

Games From Different Times and Cultures

Jim Ross

Orchard School Ridgewood, NJ
jross@ridgewood.k12.nj.us

1-2-3 DRAGON (China)

All of the players stand in a straight line with one player behind another. Each player puts his/her hands on the shoulders (or waist) of the player in front. The beginning of the line is the dragon's head, the end is the dragon's tail. The tail yells "1-2-3 Dragon!" to begin the game. The head player attempts to tag the tail player without breaking up the line. If the line breaks, the dragon dies. If the head tags the tail the dragon wins and there is much rejoicing! Rotate the players.

Variations:

- 1) Vary the size of the lines;
- 2) Using smaller groups, have the head try to tag the tail of other dragons

TIGER'S BALL (Israel, Asia)

Divide the class into groups of 7-8. Each group forms a circle. One member from each group goes into the circle of an opposing group. On the starting signal, the circle players try to pass the ball, keeping it away from the middle person. The first middle person to intercept the ball scores a point for his/her team. Switch all of the middle players and start again.

Encourage faking and passing.

Variations:

- 1) Specify the type of throw/pass to be used (two-handed chest pass, bounce pass, kicking, etc...)
- 2) Combine **GROUP JUGGLING** with this game.

JUMP BALL (Africa)

An activity that works on eye/foot coordination, abdominal strength and jumping! In Africa it is performed while singing a traditional song. Each student holds a ball out in front with two hands. When ready, s/he drops the ball and then jump up with both feet together trying to tap the ball back up into the air. Students try to catch the ball after landing.

ADVANCED: How many taps in a row can be made without letting the ball hit the floor?

GATHERING STARS (Africa, Pygmies of Gabon)

This game is based on a myth. The legend says that the Milky Way is made up of broken stars. The gods go along gathering up the broken stars and put them into baskets. The stars are used as fuel for the sun to burn. In the USA and Canada this game is called "Blackberry".

One player is designated as the "catcher". The rest of the players stand behind one end line. When ready, the catcher (standing in the middle of the playing area) yells aloud

"Star light, star bright,
How many stars are out tonight?"

The players respond:

"Too many for YOU to catch and carry!"

The players then try to cross to the opposite side of the playing area without being tagged by the catcher. If tagged, the player joins the catcher in the middle and the game begins again.

CHICKEN FIGHT

This game has its origins in Brazil. It incorporates the skills of balancing and dodging. Played 1 vs. 1, each player is equipped with two flags. The players enter the playing area (a small circle or square) at the same time while hopping on the right foot and with the right arm held across the chest. The object is to grab one of the flags from the opposing player. A point is scored if successful. The opposing player scores a point if a player's arm comes away from the chest, the left foot touches the ground (or right foot) or if a player leaves the playing area.

SPEARING THE DISK (Native Americans, African tribes)

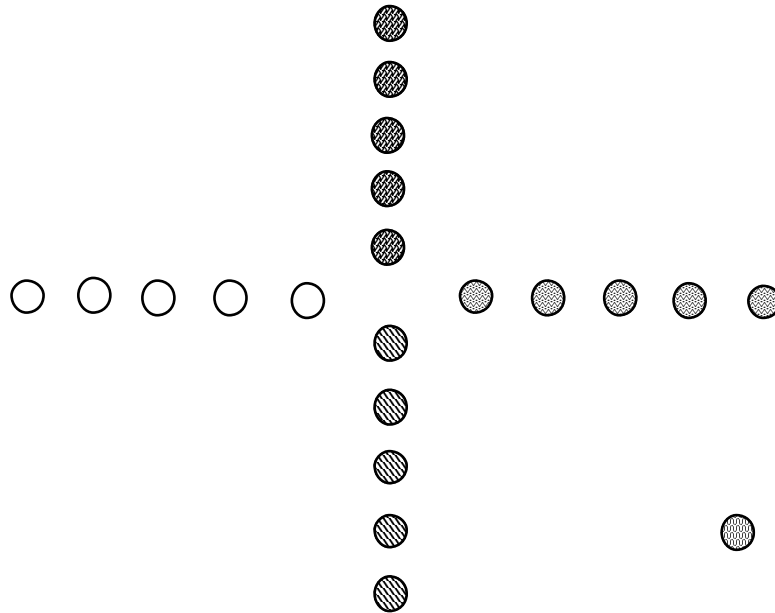
This activity was used by many cultures to practice hunting and survival skills. Divide the class into groups of 4. Each group is given a ball and a hoop. Two of the players are the "hunters". The other two players create a moving target by rolling the hoop back and forth between each other. The hunters take turns throwing at the hoop. Switch roles.

Variations:

- 1) Use sport specific skills (ie. BB bounce pass)
- 2) Create a cooperative team game
- 3) Use different size hoops or other objects

JUEGO DE PANUELO (Bolivia)

Translated the title means "The Handkerchief Game". The players make 4 separate lines, setting up in a "plus sign" design. One player stands on the outside with a ball. The outside player travels around the other players, finally placing the ball at the head of one of the lines. All of the players race around the other groups and try to make it back to a space in their line. Meanwhile, the outside player takes the place of one of the runners. When the group makes it back to the line, one player is left out and becomes the new outside player. Try this with two balls for more action!



DOVES AND HAWKS (China)

In groups of three, the players join hands. The player in the middle is known as "Chinese Child". The other two players are designated hawk and dove. The "Chinese Child" releases the dove, who takes off running. After 2 or 3 counts hawk is released. Hawk tries to tag dove before dove is able to return to "Chinese Child". Rotate spots after each round.

BRITISH BULLDOG (Great Britain)

The players begin in a scattered formation. One player is designated as the "British Bulldog" - the tagger. On the starting signal, the players begin to travel through playing area trying to avoid the bulldog. Once tagged, a player joins the bulldog as a tagger until the end of the game. *NOTE: Have a bucket of tennis balls ready. When a player is tagged s/he picks out a ball and is instantly identified as a tagger.

CLOWN GAME (Zuni Indian)

There are a few ways to play this game but the focus of the game is the skill that is involved. The player lies down on his/her back with the head towards the goal. Place an object such as a bean bag or deck ring on one foot. On the "go" signal, the player lifts the leg and flings the object over his/her head towards the goal. Again, there are different ways to play this:

1. Team Relay For Distance: Create teams of 4-5. Each player is given one kick. Measure each kick for the distance. Total all of the distances for a team score.
2. Team Relay Race: Create a start and finish line. The teams of players travel together to the landing spot of the kicked object. The next player in line kicks it forward. This continues until the team crosses the finish line.
3. Team Goal Relay: Each player on a team kicks until s/he kicks the object into a goal/net. The player then gathers the object and runs back to the next player in line. Teams have 10 minutes to score as many goals as possible.

TAPU-AE (New Zealand)

This is a throwing and catching game with the added element of a defense. Each team consists of one goalie, rovers, centers and shooters. The goalie from each team is placed inside of a circle defending a pin (or a cone with a ball on top). Surrounding each goalie are the shooters from the opposing team. The shooters are also located inside of a circle (a separate circle than that of the goalie). In the middle of the playing court (or field) is a designated area for the centers. The centers are located on the opposite side of the field as their goalie. The rovers are in the same half of the field as their goalie, but outside of the circles. The goalies pass the ball to the rovers, who pass the ball to the centers, who pass it to the shooters, who throw at the target. All players must remain in their respective zones. No player may travel while in possession of the ball. Each player has 5 seconds to get rid of the ball.

