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PATENT SPECIFICATION

(11) 1 479 961

- (21) Application No. 12805/74 (22) Filed 22 March 1974
 (23) Complete Specification filed 13 March 1975
 (44) Complete Specification published 13 July 1977
 (51) INT CL² A63B 67/18
 (52) Index at acceptance A6S 28
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(54) SHUTTLECOCKS

(71) We, DUNLOP LIMITED, a British Company of Dunlop House, Ryder Street, St. James's, London S.W.1, do hereby declare the invention, for which we pray that a patent may be granted to us, and the method by which it is to be performed, to be particularly described in and by the following statement:—

This invention relates to shuttlecocks and particularly skirts therefor. Shuttlecocks have basically two portions, one being the cap or striking portion and the other being the skirt portion which provides the flight characteristics. The invention is concerned with skirts moulded, for example by an injection-moulding technique, from a suitable plastics material, and with shuttlecocks incorporating such skirts.

Moulded shuttlecocks skirts are well known. They usually comprise a number of diverging stems or vanes which define a cone-like structure. In the case of a skirt moulded in one piece, the ends of these stems which converge at the convergent end of the skirt i.e. the 'root ends' of the stems are normally joined together to form a continuous ring, referred to as the 'end-ring'.

A number of variations of this basic design have been postulated but a typical, widely-used type of moulded skirt is illustrated in Figure 1 of the accompanying drawings. This shows a longitudinal section through a conventional moulded shuttlecock without the striking cap.

The present invention is particularly concerned to provide a moulded skirt having improved physical characteristics when the shuttlecock is struck by a racket.

The present invention provides an integrally moulded shuttlecock skirt comprising a plurality of diverging stems which define a substantially frusto-conical structure, and whose ends at the convergent end of the skirt form an end-ring comprising a hollow cylinder, that end of the cylinder remote from the substantially frusto-conical structure being closed by an outwardly-convex wall to form a member of substantially 'U'-shaped longitudinal cross-

section, the closed end being provided with a centrally-disposed nose stem which extends from the base of the 'U' and away from the skirt to provide anchorage means for a striking cap.

The longitudinal axis of the end-ring will normally be substantially coincident with the longitudinal axis of the skirt.

By means of this invention, a shuttlecock skirt having an end-ring of low radial rigidity can be provided, by virtue of the absence of radially extending components in the end-ring region of the skirt. One disadvantage of using a rigid end-ring is that this results in an abrupt change in stiffness from the ring to the stem, and the skirt is consequently more liable to breakage.

There are two conflicting features to be optimised in the end construction. These are the need for the skirt to be flexible in order to reduce the risk of breakage on impact and the need for the skirt to be stiff so that it will recover quickly from deformation on impact. In skirts of the invention, the end-ring can be made more radially flexible than is conventional without deleteriously affecting the overall recovery properties of the skirt.

The axial length of the end-ring is preferably in the range 2 to 10 mm, e.g. 3 to 8 mm, whilst its internal diameter can for example be in the range 4 to 12 mm, especially 6 to 9 mm. The wall thickness of the end-ring is preferably from 0.3 to 1 mm.

A further advantage of shuttlecocks according to the invention is that the nose-stem feature results in there being relatively little solid material inside the striking cap of the shuttlecock; the cushioning effect of the cap is thus improved.

Since the nose-end of a shuttlecock is to be enclosed in a striking cap, satisfactory binding means must be used to ensure that the skirt and cap do not part company in use. This may be achieved by any convenient means including adhesion and/or mechanical locking. One type of striking cap now widely used is made of foamed plastics material. It can be forced over,

allowed to shrink around or moulded onto a suitable projection on the nose-end of the skirt to give a mechanical lock.

Thus in another preferred embodiment of the invention, the nose-stem of the skirt has a radial extension attached to it. This extension is preferably a disc. The disc provides the required projection from the stem for the mechanical locking with the cap.

The disc is conveniently provided as a separate moulding with a central hole to accommodate the stem and may be attached to the nose-stem by any conventional means. For example, it can be adhered or spun-welded to the stem or the end of the stem can be peened after the disc has been fitted on it. The disc must be sufficiently stiff to prevent the skirt being pulled out of the cap. However as shuttlecocks must be light, the weight of the disc can best be kept to a minimum by its having a tapered cross-section. By this means the stiffness/low weight requirement can be optimised.

Discs of different weights can be used to produce shuttlecocks having different characteristics.

A further useful advantage of the nose-stem feature of the invention is that it enables the nose-end to be set further into the striking cap than with conventional shuttlecocks without changing the basic external configuration, shape or weight of the cap.

The invention will now be further described, by way of example only, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:—

Figure 1 is a longitudinal cross-section through a conventional shuttlecock skirt;

Figure 2 is a longitudinal cross-section through a skirt according to the present invention;

Figure 3 is an enlarged section of the end ring of the skirt of Figure 2;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of the shuttlecock of Figure 2 provided with a disc for locking the cap;

Figure 5 is a cross-section of a suitable cap.

