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A Board Riding Apparatus

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ABSTRACT

The invention relates to the field of board riding, and in particular to an apparatus and system for teaching and learning board riding skills. Embodiments of the invention are particularly suited for use with skim-boards and include:

a board adapted to support a rider for sliding movement on a surface in a forward direction, the board having a tow rope attachment fixture toward the forward end thereof;

a tow rope having a rider grip at one end and a towing grip at the other end, and a plurality of attachment points spaced from one another along a portion of the tow rope toward the rider grip end; and

a coupling for selectively linking the board attachment fixture to one of the tow rope attachment points.

Figure 6

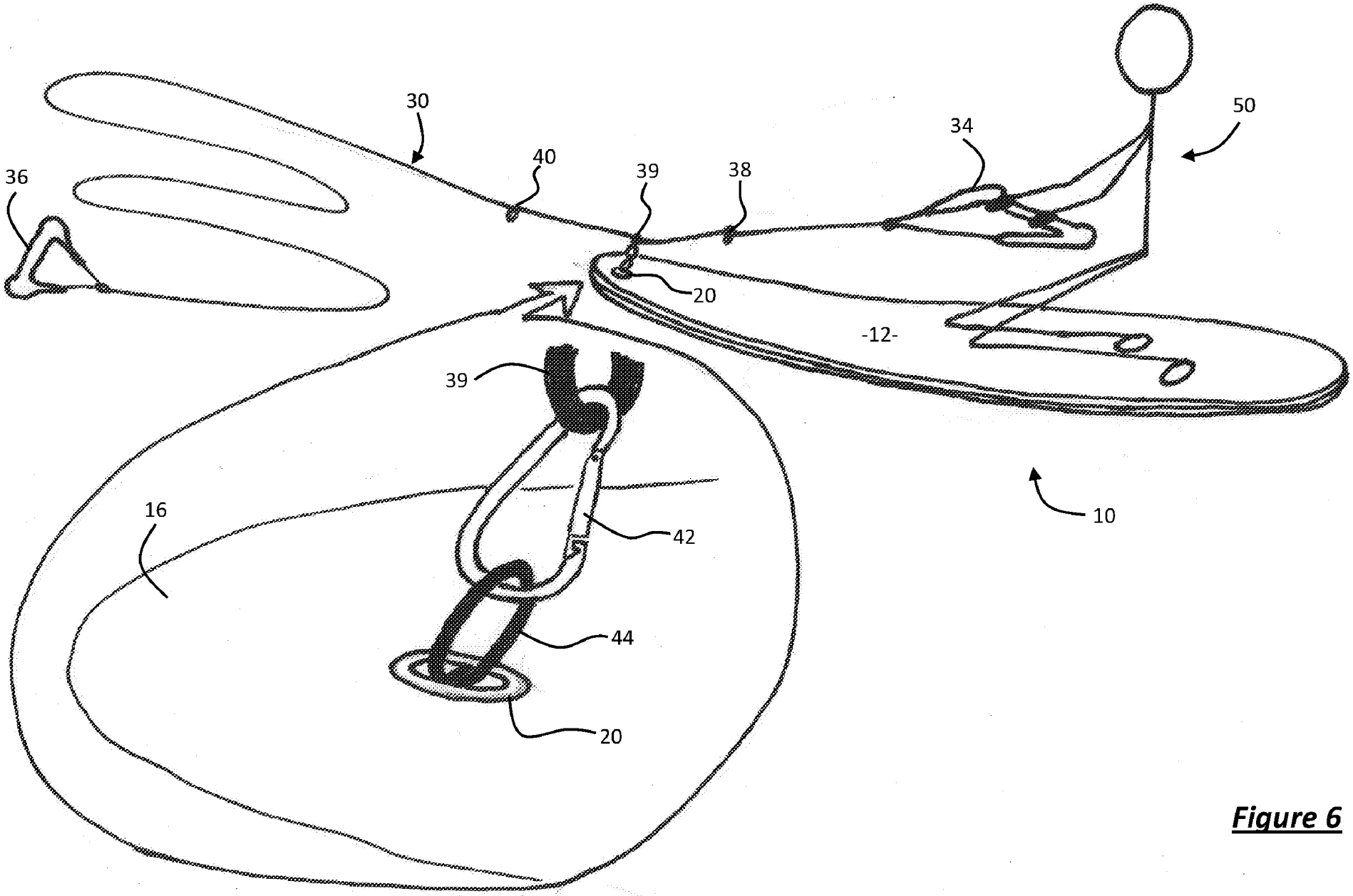

Figure 6

A Board Riding Apparatus

FIELD OF INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to the field of board riding, and in particular to an apparatus and system for teaching and learning board riding skills. Embodiments of the invention are particularly suited for use with skim-boards.

BACKGROUND ART

[0002] It is a popular recreational and sporting activity to ride a board by sliding or gliding over a low friction surface such as water, snow, grass or sand. Various different types of boards have been developed for use on different surfaces, conditions and/or circumstances. For example snowboards are useful for riding downhill on a snow covered surface, surfboards are useful for riding standing up on the surface of a wave, body-boards are useful for wave riding whilst prone or kneeling, whereas wake-boards are useful for riding on the water surface behind a motorised watercraft.

