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SAFETY HAT FOR WATER SKIERS

Robert M. Levy, 1707 Franklin, Lexington, Mo., and Linus Eldon Wegeng, Rte. 1, Henrietta, Mo.

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This invention relates to headgear for sportsmen and, more particularly, to a hat or cap having warning means thereon and adapted to be used by water skiers.

Since the sport of water skiing becomes more popular every year, lakes and rivers are becoming increasingly crowded with boats and water skiers. As a result of these crowded conditions many accidents occur which result in injuries to water skiers when they are struck by oncoming boats after they have been spilled into the water upon losing control of their water skis and as they are waiting to be picked up by their towboats.

It is sometimes difficult to observe a person in the water when only the head of the person is above the surface of the water. This is especially true where certain reflections from the water almost completely obliterate any objects protruding above the surface. Also, in view of the relatively high speeds of small motor boats it is sometimes difficult to change course in time to avoid striking a person if the person is not observed from a relatively great distance.

Children who water ski are generally oblivious to the dangers of approaching motorboats inasmuch as their attentions are distracted for one reason or another while they are in the water waiting to be picked up. A large percentage of the water accidents involving water skiers results in injuries to children who do not take proper precautionary measures to warn boat operators approaching their positions in the water.

In view of the foregoing, a need exists for a warning device for use by water skiers which is simple in construction yet which serves to warn approaching boat drivers of the presence of an individual in the water while the individual is waiting to be picked up or is swimming to shore after being spilled into the water upon loss of control of the water skis. The present invention satisfies this need by providing a safety device for water skiers comprised of a head covering or cap of the conventional type used by bathers and having a mast provided with a warning device thereon so that, when the water skier is in the water, the mast will protrude upwardly therefrom and the warning device on the mast will signal the presence of the water skier to operators of approaching boats.

It is, therefore, the primary object of the present invention to provide a safety hat for water skiers which can be worn in such a manner that a warning signal will be displayed in a position observable by the operator of an approaching boat when the water skier is in the water with only his head protruding above the surface thereof.

Another object of the present invention is the provision of a hat of the aforesaid character having warnings means thereon which is automatically disposed in an observable position when the wearer of the hat is in the water, whereby the wearer need not take any steps to place the warning device in the position and thus he can turn his attention to other activities such as maintaining the position in the water until help arrives.

Yet another object of the instant invention is the provision of a hat of the aforesaid character having warning means which may be worn in a retracted position but which moves automatically into an extended, operative position by the force of the water thereon as the wearer is spilled into the water, whereby the warning means automatically moves into the operative position and can be readily observed by operators of approaching or passing motor boats from a relatively great distance from the

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wearer so as to warn such operators of the presence of the wearer in the water.

In the drawings:

FIGURE 1 is one embodiment of the hat made pursuant to the concepts of the present invention and illustrating its use on the head of a wearer thereof;

FIG. 2 is an enlarged, fragmentary, cross-sectional view of the hat illustrating the way in which the warning means thereof is attached thereto;

FIG. 3 is another and preferred embodiment of the hat showing the warning means in a retracted position prior to use thereof;

FIG. 4 is a view similar to FIG. 2 but illustrating the spring clip for maintaining the warning means in a retracted position;

FIG. 5 is an end elevational view of the spring clip; and

FIG. 6 is a top plan view of the warning means and the base for attaching the same to the hat.

The present invention is directed to a hat having observable warning means thereon for use by water skiers to signal to the operator of an approaching motor boat the presence of the wearer in the water in the vicinity of the path of travel of the boat. The hat comprises a hat member having a crown from which the warning means extends in an upward direction. The warning means includes a base rigidly secured to the crown of the hat, a mast projecting outwardly from the base, and a warning device, such as a pennant, on the outer end of the mast. The pennant may be of brightly colored material so as to be readily observed from a relatively great distance.

In one embodiment of the invention, the mast is at all times maintained in a position extending outwardly from the crown. In another embodiment, the base is provided with a spring clip for releasably maintaining the mast in a retracted position extending rearwardly of the crown but, upon contact with the water when the wearer is spilled into the water, the mast will automatically move into an operative, observable position extending upwardly from the crown.

The first embodiment of the hat is denoted by the numeral **10** and includes a hat number **12** having a crown **14** and adapted to be worn on the head in the usual manner. Hat member **12** may be of any construction but preferably it is made in the same manner as conventional bathing caps.

Warning means **16** is coupled with and extends outwardly from crown **14** and comprises a base **18** having a mast **20** integral therewith and extending outwardly from one face **22** thereof. The opposite face **24** of base **18** is in complemental engagement with and bonded to the outer surface of crown **14** in any suitable manner such as by an adhesive. If hat member **12** and base **18** are formed of thermoplastic materials, the same may be fused together upon the application of heat thereto.

A warning device in the nature of a pennant **26** is secured to and extends laterally from the upper end of mast **20**. Pennant **26** may be formed of a fabric material or can be rigid as shown in FIG. 1. Moreover, pennant **26** is preferably brightly colored so as to be observed from a relatively great distance therefrom.

In use, mast **20** extends upwardly from crown **14** at all times as hat **10** is worn and, when the wearer is spilled into the water or otherwise is in the water for some reason, mast **20** will extend upwardly from crown **14** and pennant **26** will be observed in substantially all directions.

Another embodiment of the hat is denoted by the numeral **110** and is illustrated in FIGS. 3–6. Hat **110** includes a hat member **112** having a crown **114** and warning means **116** secured to crown **114**. Hat member **112** is to be worn in the usual way on the head of the wearer.