

Leadup Games for 19 Sports & PE Activities



*Dick Moss, Editor,
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This eBook provides practical and fun lead-up games specifically designed for use in your physical education classes or team practices.

There is a game for 19 of the sports and activities that are a part of most North American physical education programs.

As with most lead-up games, they will make classes fun while developing your students' abilities in particular aspects of the sport. They are particularly useful as a fun way to wind up your classes.

The games are taken directly from the extensive archives of the Physical Education Update.com website - a site that provides hundreds of articles on 40 different physical education topics.

This eBook is provided as a free incentive for you to subscribe to the "Fun Stuff for PE" newsletter. Now that you've subscribed to the Fun Stuff newsletter, you'll receive an email notice whenever a new issue is published. The newsletters provide lots of free content: instructional articles; links to PE videos on the internet; free PE resources and a link to the latest PE Update Blog posting. In addition, you'll learn about the latest additions to PE Update.com - our affiliated membership website.

We hope you enjoy this eBook and find the games useful. Remember, there are MANY more available on the PE Update.com website!



Dick Moss, Editor, "[PE Update.com](#)," the "[PE Update Blog](#)" and the "[Fun Stuff for PE Newsletter](#)"



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Number One Game

Number One is a lead-up game that will develop your students' hitting technique and reflexes. Since it doesn't require nets, you can play it anywhere.

Setup

Form groups of six to eight players. Give each player a racquet and each group one shuttle. Use markers or pylons to form a large square divided into four smaller squares. Number the squares from one to four.

Place one player in each square. Call the student in square #1 "Number One," and so on. Players not in the square form a line and bounce a bird on their racquet or perform other drills.

How to Play

The object of the game is to become "Number One," and to stay there as long as possible.

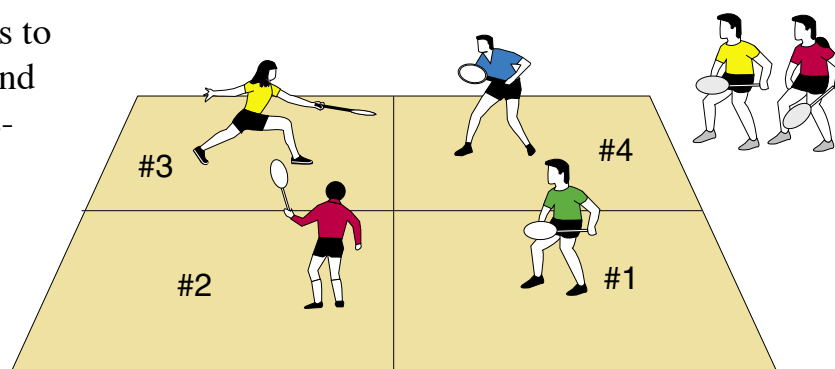
Number Three starts by serving the shuttle to any square. The player who receives the serve cannot return it to the server, but after that the bird can be hit to anyone.

Play continues with the bird being hit back and forth between squares (no smashes allowed).

Players who miss a shot must go to the end of the waiting line. The player at the start of the line moves to square number four, and the other players stay in their own square or rotate up a square if there is one vacant.

Players who are Number One must remain especially alert—they are prime targets because the other players want to move up into their square.

A badminton game in which players advance through a series of squares by making other players miss.



Number One Badminton Game



Mad Dog Baseball

Here's a softball variation that increases the fitness component of the regular game.

Organization

You'll need a soft ball, a batting tee, and two cones for bases.

Divide your class into two teams and number each team member to produce their batting order. One team bats and the other takes the field.

How to Play

The batting team gets to send up three batters before changing places with the fielding team. If batters miss the ball or hit the tee, it's a strike. Three strikes (or throwing the bat) makes an out.

When players make a hit, their whole team follows them around the two cones. They keep running until stopped by the defensive team (you'll see how later), and every time the batter passes the second cone his/her team scores a run.

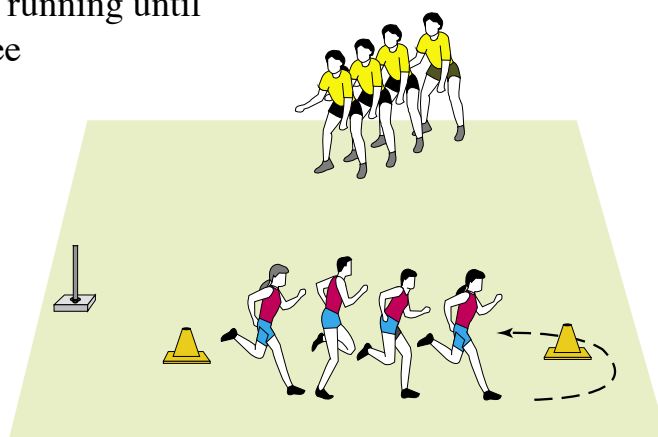
Meanwhile, when a player on the fielding team catches the ball, his/her entire team runs behind the fielder and stands in single file. They pass the ball through their legs until it reaches the last player. This player runs to the front of the line and yells "Stop!"

This signals the batting team to stop running the bases and scoring runs. After three batters have hit, the fielding team comes to bat.

The team scoring the most points wins the game.

A softball variation in which the entire batting team runs the bases and every fielding player must run to the catch.

Fielders pass the ball between their legs



Mad Dog Baseball



Snake Catcher Dribbling Game

Snake Catcher is a fun game that's great for your basketball class. It teaches your students dribbling skills and court awareness.

How to Play

Divide your students into two groups. The Snakes are given a skipping rope, which they hold lightly between their thumb and forefinger. The Chasers are given a basketball.

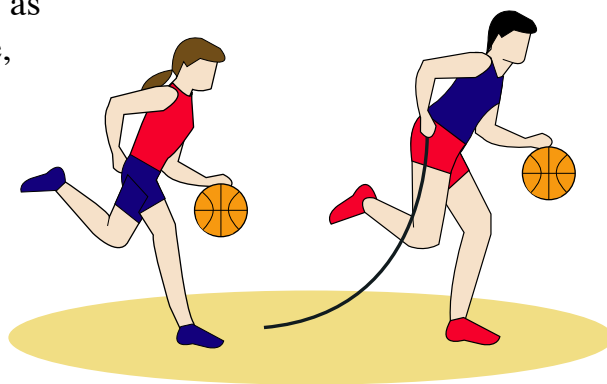
On your signal, the Chasers pursue the Snakes, who hold their skipping rope behind them as they run away. If a Chaser steps on a rope, pulling it free, they get a point. The Snake picks up the rope and continues running.

Play for five minutes, then switch roles. The player with the most points is the winner.

Other Rules

- If Chasers make a dribbling violation, such as losing the ball or double-dribbling, they must leave the court and make 10 chest passes to themselves against a wall before they can continue play.
- If Snakes are caught holding their rope with more than a finger and thumb, they lose five points.

A game in which dribblers attempt to step on ropes held by other students.



Snake Catcher



Run Rummy

Run Rummy will teach your students the card-playing skills they'll need on Saturday nights later in life. It also makes a game out of running—always a great way to trick people into becoming fit.

How to Play

Divide your class into teams and stand at the finish line of a track or other running loop with a deck of cards. You may need more than one deck, depending on the number of participants and the number of laps you think they can run.

Teams run as a group—this is a fitness activity, not a race, so speed isn't important. Each time the group passes the finish line, give each runner a card. Teams must compare cards as they run and attempt to complete a “run” — a series of cards in sequence (i.e. 2,3,4,5,6).

When a group completes a “run,” they can stop jogging, and must stand at the finish line cheering on their teammates and helping to distribute playing cards.

Options

- You can pre-determine the required length of “runs” and whether they must be in the same suit. This may depend on the level of fitness of your students.
- Instead of jogging until a card sequence is completed, have your students jog for a set time period. At the end of the period, the group with the best card hand wins.
- Groups need not run together, but must somehow communicate their cards to each other on the track (faster runners can run ahead and come back to the group or shout across the track to slower runners).

A running activity in which groups receive a card after each lap and attempt to complete a rummy hand.



Run Rummy Teams Attempt To Compile a Rummy Hand While Jogging Around the Course

Holding Hands Relay

A *Holding-Hands Relay* is a popular contest for young students and beginning skiers.

It gives your beginners more confidence because it provides them with a buddy to hold for support and to help them get up if they fall.

It also reinforces the rhythm of their diagonal stride because it forces each pair of skiers to synchronize their strides. If skiers begin to lose their rhythm, they need only match strides with their partner.