[0003] Another form of riding board is a skim-board, typically used in shallow water along a beach or shoreline. Unlike the other riding boards mentioned above, the normal operation of a skim-board is in a self-propelled manner. In other words, a skim-board does not ordinarily have the force of gravity, a wave or water current, or a motor boat with which to propel it. This can present certain challenges for children and novices to learn the balance and skills necessary for skim-board riding.

[0004] It would be desirable to provide an apparatus that can be used to progressively learn the balance and skills necessary for skim-board riding, or at least provide a useful alternative.

[0005] It is to be appreciated that any discussion of material such as documents, devices, acts or knowledge in this specification is included to explain the context of the invention in terms of the inventor's knowledge and experience and, accordingly, any such discussion should not be taken as an admission that any of the material forms part of the prior art base or the common general knowledge in the relevant art in Australia, or elsewhere, on or before the priority date of the disclosure and claims herein.

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SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0006] In accordance with the present invention there is provided a board riding apparatus including:

a board adapted to support a rider for sliding movement on a surface in a forward direction, the board having a tow rope attachment fixture toward the forward end thereof;

a tow rope having a rider grip at one end and a towing grip at the other end, and at least one attachment point toward the rider grip end; and

a selective coupling means for selectively linking the board attachment fixture to the at least one tow rope attachment point for different modes of use, wherein the length along the tow rope from the rider grip to the at least one attachment point linked to the board is different for different modes of use.

[0007] In one form of the invention the board is a skim-board.

[0008] The at least one attachment point may include a plurality of attachment points spaced along a length of the tow rope, or may include a single attachment point that is, in use, moveable in position along a length of the tow rope. Alternatively, the at least one attachment point may include a single attachment point, wherein the length of rope between the attachment point and the rider grip is adjustable. These arrangements allow the tow rope to be attached to the board with a selective length of rope between attachment point and rider grip to accommodate different sized board riders and modes of use.

[0009] In one form of the invention the attachment points are in the form of loops knotted or otherwise affixed on the tow rope.

[0010] The selective coupling means may be in the form of a detachable link that can be used to couple the attachment fixture of the board to a selected one of the tow rope attachment points.

[0011] The rider grip and the towing grip may each be in the form of a handle.

[0012] The tow rope attachment fixture may advantageously be recessed in the board structure so as to not substantially protrude from the surface of the board.

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[0013] Further scope of applicability of embodiments of the present invention will become apparent from the detailed description given hereinafter. However, it should be understood that the detailed description and specific examples, while indicating preferred embodiments of the invention, are given by way of illustration only, since various changes and modifications within the spirit and scope of the disclosure herein will become apparent to those skilled in the art from this detailed description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0014] The features, operation and advantages of the invention may be more fully understood from the following detailed description of an embodiment thereof, presented by way of non-limiting example only, and with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a plan view of a skim board with a tow rope attachment fixture;

Figure 2 is a side view of the skim board;

Figure 3 is a perspective view of the skim board;

Figure 4 is a representation of a tow rope;

Figure 5 illustrates a tow rope coupled to an attachment fixture in isolation from the skim board;

Figure 6 illustrates a board riding apparatus in operation in a first configuration;

Figure 7 illustrates the board riding apparatus in operation in a second configuration; and

Figure 8 illustrates the board riding apparatus in operation in a third configuration.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0015] An embodiment of the invention is described in detail hereinafter in the context of a skim-board apparatus and system useful for teaching and learning skim-board riding balance and skills in a progressive manner.

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[0016] Skim-boarding, like surfing and body-boarding are common beach sports, but are not easy to teach or learn for young children. The skim-board apparatus described herein has been designed to be suitable for use by young children as a lead in to the more common sports of surfing, wake boarding, skiing, snowboarding, etc. The apparatus is useful to help teach the skills required for these sports with a progressive system, by way of a specifically designed adjustable tow system which allows for alterations according to the skill level and height of the board rider. The rider can progress from a beginner stage to a free riding stage by simple rope adjustments, which are designed into the tow rope attachment. The board has been designed to allow for comfortable riding on non-slip padded foam so children may ride on their knees without injury. The apparatus allows for handle-aided riding and free riding positions. The board is designed to be towed by a third party, using the adjustable tow system, by running along the shoreline of a beach or lake, on grass or on snow, or any other suitable surface.

[0017] A skim-board 10 is shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3 in plan, side and perspective views, respectively. The board 10 is generally oval-shaped when viewed from above, with rounded ends at the front (16) and rear (18). The board is generally flat with inclined portions to the front and rear, the front incline being more pronounced. The top surface 12 of the board is adapted to support a rider, and the under surface 14 is generally smooth to facilitate sliding over a surface such as water, in use. The board 10 may be constructed from materials suitable for its purpose, preferably buoyant in water, such as epoxy-coated wood or cork, plastics or fibreglass materials. The board may have a multi-layer construction wherein the top surface is of a different material than the under surface. The material on the top of the board advantageously has a non-slip characteristic to aid the grip of a board rider, and may include a resilient foam plastics or rubber layer that provides a degree of padding to a kneeling rider.

