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ALTERNATIVES TO DODGEBALL: MY 4 FAVS

As a SHAPE America professional member, I support their position statement that “...dodgeball is not an appropriate activity for K-12 school physical education programs.” I also believe that Dodgeball should not be played at school because recess and before/after school activities should be an extension of the physical activity we are teaching them in our class. Students should never be forced to participate in a physical activity where they are to be targeted for elimination.

When I have come into a new teaching situation where the students were allowed to play dodgeball at school, I have taught them these competitive games instead so students can still apply skills they have learned in PE. The difference is that these games have a bit more cooperation and strategy involved along with a more positive learning environment that I consider to be safer both physically and psychologically for my students. Students LOVE them and some have thanked me for them, some have even told their classroom teachers privately how they were so glad they didn't have to play dodgeball in PE anymore. 😊



Grade Level Recommendations: 3rd-8th (modifications could be made on some of these games for lower grade levels)

BENCHBALL

Grant Wood AEA - Workshop on Wheels (WOW) 2008

Presented by: Karen Bagby

Equipment:

4 tumbling mats (6 ft length)

24 foam coated balls (6-7 inch size works best & at least 1 person student)

2 sets of colored pinnies

10 cones (optional to mark off no defense zone in front of the bench, if needed)

Set Up: Create two “benches” which are stacks of mats by placing one folded mat on top of another one. Using the basketball court, place one “bench” on each free throw line. You can use the 3 point line or top of the key as the “no defense zone” or place 5 cones on the line in front of the bench for a better physical barrier students can see & feel. All dodgeballs are split up evenly and laid out along the center court line or the 10 ft. volleyball court line. *Tip: using the volleyball court line will help avoid any accidental head to head crashes as students rush to the centerline for a ball at the start of the game.* Split your class into two teams. Each team sends one student over to the other side to stand on top of the bench.

Object of the Game: To get everyone from your team onto the bench that is on the other side of the centerline. You do this by throwing a ball to your team member standing on the bench across the centerline so that they can catch it. If they do catch it, you may then cross the centerline to join them on the bench. Everyone on the bench may catch balls thrown at them to help other team members get across to join you on the bench. You may not pick up a ball from the ground, it must be caught in the air. If anyone ever falls off the bench or steps off the bench, they must return to their own side and try throwing the ball again for someone to catch before they can rejoin their teammates on the bench. Defense may prevent the catchers on the bench from catching any thrown balls by intercepting balls that have been thrown, jumping up to block a thrown ball, throwing balls at incoming balls, or even holding balls in your hands while whacking the incoming balls away. No body contact allowed except to cooperative hold each other up on the bench to prevent anyone from falling off. You may not jump onto a bench or away from a bench to catch a ball. The first team to successfully get all of their team members standing on the bench together is the winner. *Tip: to make sure the entire team is successfully standing on the bench together I count to 3 to make sure no team members fall off or step off as soon as the last team member gets on.*

Key Points: Communication – allow students to discover how communication can help them be more successful such as calling a team member’s name before throwing it to them, Strategy – should some team members focus on defense first while others focus on offense, Encouragement – helping team members find ways to be successful with their throws/catches

Modification that could be added:

*time limit on games

*time each team to see how long it takes for them to be successful and then try to beat their score

*move the location of the bench

*change the height of the bench or have 2 heights for a staggered bench

*reverse benchball - everyone starts on the bench, with the single player standing on the floor across the centerline

*allow struggling students to cross the centerline to throw from the volleyball 10ft line

KING PIN

PE Universe

Posted by: Jay Gustafson

Equipment:

12 bowling pins

2-4 tumbling mats

10 cones

12-24 foam coated balls

2 sets of colored pinnies

Set Up: 6 pins on end lines of basketball or volleyball court, 2 stacks of 1-2 folded mats placed on top of each other at each free throw line (jail), 5 cones in front of the stacked mats(jail) on the 3 point line or top of the key, 12-24 foam coated balls placed on the centerline or half of them on each 10ft volleyball court line

Object of the Game: To knock down the other team's 6 pins.

You can do so by throwing and rolling a foam coated ball from your side of the gym (where you are safe) or by taking a risk and crossing the center line to get closer to the pins. If you get tagged on the other team's side, you then go to their jail. To get out of jail one of your teammates has to throw a ball to you and you have to catch it. If you catch it, you then turn and try to make a basket. If you make it, everyone in jail is free, if you miss, only you are free from jail. Play until one team knocks down the other team's 6 pins.

Key Points: The bowling pins are your targets – not students. Tagging is done safely with hands or using a ball to touch tag not throw at a student. The tagger is always right. Honesty.