How to Play

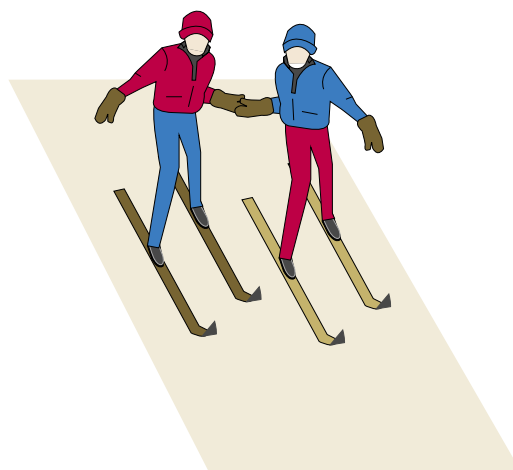
Before holding a race, have your students practice skiing with no poles and while holding hands with a partner. When they've mastered this skill, they're ready for a holding-hands race.

The race is really a shuttle relay on skis, so divide your class into partners, then put several partners together to form teams. Place the teams in single file along a start line.

On the sound of your signal, the first pair from each team skis around a short loop and returns to tag the second pair, who must then also ski the loop. As in your practice session, the partners do not use poles and must ski while holding hands. Continue the relay until all pairs have completed the loop.

To make the relay more difficult, you could tie the inside legs of each pair together, just as in a three-legged running race. This will force the pairs to work together but it also means that if one falls, they both fall.

A shuttle relay on skis in which partners must ski together, without poles, while holding hands.



Holding Hands Relay



Hail Mary Football

Hail Mary Football develops catching, teamwork, and throwing skills for both distance and accuracy.

It's a great game because kids love to catch the long bomb in football.

Setup

Mark off a 20 x 20 metre (yard) square using pylons. Divide your class into three teams, two of which play offense while the other plays defense.

Split the two offensive teams evenly: one team on the north and south sides of the square, with the other on the east and west flanks. The defensive team is in the middle of the square.

Distribute six to 12 Nerf footballs among the offensive players.

How to Play

On your signal, the east/west team begins throwing balls to each other, while the north/south team does the same.

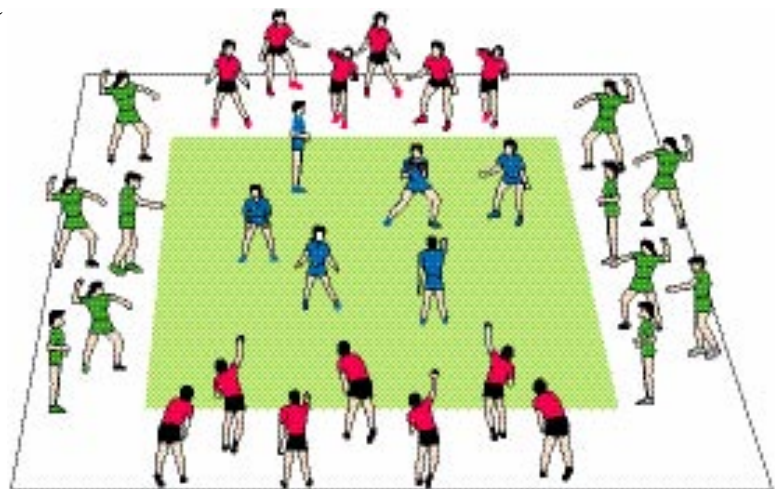
The offensive team receives a point for each completed pass, while the defensive team receives a point for each interception. Any intercepted ball is immediately rolled out to an offensive player.

After one to two minutes, blow the whistle and rotate teams.

Variations

- Punt the balls instead of passing them.
- Change the size of the square, depending on the size of the teams and the throwing ability of your students.

A passing game that develops the ability to throw and catch the long bomb.



Hail Mary Football

- Award the defense a point every time two passes collide in mid-air (this is your destructive editor's variation).



The Shot Put Relay

The shot put relay is a fun game you can use in your field event throwing unit, with your varsity throwers, or in any physical education class.

How to Play

The idea is to see which team can collectively throw the shot the farthest distance down the field.

Divide your students so that each group is fairly equal in terms of talent. Give each team one shot put.

The first member of each team steps up to the starting line and, using a one-step pivot technique, tosses the shot as far as possible. The point at which the shot contacts the ground becomes the “toe board” for the next thrower on the team.

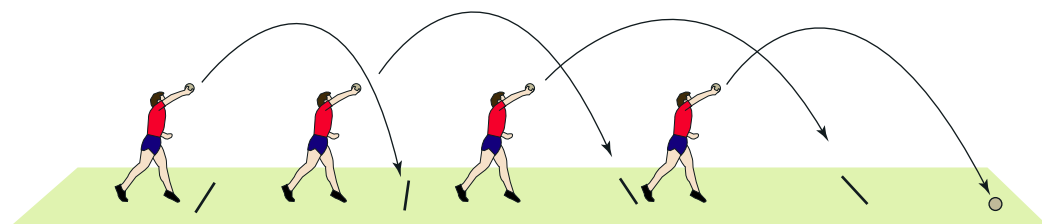
After everyone has had a turn, the team that has moved the shot the farthest is the winner.