[0018] The board, by way of example, may have an overall length of approximately 940mm and width of 520mm, with a front incline rising 30mm and a rear incline of 10mm. The board thickness may be about 12mm, of which the top 4mm is foam padding.

[0019] An attachment fixture 20 is provided toward the front end 16 of the board. The attachment fixture as shown is in the form of a metal or plastic padeye fitted into the structure of the board 10 so as to be generally flush with the top and under surfaces,

minimising friction on the under surface and protruding obstructions on the top. The padeye has an aperture or recess bridged by a pin to which attachments can be made. The padeye may be secured to the board structure in a hole formed through the board using adhesive or mechanical securing means such as flanges.

[0020] Figure 4 illustrates a tow rope 30 in the form of a length of rope 32 having a rider grip in the form of handle 34 at one end, and a towing grip in the form of handle 36 at the other end. The tow rope has a plurality of attachment points, such as loops 38, 39, 40, spaced along a portion of the rope toward the rider grip end. The tow rope attachment points are fixed at intervals along a portion of the rope length toward the rider grip end. The attachment points may be in the form of loops that are knotted or otherwise formed in the rope, for example. The rope and handles are advantageously constructed from materials that are resistant to detrimental effects of salt-water so that the tow rope does not unnecessarily degrade when used at the seaside. For example, the rope 32 may be of a nylon material.

[0021] The tow rope, by way of example, may be of the order of 4.5 metres in total length, with adjacent attachment points spaced by approximately 100 mm. The nearest attachment point (e.g. loop 38) may be about 300 mm from the rider handle. Although the embodiment shown and described has three attachment points, more attachment points may be provided. For the purposes of this embodiment a minimum of two attachment points are necessary to allow for progressive board riding modes of use as described hereinbelow.

[0022] The tow rope 30 is shown in Figure 5 coupled to the board attachment fixture 20 (the attachment fixture is shown in isolation from the board itself). The tow rope is shown with attachment loop 39 coupled to the padeye by way of a coupling that comprises a cord 44 and a carabiner 42. The cord is secured around the pin of the padeye and the carabiner attaches the tow rope to the cord (and thus to the board, in use). The carabiner has a hinged link that enables it to be detached from the cord and tow rope so that any of the tow rope attachment points (loops 38, 39, 40) may be coupled to the board, or the tow rope may be detached from the board altogether. This arrangement allows the tow rope to be used with the board in a number of different configurations which permits a user to progress through several different modes of use whilst learning board riding skills.

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[0023] The board riding apparatus is illustrated in a first mode of use in Figure 6. In this case a rider 50 is supported by on the board 10 by kneeling on the top surface 12 thereof. The rider grasps the rider handle 34 of the tow rope 30, which is attached to the padeye 20 on the front of the board by way of the coupling of cord 44 and carabiner 42 to attachment loop 39. Since the tow rope is attached to the front of the board, the rider is able to gain additional stability by holding onto the handle 34, and also an instructor (not shown) can tow the board and rider by pulling on the towing handle 36. The size of the rider and/or the position of the rider on the board may determine which of the tow rope attachment points should be coupled to the board for optimum stability and comfort in use.

[0024] Once the rider has gained balance and confidence riding the board from a kneeling position, he or she may progress to standing on the board. Accordingly, Figure 7 illustrates a second mode of use of the board riding apparatus in which the rider stands on the board. In this case the tow rope is attached to the board using a different attachment point (loop 40) so that the rider may comfortably grasp the handle 34 whilst standing. Since the tow rope is attached to the front of the board the rider can once again gain stability by pulling against the handle 34, and an instructor can tow the board and rider by pulling against the handle 36.

[0025] Another mode of use of the board riding apparatus is illustrated in Figure 8. In this case the rider is standing but the tow rope has been decoupled from the board. Thus, in this configuration the rider does not have the ability to stabilize himself by pulling on the handle attached by the tow rope to the front of the board and must balance on the board by feet only. An instructor (not shown) can tow the rider by pulling on the handle 36 of the tow rope, which in this case pulls the rider (holding handle 34) directly rather than pulling the board.

[0026] By progressing through the various modes of use of the board riding apparatus using the selectively configurable tow rope and coupling arrangement of the described embodiment, a rider may develop a level of board riding proficiency such that use of the tow rope may be dispensed with altogether. In this case the rider can utilise the board 10 in the manner of an ordinary skim board.

[0027] While this invention has been described in connection with specific embodiments thereof, it will be understood that it is capable of further modification(s).

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This application is intended to cover any variations uses or adaptations of the invention following in general, the principles of the invention and including such departures from the present disclosure as come within known or customary practice within the art to which the invention pertains and as may be applied to the essential features hereinbefore set forth.

[0028] As the present invention may be embodied in several forms without departing from the spirit of the essential characteristics of the invention, it should be understood that the above described embodiments are not to limit the present invention unless otherwise specified, but rather should be construed broadly within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims. The described embodiments are to be considered in all respects as illustrative only and not restrictive.

