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(54) **FILLING DEVICE AND METHOD FOR FILLING BALLS IN THE APERTURES OF A BALL-RECEIVING ELEMENT**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A filling device for and a method of filling balls in an array of apertures in a ball-receiving element, the filling device comprising: a housing including an opening at a lower surface thereof and defining in part a chamber for containing a supply of balls, the housing being in use movably disposed over a ball-receiving element including an array of apertures; and distribution means disposed within the housing for distributing balls contained in the chamber such as to maintain a limited number of layers of the balls over at least a region of the opening in the housing.

35 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets

