

It's All Fun & Games... and learning too!

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Asteroid

Objective: Throwing; catching; quick reaction; agility; teamwork; aerobic endurance.

Equipment: 1 Large soccer ball (or similar) and 1 coated foam ball for every six players.

Set-up: Players form teams of 3 or 4. One team has a soccer ball (called the planet) and the other team has a foam ball (called the asteroid).

How to play: The team with the planet must kick the ball around the field, keeping it away from the asteroid. The team with the asteroid must throw the asteroid at the planet and hit it. When the asteroid hits the planet, the team who threw the asteroid takes possession of the planet and the teams switch roles. The person with the asteroid cannot travel with it; they must throw it to a teammate to get close to the planet. The team with the planet can only use their feet to move the ball around the play area.

Cross-the-Line

Objective: Aerobic endurance; throwing; catching; teamwork; strategy.

Equipment: Six hoops; 6 Koosh balls (beanbags can also be used); cones.

Set-up: Place three hoops at each end of the play area, approximately 10 feet apart. Place the cones in a line in the middle of the field so that the field is divided in half. If desired, you can also use cones to make sideline boundaries. Divide the players into two teams of 6 each. Each team has three Koosh balls, which are distributed to three different players.

How to play: The object of the game is to get three Koosh balls into the other team's hoops before they get three in your hoops. A player who has possession of a ball is allowed to cross the line in the middle of the field and run toward the other team's hoops. However, when a player crosses the line the opposing team can tag him. If tagged while in the other team's zone, the player who was tagged must hand their ball over to the other team. They are now free to go back to their own side of the line. When a player runs across the line with a ball, his goal is to get the ball into one of the three hoops. Throws can be made from anywhere once a player crosses the line. Of course, the closer the player gets to the hoops the easier it is for a successful throw to be made. If a throw misses the hoops and lands on the ground, the opposing team gets possession of the ball. The game is played until one team has three balls in the opposing team's hoops.

Variations: You can add more balls to the game. This will make the game last longer. This game can be played with less people on each team (e.g., 3 v.3; 4 v. 4; or 5 v. 5).

Tips: Only players who have possession of a ball can cross the line in the center of the field. If a player who crosses the line is in danger of being tagged, he can avoid losing his ball by throwing it at the opposing team's hoops. He then is allowed to go back to his own side of the field. If the ball goes into the hoop, it remains in, and no one can touch it. If the ball misses the hoop, the opposing team picks it up and can use it.

Catch 5

Objective: Throwing; catching; teamwork; cooperation.

Equipment: One football (or other ball) for every group of 6-8 players; cones.

Set-up: The players form teams of 3 or 4 (this game is played either 3 vs. 3 or 4 vs. 4). Using cones, mark off boundaries (rectangle or square) for each game approximately 50 x 100 feet or 75 x 75 feet.

How to play: One team starts on offense and has the ball. The other team is on defense. The object is for the offensive team to pass the ball to each other, trying to make five consecutive passes and catches without dropping the ball or having the defensive team intercept it or knock it down. If five successful passes and catches are made, the team scores one point and the ball now goes to the other team. If the ball is dropped, knocked down or intercepted by the defensive team, the defensive team takes possession of the ball and goes on offense. The game continues for a predetermined amount of time or until one team scores a predetermined amount of points. Defensive players are not allowed to touch offensive players who are trying to make a pass. If they do, the thrower is allowed to throw again. If a defensive player touches an offensive player who is attempting to catch a pass, "interference" is called and the catch counts, and the offensive team continues. Throwers cannot travel with the ball, but they are allowed to pivot their feet as in basketball, but must stay in one place. Other players can move anywhere within the designated boundaries.

Crazy Catch

Objective: Agility; hand/eye coordination.

Equipment: One "Z-ball" or reaction ball and one hoop for every two players.

Set-up: This game is played in pairs. Each pair needs one ball and one hoop.

How to play: The players stand on opposite sides of a hoop, facing each other. The player with the ball (player A) bounces the ball into the hoop toward the other player. The opposing player tries to catch the ball. If the player doesn't catch the ball, the thrower receives one point. The players continue throwing the ball into the hoop back and forth. The first player with 7 points wins the game. Throws cannot bounce higher than the opposing player's head. If a thrower bounces the ball so that it bounces above the opposing player's head, the opposing player receives a point.

Drop 21

Objective: Agility; hand/eye coordination.

Equipment: One "Z-ball" or reaction ball for every two players.

Set-up: This game is played in pairs inside a circle. Each pair needs one ball.