Rules/modifications that could be added:

*time limits on games 3-5 minutes

*no guarding of the pins

*no crossing the center line

*no touching a ball until it passes the pins or comes to a complete stop ("dead" ball)

*catching or touching a "live" ball results in you going to jail

*move the jail location

*move the pins

*make a half court basket and all your pins get set back up and everyone is out of jail

*floor level jail

BATTLE SHIP

Grant Wood AEA - Workshop on Wheels (WOW) 2008

Presented by: Karen Bagby

Equipment:

- 4-6 Tumbling Mats that are at least 6 ft long (4-6 students per mat)
- 16-36 Bowling Pins (4-6 set up around each mat)
- 4-6 multi-colored cones (one for each mat)
- 4-6 multi-colored pinnies
- 4-6 multi-colored scooters
- 24 foam coated balls (6-7 inch or assorted sizes)

Set Up: The mats represent the battleships and they must be laid out in an oval type shape so that adjacent ships are no less than 5 ft apart. Bowling pins are set up on the floor at each corner of the battleship and then extras may be placed on the floor at the middle of the mat. One colored cone is set up on the middle of each mat. Students are divided up into colored battleship teams. All battleship team members start the game standing on the mat except one that is the scuba diver. The scuba diver must sit on the colored scooter for his/her battleship team that is sitting in the ocean (gym floor) and also wear the corresponding colored pinnie. All balls are scattered in the ocean.

Object of the Game: To sink other battleships and be the last ship still afloat.

You do this by throwing or rolling cannon balls (foam coated balls) at the other battleships' pins to knock them over. Once a ship's pins are all knocked down their ship is sunk and they must tip over their colored cone to signify that has occurred. Team members on the sunken ship may still throw balls at other ships to try to sink them. The scuba diver is not allowed to attack other ships because their only job is to gather cannon balls from the ocean and get them to their team members on the ship. Teams may switch out scuba divers at anytime during the game. Scuba divers may not block shots or guard pins but they may protect they may use their hands/ball to protect their head/face if a thrown ball is headed toward them. Team members on the battleship may not touch the ocean floor. If they do, the teacher may knock down one of their pins as a penalty. Team members on the battleship may protect their pins with their hands or feet but they cannot touch the pins or surround the pins with their arms & head (air hug). If a pin is accidentally knocked down by their own team it is still considered down. The game is over when 1 battleship is left still afloat or when time is up.

Modifications:

- *Use a time limit on games and give a point to each team still afloat or based on the number of pins they have left
- *Knock down another team's pin and you may then set one of yours back up
- *Teacher shouts "abandon ship" and those standing on a sunken ship must all "swim" over to another ship that is still afloat to join them. The new team members must all join the same ship and bring all their scuba diver gear with them.
- *Teacher designates ships that are part of an alliance and need to protect their fleet – they do not attack ships within their own fleet.
- *Designate a "lifeline" such as shooting a ball successfully into a nearby basketball hoop from your battleship to be able to set up all your pins that have been knocked down
- *More or less pins or change the placement of the pins
- *No guarding/protecting the pins

Key Points: The bowling pins are your targets – not students. Communication, Teamwork, Strategy

CASTLEBALL

Hanawalt Elementary

John Baker

Equipment:

24 foam coated balls (6-7 inch)

24 hula hoops (4 for each castle) – 24inch size hula hoops work best
(optional)Pinnies for each team – 2 colors

Set Up: You will need 2-3 castles on each side of the gym near the back of the playing area for a total of 4-6 castles. The castles are built by placing one hoop flat on the ground then placing two inside the hoop on the ground so they angle toward each other barely touching while the fourth hoop is gently placed on top of them to help hold them together. The balls are laid out along the centerline or half are placed along the 10ft volleyball court line on each side. The students are split into two teams.

Object of the Game: Topple over all your opponent's castles before they get yours.

You do this by throwing or rolling the balls at your opponent's castles while trying to defend your own. Defense is played by catching or blocking any balls thrown or rolled at your castles. Defenders may not hold onto their castles. When one of your castles is knocked down you need to quickly rebuild it while the game continues. As long as you have at least one castle still standing freely, your team is still in the game. A castle in the process of being rebuilt is not considered standing freely on its own and therefore doesn't count.

Tip: It is best to have your class practice building hula hoop castles prior to playing this game.

Modifications:

*increase or decrease the number of castles

*allow them to cross the centerline up to a certain point but if tagged they must run around the fortress (playing area) twice before coming back to play for their team again.

*each time a castle is knocked down the opposing team receives a point

*play with a time limit

Key Points: the castles are your targets – not students; teamwork, strategy, patience, working under pressure, protect your builders, communication