[0029] For example, although a certain form of attachment fixture has been described, other means for attachment to the board can alternatively be employed. The tow rope is preferably constructed so as to be resistant to degradation through exposure to salt water and sunlight, for example woven from synthetic fibres, but other materials and constructions may also be used and the “rope” may in fact be in the form of a ribbon, cord, cable other equivalent. The rider and towing grips can be in the form of handles as described above, formed from plastic or wood for example, but could alternatively be formed by the rope itself. Similarly, the attachment points as shown are knotted loops on the tow rope, but may alternatively be provided by additional features that are otherwise attached to the rope such as rings or loops of another material. Whilst the coupling is shown as a combination of a carabiner and a cord loop, it will be appreciated that there are many other ways of selectively coupling the tow rope attachment points to the board fixture in order to provide the same functionality.

[0030] The facility for a user to progress through several modes of use of the apparatus whilst learning board riding skills is provided by the tow rope being selectively attachable to the front of the board and the length of the tow rope between the board attachment point and rider handle being selectable or adjustable to suit different riding positions and/or rider dimensions. Thus, whilst this function is enabled in the described embodiment by a plurality of spaced attachment points, it is also possible to have a single attachment point that is adjustable in position along a length of the tow rope (e.g. a

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moveable clamp), or a single fixed attachment point with an adjustable rope length between the attachment point and the rider handle.

[0031] "Comprises/comprising" and "includes/including" when used in this specification is taken to specify the presence of stated features, integers, steps or components but does not preclude the presence or addition of one or more other features, integers, steps, components or groups thereof. Thus, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, throughout the description and the claims, the words 'comprise', 'comprising', 'includes', 'including' and the like are to be construed in an inclusive sense as opposed to an exclusive or exhaustive sense; that is to say, in the sense of "including, but not limited to".

CLAIMS

1. A board riding apparatus including:

a board adapted to support a rider for sliding movement on a surface, the board having a tow rope attachment fixture toward a forward end thereof;

a tow rope having a rider grip at one end and a towing grip at the other end, and at least one attachment point toward the rider grip end; and

a selective coupling means for selectively linking the board attachment fixture to the at least one tow rope attachment point for different modes of use, wherein the length along the tow rope from the rider grip to the at least one attachment point linked to the board is different for different modes of use.

2. A board riding apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein the at least one attachment point includes a single attachment point and wherein the length of rope between the attachment point and the rider grip is adjustable.

3. A board riding apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein the selective coupling means includes a detachable link that can be used to couple the attachment fixture of the board to a selected one of the tow rope attachment points.

4. A board riding apparatus as defined in claim 1, wherein the tow rope attachment fixture is recessed in the board structure so as to not substantially protrude from the surface thereof.

5. A skim-board riding system including:

a board adapted to support a rider for sliding movement on a surface in a forward direction, the board having a tow rope attachment fixture toward the forward end thereof;

a tow rope having a rider grip at one end and a towing grip at the other end, and a plurality of attachment points spaced from one another along a portion of the tow rope toward the rider grip end; and

a coupling for selectively linking the board attachment fixture to one of the tow rope attachment points.

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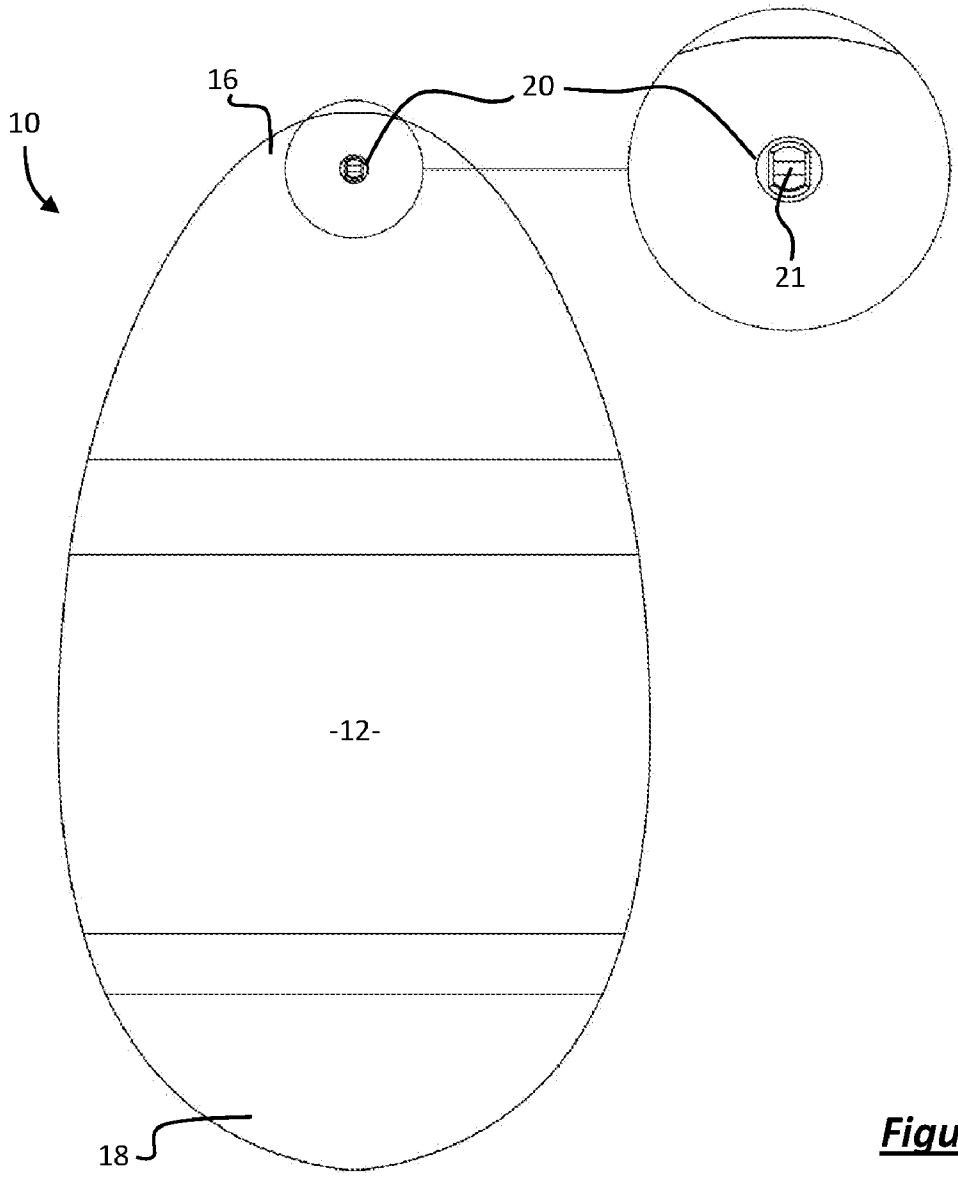

