a diameter that tapers from a first small diameter to a second larger diameter; and wherein the opening includes a diameter larger than the first diameter of the golf club shaft, whereby outer free ends of the first and second jaws are biased together when mounted around the first diameter, and smaller than the second larger diameter, whereby the opening frictionally engages the second larger diameter when mounted around the second diameter.

3. The assembly according to claim **1**, wherein the inner walls of the jaws include a plurality of rounded or curved sections of different radiuses or curvature for frictionally engaging shafts of golf clubs with different diameters.

4. The assembly according to claim **1**, wherein the inner walls of the jaws include teeth for frictionally engaging the shafts of the golf clubs.

5. The assembly according to claim **1**, wherein the inner walls of the jaws include a frictional material for frictionally engaging the shafts of the golf clubs.

6. The assembly according to claim **1**, wherein the clamp comprises first and second lever arms pivotally connected to each other with the first and second jaws at the outer free ends thereof, respectively.

7. The assembly according to claim **6**, wherein the first and second lever arms comprise a resilient material, thereby biasing the first and second jaws together.

8. The assembly according to claim **6**, further comprising a spring for biasing the first and second jaws together.

9. The assembly according to claim **8**, further comprising first and second handles at ends of first and second lever arms, respectively, opposite the first and second jaws, for manually applying a force to overcome the biasing force of the spring.

10. The assembly according to claim **1**, further comprising a spring for biasing the first and second jaws together.

11. The assembly according to claim **1**, wherein the golf tee includes first and second flat sides, which are 2× to 4× wider than first and second rounded sides.

12. The assembly according to claim **11**, wherein the golf tee further comprises a hole extending through the first and second flat sides for receiving an end of the cord.

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