How to play: The players stand inside a 12-15 foot diameter circle, facing each other a few feet apart. The player with the ball (player A) holds it at the height of the other player's head then drops it in the center of the circle. The object is for the other player (player B) to catch the ball after it bounces, but before it lands outside the circle. Every bounce counts as a point. Therefore, if the ball is caught after one bounce player B gets 1 point, after two bounces, 2 points, etc. However, once the ball lands outside the circle or can no longer be caught off the bounce, no points are awarded. Each player is trying to achieve 21 points. After player B has caught the ball, she drops it for player A to catch. Players continue dropping the ball for each other. The players continue adding to their scores trying to achieve 21 points. To win, a player must have exactly 21 points. If she exceeds 21, she must begin subtracting points to get back to 21. If a dropped ball hits the person who drops it or the person who drops it gets in the way of the person trying to catch the ball, it is a "do-over" and the ball is dropped again.

Go for the Gold

Objective: Chasing; fleeing; cooperation.

Equipment: A beanbag or small, soft object for every pair of players.

Set-up: The players form pairs. Each pair stands facing each other approximately 30 to 40 feet apart with a beanbag placed on the ground between them. The line where each player stands is his or her safety line.

How to play: There are two objectives to this game: 1) To grab the beanbag and run to the safety line before your partner can tag you, or 2) tag your partner before she can get to her safety line with the beanbag. The game begins with both players holding up a closed fist. When Player A opens his fist, showing his opponent all five fingers and the palm of his hand, it indicates he is ready to begin. When Player B opens her hand it is the signal for the game to begin. At this point both players run to the middle where the beanbag is lying on the ground. The players can either attempt to grab the beanbag or wait for their opponent to grab it, then try and tag them. If the "grabber" is tagged before reaching her safety line, the tagger gets a point. If the "grabber" makes it to the safety line with the beanbag, he gets a point. After a point is scored, the players place the beanbag back in the middle and return to their safety line. On each turn the players alternate who will open their hand first to indicate they are ready to begin and who will open their hand second to indicate the start of the game.

Hoop Ball

Objective: Hand/eye coordination; agility.

Equipment: One hoop and one playground ball for every two players.

Set-up: The players form pairs. Each pair stands on opposite sides of a hoop lying on the ground. One player has the ball.

How to play: The player with the ball bounces the ball one time then strikes with her hand, making it bounce inside of the hoop. The opposing player must now attempt to return the ball to the hoop by striking it with his hand before it bounces again (similar to volleying back and forth in tennis). When a ball cannot be returned successfully to the hoop the other player receives one point. The game can be played to 11, 15, or 21. The winner must win by two points.

Keep Away

Objective: Throwing; catching; teamwork; cooperation.

Equipment: One coated foam ball for every group of 5 to 7 players.

Set-up: The players form groups of 5, 6 or 7 players. The players form a circle with one player in the center of the circle. The circle should be approximately 12-15 feet in diameter.

How to play: The circle players attempt to toss the ball around or through the circle without the center player touching it. If the center player catches the ball, touches it, or knocks it away, the last circle player to have touched the ball switches places with the center player. The center player may also get out of the center by tagging a circle player who is in possession of the ball or by taking the spot of a circle player if they leave their spot to chase the ball.

Kickball (4 on 4)

Equipment: One coated foam ball or rubber playground ball; five saucer cones; and one wiffleball for each game.

Set-up: Set four cones up in a diamond (home, 1st base, 2nd base, and 3rd base). Place the fourth cone in the center (pitcher's mound) and place the wiffleball on top of this cone. The players form two teams of four. One team is the kicking team and stands behind home plate. The other team is the fielding team. One player is the pitcher who stands behind the cone with the wiffleball, holding the kickball. The other players are field players who stand in right field, center field, and left field.

How to Play: The player with the ball (pitcher) rolls the ball to the kicker. The kicker kicks the ball and begins running around the bases. Players do not need to step on the bases (they run around, behind each one) and they do not stop running until they get back to home plate. When the kicker returns to home plate he tags the hand of the next runner, who then runs around the bases. This pattern continues until the fielding team gets the kicking team out. The kicking team can score as many runs as possible until the fielding team gets them out. There are three ways to get the kicking team out on each kick. First, if the kicked ball is caught in the air, the kicking team is out. Second, the four fielders work together to get the ball and knock the wiffleball off of the cone using the kickball. Prior to knocking the wiffleball off the cone, all fielding players must touch the kickball, so they must pass it to each other first. When the wiffleball is knocked off, the kicking team is out. The kicking team receives one point for each runner that has completely circled the bases before the wiffleball was knocked off. Third, if the kicker kicks the ball and it hits the wiffleball and knocks the wiffleball off of the cone, the kicker is out. After each out, the pitcher moves to right field, the right fielder moves to center field, the center fielder moves to left field, and the left fielder comes into pitch. After all four kickers have had a chance to kick and all four fielders have had a chance to pitch, the teams switch roles and continue.