Figure 1

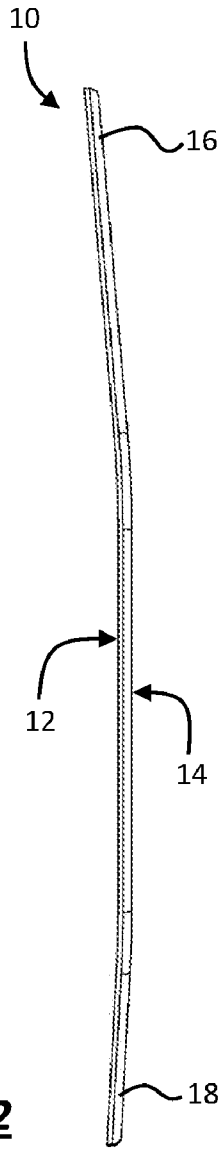

Figure 2

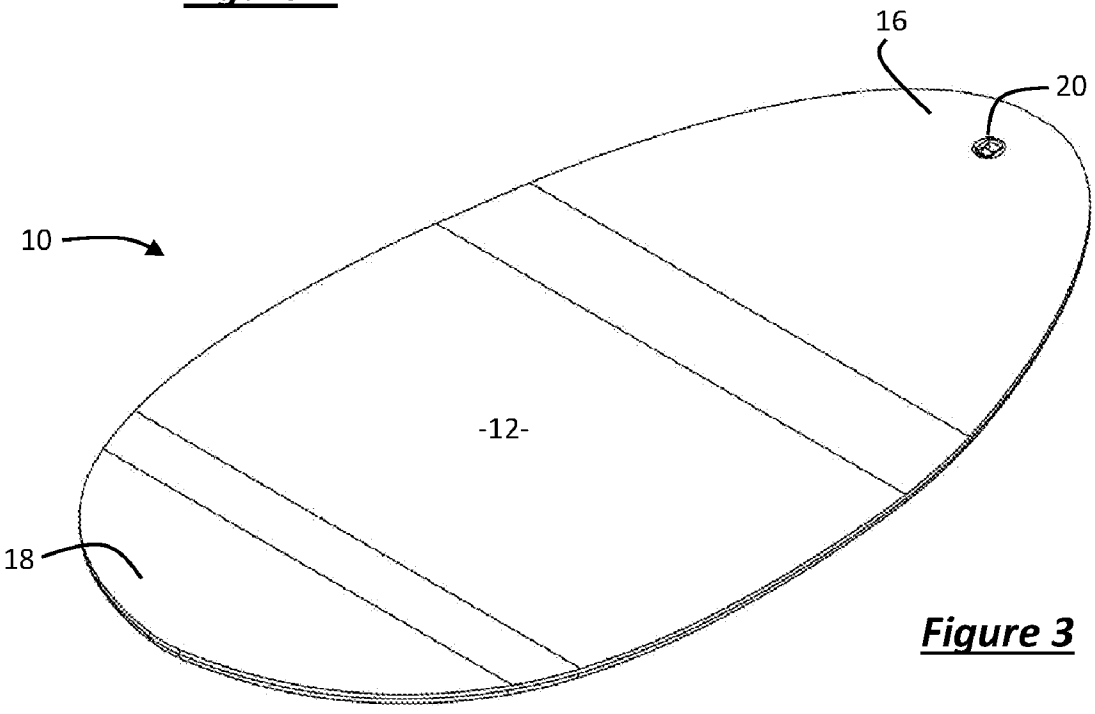

Figure 3

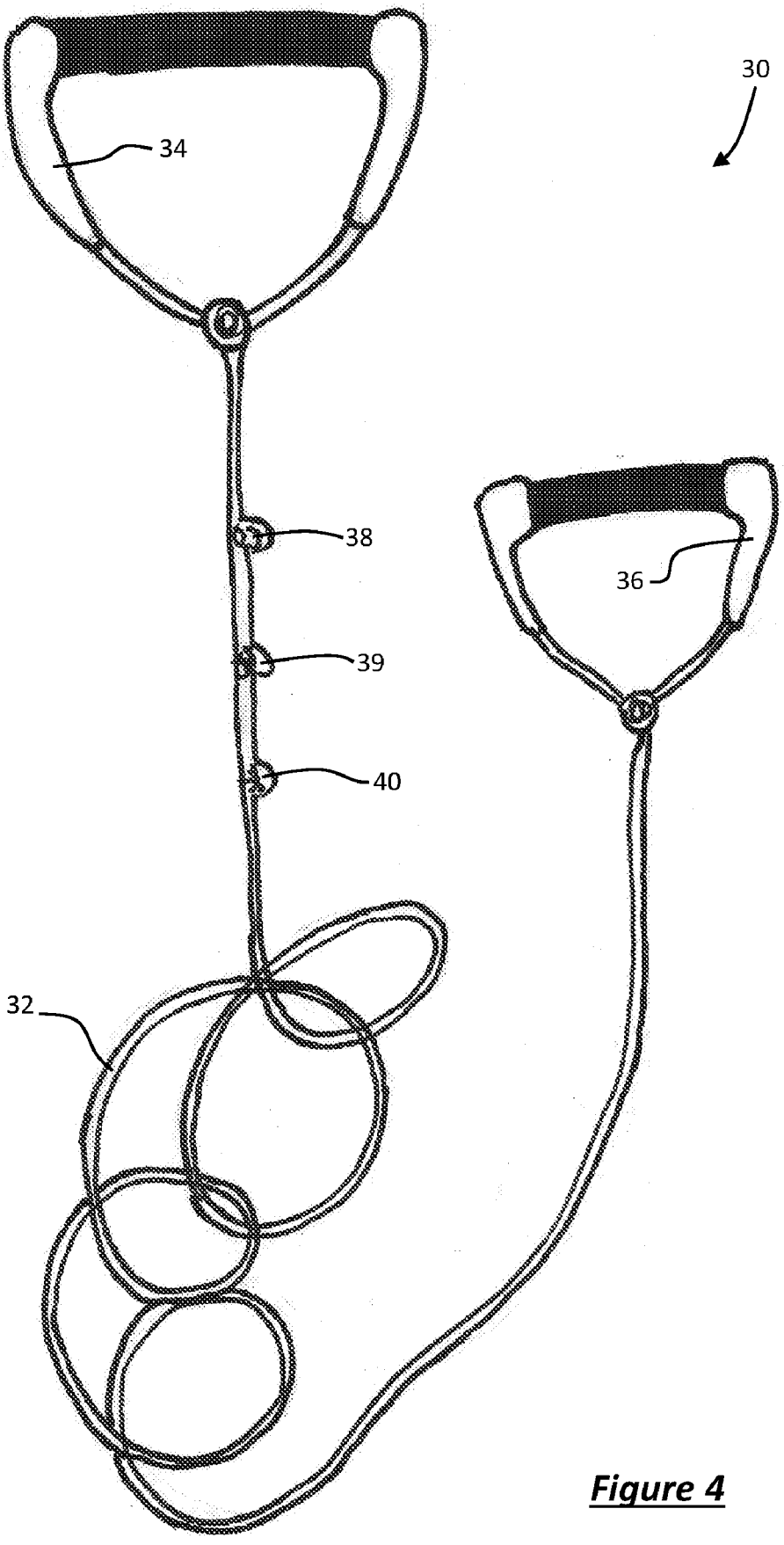

Figure 4