There is really only one infraction that can occur. If a thrower steps over the toe board (the place at which the previous thrower’s shot landed), the thrower must take one step back, then make another attempt.

Variations

- You can experiment with different techniques in this contest. For example, you could require each participant to perform the complete glide, use a toss from a standing position, a two-handed toss backward over the head, depending on the aspect of shot putting you wish to emphasize.

A relay for shot putters or PE class in which teams collectively attempt to throw a shot or medicine ball farther than their competitors.



The Shot Put Relay

- You can make this into an individual event to see who's the best all-around thrower on your team. Have each athlete make a standing throw with a shot, then a discus, and finally the javelin. The thrower with the longest total distance after the three attempts is the winner.
- Finally, you can modify this into a fun group activity for any physical education class. Instead of using a shot put, use a medicine ball and see which team can collectively throw the ball the farthest down the field or gym.



Toilet Paper Aerobics Partners

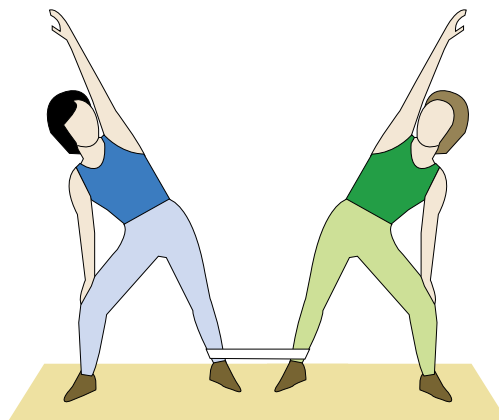
Here's an activity that will develop your students' cooperation abilities and add some variety to a regular aerobics class.

How to Perform

Divide your students into pairs and have each partner tie their inside ankles together with a strip of toilet paper.

Then perform your regular aerobics routine. Your students will have to coordinate their movements to keep their paper strip intact. If they break their paper strip, they can follow the exercise routine independently. The last pair to snap their paper is the winner.

An aerobics routine conducted with student pairs connected at the ankle by a strip of toilet paper.



Toilet Paper Aerobics Partners



Search and Destroy Putting Duel

This putting contest may remind your students of a school-yard marble duel.

Pair up your players, give each a putter and a ball, and have them face each other 15 to 20 feet apart.

They take turns putting towards each other's ball. The first to hit their opponent's ball wins a point. They then start again.



*A putting game
in which two
opponents
attempt to be
the first to hit
the other's ball.*



Giant's Treasure Game

In Giant's Treasure, your students will practice simple balance poses.

Setup

Students stand against a wall, while the teacher (the Giant) stands 20 feet away, with a number of beanbags (the treasure) in a line at his/her feet.

How to Play

Begin the game by demonstrating a number of poses the players may have to perform. This might include balancing on the left leg with both arms over the head, bending at the waist with arms spread like wings, arabesques, etc.

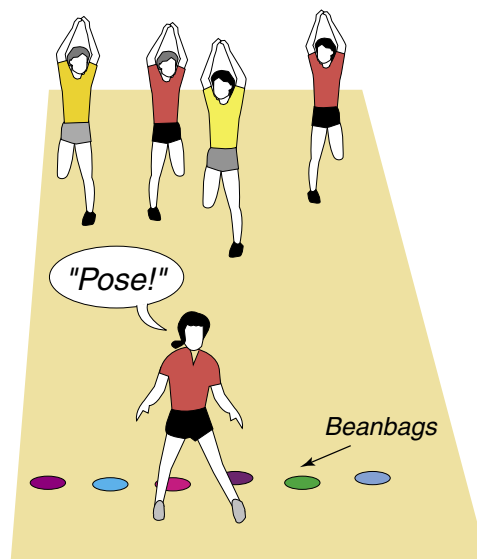
The Giant turns his/her back and shouts out a mode of locomotion (hopping, skipping, walking). The students, whose goal is to take a beanbag and return to the starting point, advance towards the beanbags.

The Giant shouts "pose," and the students must assume and hold the pose. Giants can either demonstrate the pose as they shout, or simply name it.

The Giant turns around, and any students who lose their balance or assume the wrong pose must return to the starting line (or the beanbag line, if they are on their way back from picking up a beanbag).

The Giant then turns around, and the game continues until all the beanbags have been stolen and returned to the starting line.

