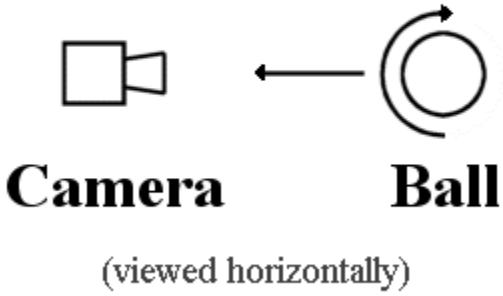
Question #212

This is a follow-up question to Question #206, regarding the curve ball. Pictured below is a styrofoam ball about 4 inches in diameter, which I am about to throw at a video camera as it records the action. How I will throw the ball and what it does as it moves toward the video camera is the subject of this week's question.

When I throw the ball, I will throw it with an overhand motion, as a right-handed pitcher would do. I will release it by letting it slide off the fingers of my hand, giving the ball a spin with the bottom side moving toward the camera and the top side moving away from the camera, as seen in an mpeg video by clicking your mouse on the photograph of the ball below. The question involves the path the ball will take as it speeds toward the camera. The sketch at the right below illustrates some of the details of the situation.



Question: As the ball speeds from my hand toward the camera:

- (a) it will curve strongly upward as viewed by the camera.
- (b) it will curve strongly downward as viewed by the camera.
- (c) it will move straight toward the camera, only falling slightly due to gravity.

Click here for Answer #212 after March 14, 2005.

Question of the Week

Outreach Index Page

Lecture-Demonstration Home Page

For questions and comments regarding the *Question of the Week* contact

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