Figure 5

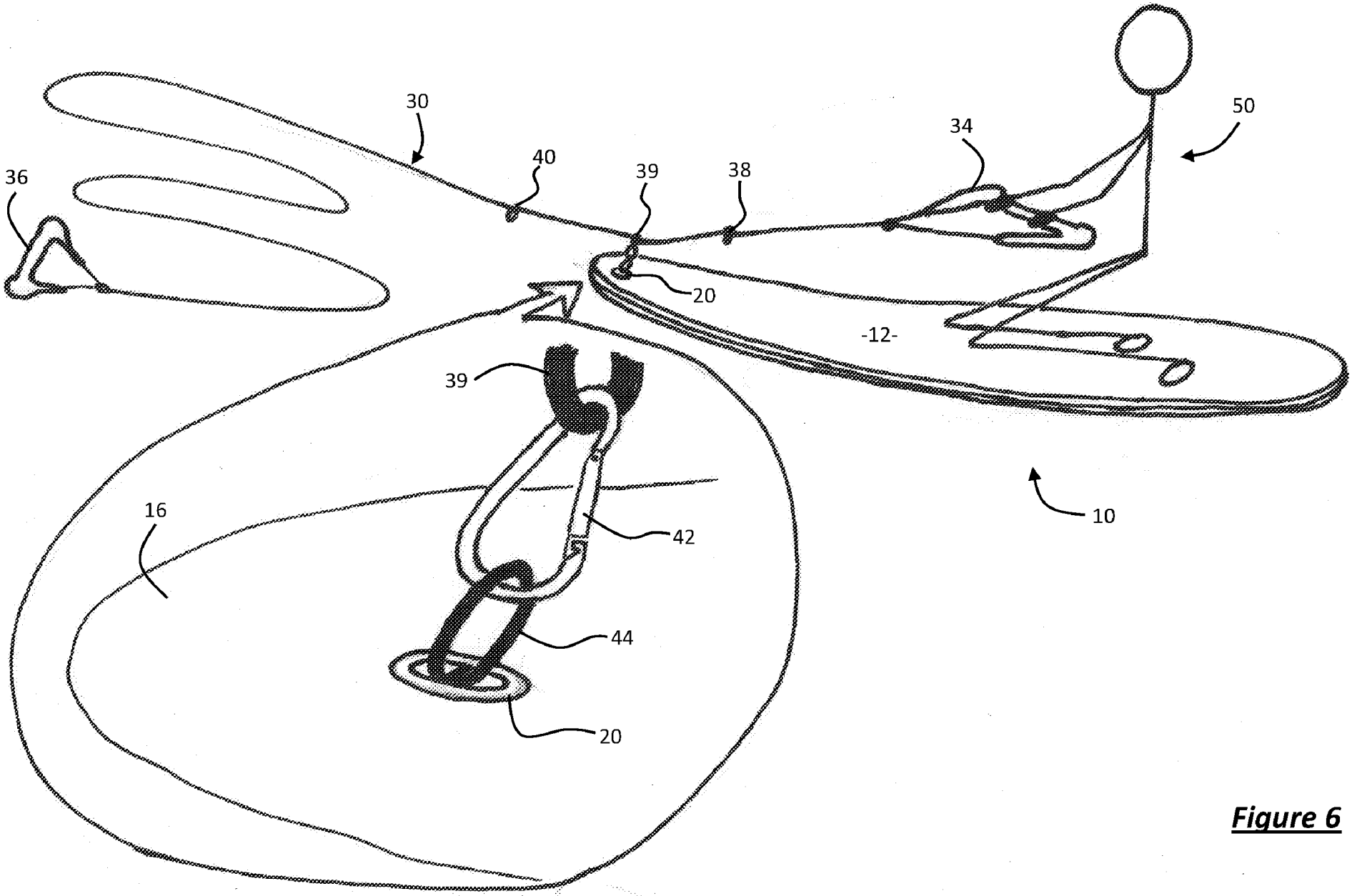

Figure 6