A game in which students perform a series of poses in order to steal a Giant's treasure.



Giant's Treasure



Torpedoes Game

A game of Torpedoes develops your players' ability to control the puck while keeping their head up and remaining aware of other players.

Setup

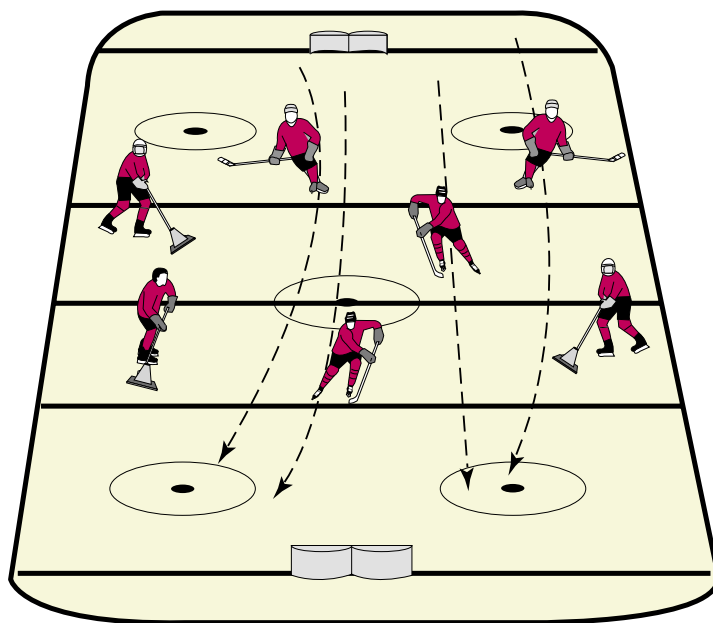
Use the entire rink or play cross-rink. Place as many small pylons (torpedoes) as you have in the center ice area, along with three players (submariners). The submariners place a pylon on the end of their stick. The rest of the players stand randomly at the end of the rink with a puck.

How to Play

On your whistle, the players must stickhandle down the ice and try to avoid being hit by a torpedo. The submariners, meanwhile, are shooting their torpedoes (pylons) at the players.

Any player who is hit with a torpedo or loses control of their puck becomes a submariner. Continue play until only one player is left.

A game in which players must control a puck while avoiding flying pylons.



Torpedoes Game



Lacrosse Golf

Lacrosse golf is a lead-up game that will develop your students' passing and catching skills.

Setup

Divide your students into pairs, giving each pair one ball and each teammate their own stick. Place nine cones in various positions around your playing field. These cones represent the nine holes of a golf course.

How to Play

The object of the game is for the two partners to move to each cone by passing the ball, while making as few passing errors as possible.

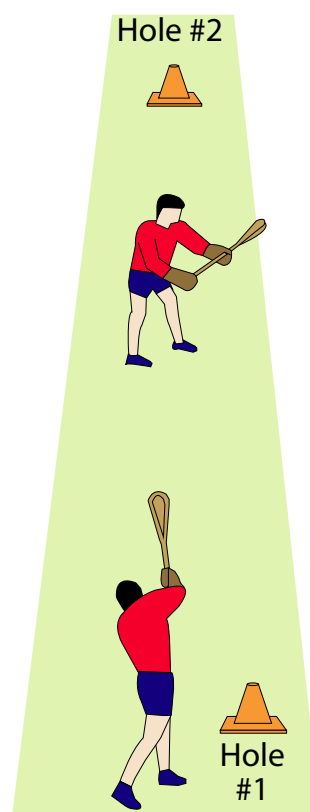
The first teammate (A) runs any distance towards the first cone, then stops to receive a pass from his teammate (B). Then "B" then runs closer to the cone and receives a pass from "A." The hole is completed when one of the members hits the cone with the ball.

Missed passes count for a stroke and result in extra attempts until the pass is successful.

The total of all the missed shots for the hole equals the score for that hole.

The team with the fewest strokes for the entire course is the winner.

A lacrosse lead-up game in which players advance through golf holes by passing the ball to their partner.



Lacrosse
Golf



Eagle Eye - A Fun Outdoor Education Game

Eagle Eye is a unique outdoor version of that old favorite, “Hide and Seek.” It increases the observational skills of students and is a lot of fun at the same time.

Set-Up

You will need an area that has tall grass, trees, bushes or other type of cover that is suitable for hiding. Be sure your group knows the boundaries of the playing area.

Discuss how eagles have very keen vision and can spot their prey while perched in their nest on a tall cliff.