Knockdown

Objective: Throwing; catching; teamwork; cooperation.

Equipment: One Koosh ball; two hoops; and two plastic water bottles (with a few ounces of water in each one) for every group of 6 to 8 players.

Set-up: Set up two hoops approximately 40-60 feet apart. Place a plastic water bottle in the center of each hoop. The players form teams of 3 or 4 players. One team is on offense and begins with the Koosh ball.

How to play: The object is to use the Koosh ball to knock down the other team's water bottle. A player with possession of the Koosh ball cannot travel with the ball, however they can pivot (as in basketball). To advance the ball down the field, players must pass the ball to each other. A ball that hits the ground goes to the team that didn't have possession. A team scores one point when they knock down a water bottle. The bottle is then stood back up and play resumes with the other team in possession of the ball. Defensive players can intercept and knock down passes. Defensive players are not allowed to touch offensive players. They must stay at least one-arm's length away from offensive players who have possession of the Koosh ball.

Pass & Catch

Objective: Throwing; catching; teamwork; cooperation.

Equipment: One coated foam ball for every group of 12 players; four saucer cones.

Set-up: Use the cones to make a rectangle (approximately 40 x 60 feet). Divide the rectangle in half either with cones or with chalk, if playing on a blacktop/concrete surface. The players form teams of 6 players. Three players from each team stand on one half of the playing field and the other three players from each team stand on the opposite half. One team starts on offense and has the ball. The other team is on defense.

How to play: The object is for the offensive team to pass the ball across the mid-field line to a teammate. Every time a successful pass and catch is made across the line, the team scores one point. The offensive team can score as many points as possible. The defensive team must try to stop the offensive team by intercepting a pass or knocking the ball down on the ground. Offensive players cannot travel with the ball, but they can pivot (as in basketball). The three players on one side can pass to each other, while their three teammates on the other side of mid-field move to get away from the defenders on that side. If the offensive team drops the ball or throws it out of bounds the defensive team takes over possession of the ball and goes on offense. Defensive players are not allowed to touch offensive players or grab/knock the ball out of their hands. If a defensive player interferes with (touches; bumps into) an offensive player trying to catch a ball, the catch is considered "good"; the ball goes to the offensive team and play continues. The game is played to a specified number of points (e.g., 10, 15 or 25) then a new game begins

True or False

Objective: Chasing; fleeing; quick thinking; cooperation.

Equipment: Cones or markers.

Set-up: The players form pairs. Each pair stands side-by-side in the middle of the play area. All players on one side are designated the "true" side and all players on the other side are designated the "false" side. A safety line is marked on the ground approximately 15-18 feet behind each player.

How to play: The teacher asks a question or gives a statement that is either true or false (e.g., the capitol of California is Sacramento). If the statement or question is true, players on the true side run to their safety line while the false side attempts to tag them. If the statement was false, the roles of the teams are reversed. A player gets a point for tagging the other player or for making it across the line without being tagged. Each player keeps his/her own score. Switch partners often.

About Curt Hinson

Curt Hinson, Ph.D., has been teaching for 32 years. He taught at the elementary school level for 16 years and part-time at the college level for the past 16 years. He currently works as an educational consultant for PlayFit Education and serves as the children's fitness expert for the website, HappyHealthyKids.com. In addition, Curt teaches in the on-line graduate program at Canisius College in Buffalo, NY and is also an adjunct professor at Rowan University in Glassboro, New Jersey. He holds a Ph.D. in Kinesiology from Temple University; a Masters of Education degree from Widener University; and a BS degree in Health & Physical Education from West Virginia Wesleyan College.

Curt is the author of three books, *Fitness for Children*; *Games Kids Should Play at Recess*; and *6-Steps to a Trouble-free Playground*. He has also published over 50 articles related to teaching and learning. In addition, Curt is the creator of the "Trouble-free Playground" recess program and the "Dr. Recess" assembly program. He has made presentations in all 50 states, as well as in Washington DC, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Mexico. Curt was the 1992 National Association for Sport and Physical Education Eastern District Teacher of the Year and the 1991 Delaware PE Teacher of the Year. He is a member of SHAPE America; the National Association for Sport and Physical Education; and the American Association for Physical Activity and Recreation. Curt has been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*; *Disney's Family Fun* magazine; and on the *Fox News Network*. You can reach Curt via email at drcurthinson@comcast.net or by phone at 302-438-3257.