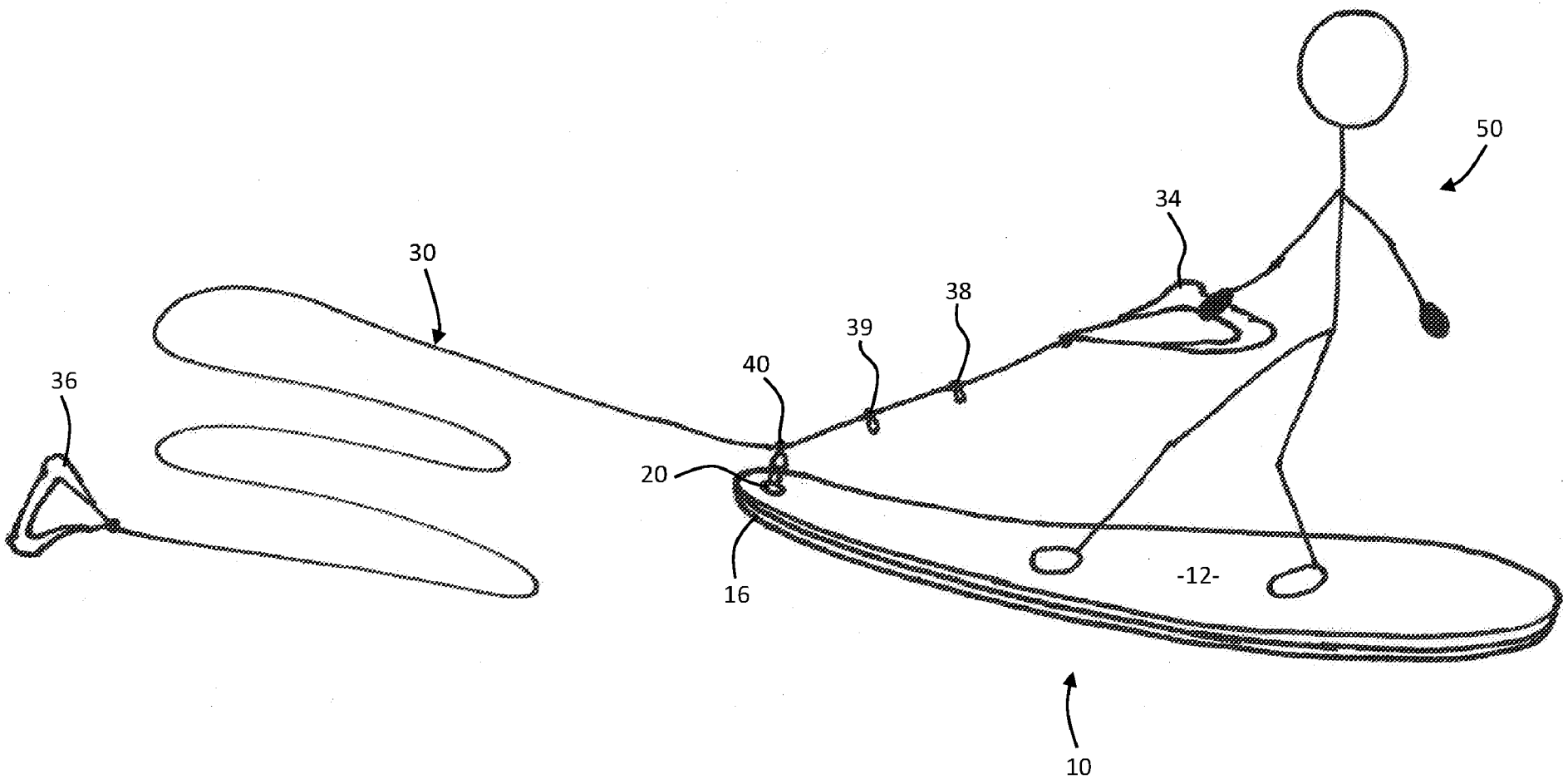

Figure 7

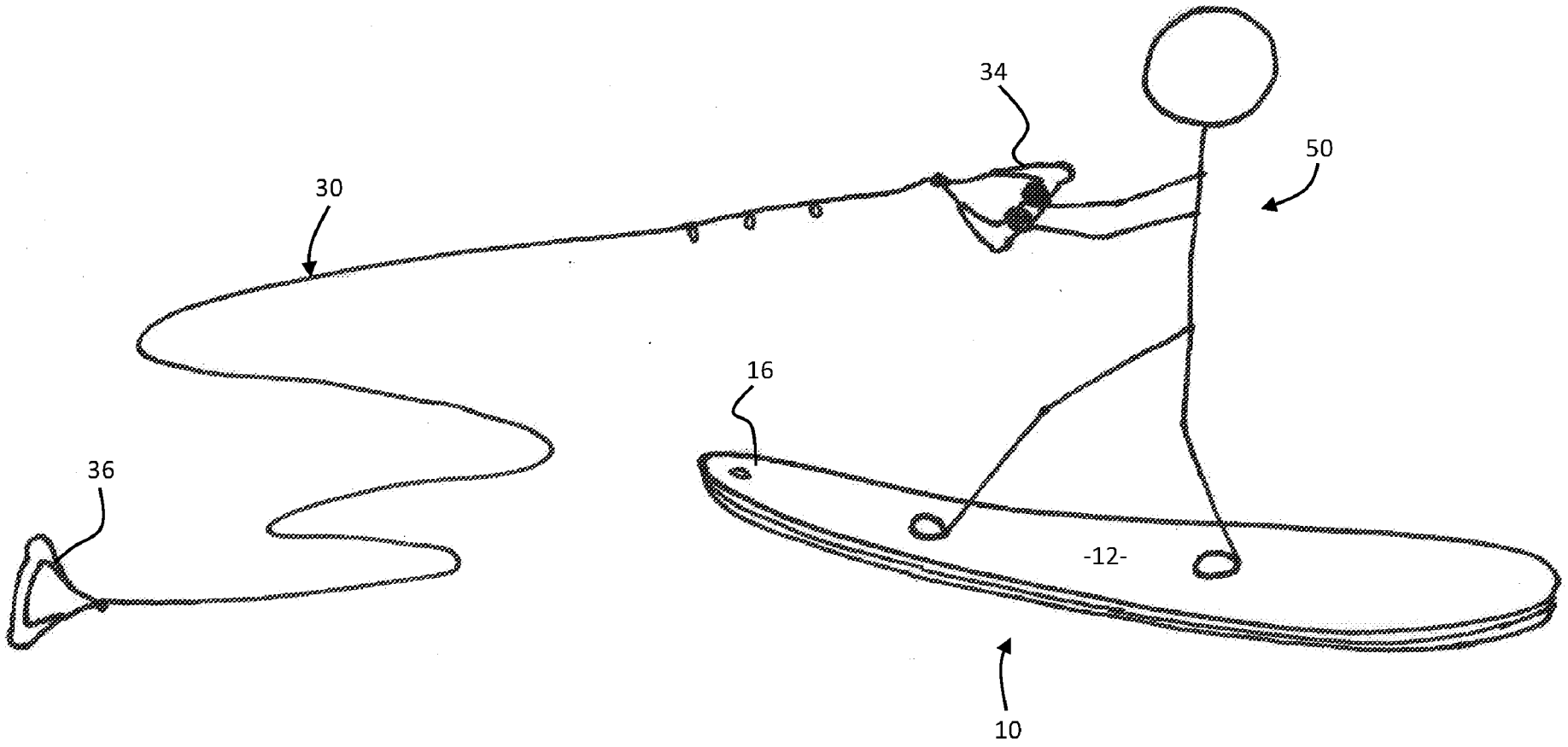

Figure 8