How to Play

Designate a centralized “Eagle’s Nest” and choose one student to be the Eagle. The Eagle closes his eyes and counts to sixty while the rest of the players hide in the playing area. Everyone must be able to keep at least one eye on the Eagle at all times while hiding.

At the count of sixty, the Eagle opens his eyes and looks (and listens) for the other players without ever leaving the nest. When he spots someone, he describes the clothing or hair color of that person until it is obvious which player has been found. That person must come and sit quietly near the nest so that the Eagle can continue looking.

If the Eagle is unable to find everyone, have him close his eyes and count to five while all the players move a few steps closer to the nest. Continue in this manner until all participants have been spotted but one, who then becomes the new Eagle.

Benefits of the Game

While students are hiding, they will have an opportunity to sit quietly and observe nature. They can become

An outdoor hide-and-seek variation that develops students’ ability to observe the natural environment.



increasingly comfortable with being in rustic, outdoor environments and develop their skills of description and observation. They will often come back to the group after being found and share a story about seeing an insect, flower, rock or pine cone they had not noticed before.

Dixie Iverson



Rugby Soccer

Rugby Soccer is a fun lead-up game you can use in your rugby unit or as a change of pace in practice.

How to Play

The rules are simple. Divide into two teams and play a soccer game with several rule variations.

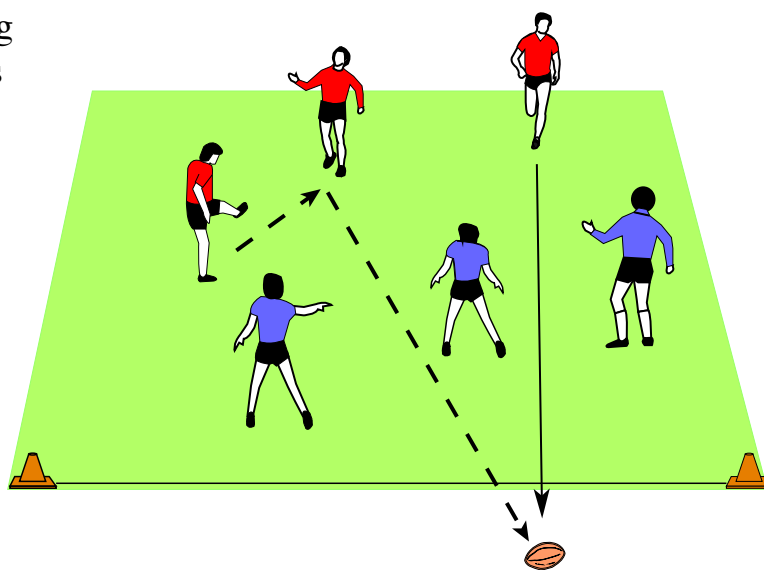
- First, use a rugby ball (if the crazy bounces are too difficult for your players, use a soccer ball).
- The ball can be advanced by dribbling as in soccer, but all passes must go to players who are behind the passer (a rugby principle).
- Finally, there are no nets.

Points are scored by kicking the ball over the opponents goal line—once across the line, the ball must be touched by a teammate of the kicker—and that teammate must have been behind the ball when it was kicked.

Variation

To make the game more rugby-like, players could be allowed to run with the ball to advance it, but all passes must be by kicking and to teammates behind the kicker. Scoring is the same.

A leadup game that combines elements of rugby and soccer.



Rugby Soccer Game



Sardine Soccer

Sardine Soccer will develop your students' passing skills and teach them to keep their head up when they're in possession of the ball

Setup

Place teams of 3-6 players within a soccer field's center circle or in a small grid that is marked with pylons. Each team gets one ball and different color pinnies so they can identify their teammates.

Execution

The object of the game is for players to make successful passes to their teammates amid the congestion and confusion of the playing area. All players must be constantly moving, which prevents teammates from bunching together and increases the fitness component of the drill.

Variations

1. You can specify certain conditions to develop particular skills. For example, on- touch, two-touch, right foot or left foot only. Or passing only to a teammate who is cutting across the circle.
2. To increase the competitive aspect of the game, count the number of times the ball leaves the circle and/or the number of unsuccessful passes, with the lowest score winning the contest. Or have players try to score points by knocking their opponents' balls out of the circle with their own ball.
3. Within teams you can specify a particular sequence in which the passes must be made (i.e. from Fred to Jan to Bill to Jane and back to Fred).
4. After receiving a pass, the player dribbles the ball for

A passing game in which players pass the ball to constantly moving teammates while within the confusion of a confined area.



