POPPERS 101

Poppers are from the uniquely crazy mind of Ryan McCormick, a Project Adventure Instructor. Poppers are made from pool noodles and are used in a variety of fun ways to promote fitness, and eye hand coordination. To make a bag of poppers, cut about an inch to an inch and a half off of a pool noodle (preferably one that has a hole in the middle of it). Then take that slice and cut it in half, through the middle, creating a piece that looks like a letter C. Scissors work well, or try an electric knife… very fast, but messy. These can then be used to pop up into the air in a variety of ways. Ideas listed below are a collaborative effort, and by no means is this list the end of the ideas…it’s a start!

1. Explore- Give the group a chance to try them out on their own…let the fun begin!
2. Highest Pop/Longest Pop
3. Grip Change- Try popping, gripping it from the front, back, side, etc.
4. Pop with the Right, Catch with the Left. Pop with the Left, Catch with the Right.
5. Rainbow- Do the same as above, but put your arms up, and out, so the popper floats over your head before catching.
6. Off the Wall- Pop it off the wall…how far away from the wall can you move?
7. Trick Pops- Under the Leg, Behind the Back, Over the Head…your call.
8. Trick Catches- Pop, Spin, Catch…Pop, Clap, Catch…Pop, Touch the Floor, Catch…Pop, Clap Catch (the catch is actually a clap).
9. Sleeper Catch- Lie down on your back and pop/catch.
10. Clothing Catches- Catch it in your…Shirt, Hood, Pocket, etc.
11. Hacky Sack- Pop it, then “Hacky” it off of a foot, thigh, head, etc., and then catch.
12. Popper Basketball- Use a regular basketball hoop and try to score, or use a bucket, trash can, laundry basket, etc., and set up scoring style games.
13. Popper Golf- Use Hula Hoops for the holes, and tee it up! Play it where it lies.
14. Doubles- Try popping two at the same time, and catching both.
15. Popper Topper- Partners challenge each other to try different throws, catches, and combinations…can you do this?
16. Partner Poppers- Start with popping one back and forth, then move to two (the first style being one each, then go to Quick Draw, with one partner firing two, and the other catching both). The ultimate challenge would be four (2 each).
17. Poppycock- Pop one at your partner, who swats it back with an open hand, and the original partner tries for a successful catch. Try pop/swat/catch by yourself.
18. Pop Top- Back to back partners fire a popper over their heads to each other.
19. Wild, Wild West Draw- The catcher turns their back to the popping partner, and when they hear the popper fired, they turn, locate, and catch.
20. Ultimate Popper- Partner #1 pops to partner #2. If caught, then partner #1 runs past #2 and sets up for a catch. If it is dropped it must return to the popping partner until a catch is made. How far can the partners travel, “leapfrogging” past each other, while popping and catching.
21. Popper Pong- One person holds a Hula Hoop (above head height) between two facing players. The popper must travel back and forth through the hoop. If the popper does not go through the hoop, or if it is dropped, a point is awarded to the opponent. Game to 3, and then rotate positions. Try it with a low net…great fun!
22. Popcorn Shower- Place a volunteer in the middle of a velcro circle, everyone with two poppers. The goal is to pop them up in the air and gently shower the middle person.

23. Popper Tag- Everyone in the game has their own popper, and should make every effort to use only that one. The goal is to tag 10 people in the back only (shoulders to waist), by popping. No tagging a player while they are picking up a popper. Overachievers may continue on past 10, or simply walk around and help others out by being a target. Boundaries are a must! A cool variation is being able to score 2 points by popping someone and catching it off of their back.

24. Popsicle Tag- Two teams each with different colored poppers. The goal is to freeze the other team by popping them in the back, as above. When frozen you must put your hands above your head in a circle. A teammate may unfreeze you by popping one through your arms (from the back side only, to avoid a popper facial). No popping someone in the bent down, pick-up position.

25. Pop Goes the Weasel- Two weasels start as taggers… each with a popper. Speed walking only, the rest of the group tries to avoid being popped in the back by a weasel. If you are popped, you grab a popper and become a weasel. Play continues until everyone is a weasel (Weasels learn quickly that they need to work in pairs). Players must be moving at all times, and may not stand back to back. Can you figure out how to play this game in reverse?

26. Pop Relay- 3 people line up behind a cone with one popper. The first person pops the popper towards the finishing line, or hoop, or wall, etc., then runs behind their group and lines up. The second person runs out and pops the popper further along, then returns and high fives the next, who runs out and continues the popper on its way. This continues relay style until the goal is reached.

27. Popcorn- Have the group form a circle, each with a popper. Have them practice making a pop sound in their hand, without releasing it. Then send the pop sound around the circle as fast as it can travel. Try it with eyes closed!

28. Popper Pile- Have one person lay down on their stomach, in the middle of a large rope circle. The rest of the group must stand on the outside of the circle, and try landing poppers on that person without crossing the rope line. The poppers may be retrieved from the middle, but nobody may touch the floor/ground inside the circle. Give the group 2 minutes, count up the number of successful “landings”, then have the group set a goal for round 2, and try again. Give them 2 minutes of strategy time between attempts. (Hint…poppers may be used to retrieve errant poppers from the middle)

29. Popper Abs- Lie down on your back. Pop one in the air. Catch it with your feet. How many can you catch in 2 minutes?

30. Move Those Poppers- Place a large number of poppers at one end of the gym and challenge the group to pop them all to the other end. No moving while a popper is in your hand. Pops only…no kicking, throwing, carrying, etc. Time their first attempt, then allow the group time to strategize and set a new goal for round 2.

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