The shuttlecock skirt shown in Figure 2 has stems 1 whose ends at the convergent end of the skirt form an elongated end ring 2 comprising a hollow cylinder, that end of the cylinder remote from the substantially frusto-conical structure being closed by an outwardly convex wall to form a member of substantially 'U'-shaped longitudinal cross-section. As can be seen from Figure 3 the stems are integrally formed with the end ring, along the arms 3 of the 'U'. The cylindrical portion of the end ring has an axial length L and an internal diameter D. The end ring is provided with a nose-stem 4 to which can be attached an extension e.g. a disc 5 (Figure 4) to engage with a cap. A suit-

able cap is shown in Figure 5.

It will be appreciated that in comparison with the nose end of Figure 1, the nose end of the shuttlecock of Figure 2 can be set more deeply into the end cap shown in cross-section in Figure 5. This can give extra protection to the stems or vanes at one of their most vulnerable points, i.e. at and immediately adjacent the end-ring. Since such points can be set inside the end cap, the effective length of the shuttlecock with the striking cap attached can be kept constant by a corresponding increase in the length of the skirt to offset the extra nose-end length enclosed in the cap.

As indicated above the shuttlecock skirts of this invention can be conveniently made by injection moulding from a suitable plastics material. Suitable materials are well known in the art. The skirt illustrated in Figure 3 is particularly suitable for manufacture in this way. A mould having a cavity corresponding to the desired shape of the skirt can very conveniently be filled with plastics material by injection at the nose-stem end, i.e. the nose-stem corresponding to the injection inlet port of the mould.

WHAT WE CLAIM IS:—

1. An integrally-moulded shuttlecock skirt comprising a plurality of diverging stems which define a substantially frusto-conical structure, and whose ends at the convergent end of the skirt form an end-ring comprising a hollow cylinder, that end of the cylinder remote from the substantially frusto-conical structure being closed by an outwardly-convex wall to form a member of substantially 'U'-shaped longitudinal cross-section, the closed end being provided with a centrally-disposed nose stem which extends from the base of the 'U' and away from the skirt to provide anchorage means for a striking cap.
2. A shuttlecock skirt according to claim 1 in which the axial length of the end ring is in the range 2 to 10 mm.
3. A shuttlecock skirt according to claim 2 in which the axial length of the end ring is in the range 3 to 8 mm.
4. A shuttlecock skirt according to any one of claims 1 to 3 in which the internal diameter of the end ring is in the range 4 to 12 mm.
5. A shuttlecock skirt according to claim 4 in which the internal diameter of the end ring is in the range 6 to 9 mm.
6. A shuttlecock skirt according to any one of claims 1 to 5 in which the wall thickness of the end ring is in the range 0.3 to 1.
7. A shuttlecock skirt according to any one of the preceding claims in which the nose-stem has attached thereto a radial extension for anchoring a striking cap.
8. A shuttlecock skirt according to claim 7



allowed to shrink around or moulded onto a suitable projection on the nose-end of the skirt to give a mechanical lock.

Thus in another preferred embodiment of the invention, the nose-stem of the skirt has a radial extension attached to it. This extension is preferably a disc. The disc provides the required projection from the stem for the mechanical locking with the cap.

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Figure 5 is a cross-section of a suitable cap.

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2. A shuttlecock skirt according to claim 1 in which the axial length of the end ring is in the range 2 to 10 mm.
3. A shuttlecock skirt according to claim 2 in which the axial length of the end ring is in the range 3 to 8 mm.
4. A shuttlecock skirt according to any one of claims 1 to 3 in which the internal diameter of the end ring is in the range 4 to 12 mm.
5. A shuttlecock skirt according to claim 4 in which the internal diameter of the end ring is in the range 6 to 9 mm.
6. A shuttlecock skirt according to any one of claims 1 to 5 in which the wall thickness of the end ring is in the range 0.3 to 1.
7. A shuttlecock skirt according to any one of the preceding claims in which the nose-stem has attached thereto a radial extension for anchoring a striking cap.
8. A shuttlecock skirt according to claim 7



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in which the radial extension is in the form of a disc.

5 9. A shuttlecock skirt substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to and as shown in Figures 2, 3 and 4 of the accompanying drawings.

10. A shuttlecock comprising a skirt according to any one of the preceding

claims fitted with a striking cap.

11. A shuttlecock according to claim 10 in 10 which the stems of the skirt adjacent the end-ring are positioned within the striking cap.

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Printed for Her Majesty's Stationery Office by the Courier Press, Leamington Spa, 1977.
Published by the Patent Office, 25 Southampton Buildings, London, WC2A 1AY, from which copies may be obtained.