Sardine Soccer

five or 10 seconds, then calls the name of a teammate. The teammate must run to the ball and make the next pass.



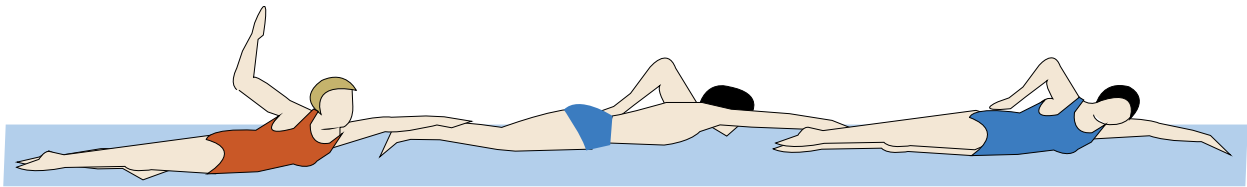
Centipede Swim

A Centipede Swim is a group activity your students will think is a hoot.

Divide your students into teams and have the teams line up in single file, with each swimmer holding the ankle of the student ahead of them.

Each student strokes using their free arm only, and the object of the contest is to get down to the end of the pool and back as fast as possible. On the turn, the last in line must touch the wall with their feet.

A team activity in which students swim in a line, stroking with one arm while holding another swimmer with the other.



Centipede Swim

Beer Belly Tennis Game

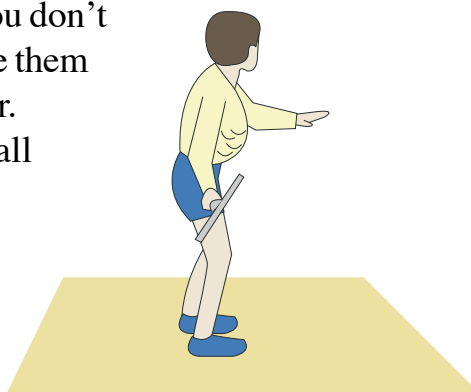
Beer-belly tennis lets you inject some fun into standard hitting drills.

All you need are a lot of balls and some students who will agree to tuck in their shirt (that's not always easy).

How to Play

Have two students hit the ball to each other across a net. If you don't have a net (i.e. indoors) have them hit across a line on the floor.

Students must drop a ball down the front of their shirt whenever they make an error. The fun increases as the game progresses and your students' bellies get bigger and bigger.



*A Player with a
Tennis-Ball "Beer-Belly"*

A hitting drill in which students must drop a ball down the front of their shirt every time they make an error.



Square Hopping Sprints for Fast Footwork

Square hopping is an activity that combines several elements that are important for the athletic development of children: quickness, agility, fast footwork, jumping ability and arm strength.

Setup

Arrange your class into groups of five, with one student standing at each corner of a 10-15 foot rectangle. The remaining student is “it.”

Give a light medicine ball to one of the corner players.

How to Play

“It” stands between the student with the medicine ball and her nearest partner. The student rolls the ball along the ground and “it” must jump over the ball with feet together, then run to get between the student who is catching the ball and *her* nearest partner.

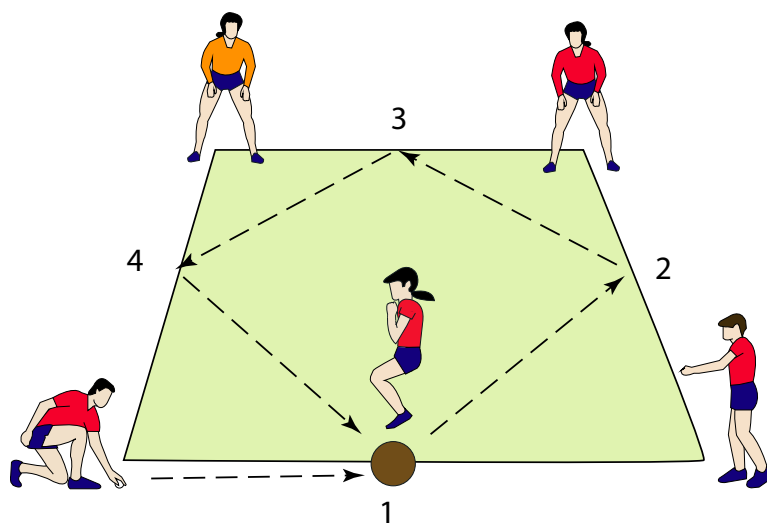
The student who catches the ball must wait until “it” is in position, then roll the ball to the next corner of the rectangle.

Continue for several circuits of the rectangle or until “it” becomes tired, then switch roles.

Benefits

The students who are “it” must move very quickly in both forward and lateral directions, learn to turn their body to face the thrower, and leap into the air to avoid the ball. Agility, quickness and leg power are all developed.

A game that develops fast footwork, conditioning, leg power, agility and acceleration abilities.



Square Hopping Sprints

The players on the corners will develop some arm strength from passing the weighted medicine ball.

The game is fast and fun and your students will enjoy it. I use it with my track club's youth program for grades sixes to eights. However, it would also be suitable in class or in a varsity sport such as soccer, football or basketball where quick footwork is a must.

Variation

To increase the emphasis on running, expand the size of the playing area and toss a volleyball or a basketball.



Sideline Volleyball

Sideline Volleyball is a lead-up game that develops serving, setting, bumping and teamwork skills. It also allows you to keep a large class involved in a single game.

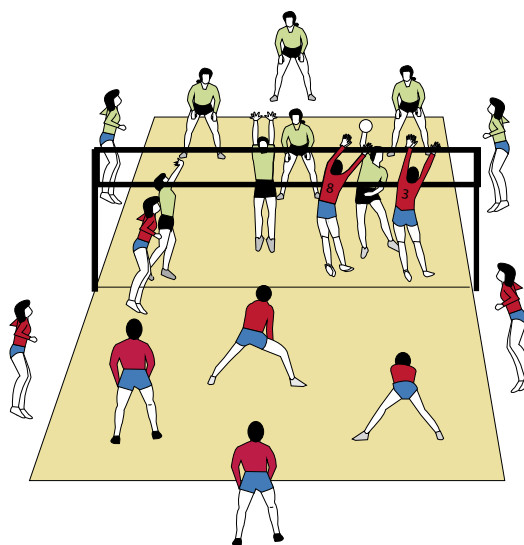
Setup

Setup is similar to a regular volleyball game: two opposing teams with six players on each side of the net. There is one difference—extra students are also involved in the play—they are positioned around the sidelines and backline of each court.

How to Play

- The game starts with a serve, as in regular volleyball. However, servers may move as close to the net as they need to get the ball over.
- The receiving team gets as many passes as they need to return the ball over the net.
- The players on the sidelines may also contact the ball, but they can't hit it over the net or score a point—their role is to pass it to an on-court player. Sideline and backline players must retain their out-of-bounds position.
- Play continues until the ball contacts the floor or wall. Only the serving team can score a point.
- Rotate positions as in regular volleyball, with sideline players taking their turn on-court.
- Other rules are as in regular volleyball.

A lead-up game in which teams can contact the ball as many times as they want, and sideline players can pass the ball to on-court teammates.



Sideline Volleyball



Touchdown Wrestling Game

Here's a game you can use as a lead-up in your wrestling unit or a change of pace for your varsity squad. The object of the game is to be the last player to stay on hands and knees while attempting to cross the mat.

The game gives your students practice in wrestling from their hands-and-knees "base" position.

Procedure

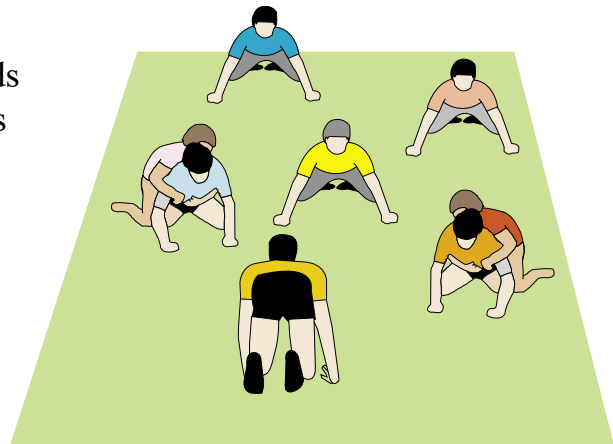
Line up your players on hands and knees on one side of the mat. Wrestlers worried about knee-burn can wear sweat pants.

One player—"it"—kneels facing the other players at the center of the mat.

On your signal the wrestlers crawl on hands and knees across the mat. "It" intercepts them and attempts to make them touch a shoulder or hip to the mat. Any player "it" defeats becomes another "it."

Players must not stand up or put the soles of their shoes on the mat to keep from being pulled down. Continue until only one player is left.

A wrestling game in which players attempt to crawl on their hands and knees past an opponent without being taken down.



Touchdown Wrestling Game



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