

## About Curt Hinson

**Curt Hinson Ph.D.**, has taught at both the elementary school and university levels over the past 31 years. He currently works as an educational consultant for PlayFit Education Inc., presenting staff development workshops for school districts, teachers, and students. In addition, he teaches in the on-line graduate program at Canisius College in Buffalo, NY and is an adjunct professor at Rowan University in New Jersey. He holds a Ph.D. in Kinesiology, a Masters of Education degree, and a BS degree in Health & Physical Education.

Dr. Hinson is the author of three books, *Fitness for Children*; *Games Kids Should Play at Recess*; and *6-Steps to a Trouble-free Playground*. In addition, he has published over 50 articles related to teaching and is the creator of the "Trouble-free Playground" recess program for elementary schools.

Dr. Hinson has made presentations in all 50 states, as well as in Washington, DC, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. His practical, hands-on teaching techniques, along with his enthusiasm, make him one of the most dynamic educators in the country. He 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 the American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; the National Association for Sport and Physical Education; and the American Association for Physical Activity and Recreation. Dr. Hinson has been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*; *Disney's Family Fun* magazine; and on the *Fox News Network*. His *Trouble-free Playground* program is currently being implemented in schools in all 50 states.

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### Asteroid

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

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

How to play: Place the children in teams of two. The game is played two v. two. One team has a soccer ball (called the planet) and the other team has a foam ball (called the asteroid). 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 area.

### Catch Five

Objective: Throwing; catching; teamwork; cooperation.

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

Set-up: The students form teams of 3 or 4. This game is played either 3 vs. 3 or 4 vs. 4. You can have more than one game going on at a time. Mark off boundaries for each game approximately 30-40 feet by 30-40 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.

### Cross-the-Line

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

Equipment: Two large buckets (boxes or plastic laundry baskets can also be used); 6 Koosh balls (beanbags can also be used); cones.

Set-up: Set the two buckets on the field, approximately 75-100 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 as many balls as possible into the other team's bucket first. 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 bucket. 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. If a player is in danger of being tagged, he can avoid losing his ball by throwing it back across the line (before he's tagged) to a teammate who doesn't have a ball. He then is allowed to go back to his own side of the field. If the ball is dropped or if it is caught by a teammate that is already in possession of a ball, then the opposing team gets possession of that ball. When a player runs across the line with a ball, his goal is to throw the ball into the bucket. Throws can be made from anywhere once a player crosses the line. Of course, the closer the player gets to the bucket the easier it is for a successful throw to be made. If a throw misses the bucket and lands on the ground, the opposing team gets possession of the ball. The game is played until all the balls are in the buckets. Once this occurs, the balls are counted. The team who got the most balls in the other team's bucket is the winner. Keep in mind that it is possible for a team to get four balls into the other team's bucket while the opposing team has zero balls in the other bucket. This would leave only two balls in play, which means the team with only two balls in the bucket can not possibly win since there aren't enough balls left in play to overcome a score of four. If this happens, the game is over and a new game begins.

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.

Some teams will want to put a guard at the bucket to block throws. This can create a problem by making it difficult to score. You can make a rule that no one can guard the bucket or, paint a large circle around the bucket with spay paint and make a rule that no one can go inside the circle.

### Drop 21

Objective: Agility; hand/eye coordination.

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

Organization: The children play this game in pairs. Each pair needs one ball.

How to play: The players stand facing each other about four or five feet apart. The player with the ball (player A) holds it at the height of the other player's head then drops it. The object is for the other player (player B) to catch the ball after it bounces. Every bounce counts as a point. Therefore, if the ball is caught after one bounce player B

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gets 1 point, after two bounces, 2 points, etc. However, once the ball rolls away 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.

Tips: If more than one group is playing this game in the same area, make sure they move away from each other so they have room to chase their ball without running into neighboring groups.

#### **Four-Down Football**

Objective: Throwing; catching; cooperation; teamwork.

Equipment: One foam or rubber football and 4 cones (markers) for every 8 players.

How to play: This game is played 4 v. 4. Place the cones on the ground in a large rectangle (approximately 40' x 60'). The team with the ball starts on their own goal line (one end of the rectangle). They have four plays to get into the other team's end zone. One player is the quarterback. The other team members are receivers. The team has 4 downs to try and score. When a successful pass and catch are made, a new quarterback is selected and the team continues with their next passing play from that spot. If the pass is incomplete, it comes back to the same spot and the next play is run. If the offensive team catches a pass in the other team's end zone it is a touchdown. The other team now starts from their goal line and has four plays to try and score. If the offensive team doesn't catch a pass in the end zone after four plays, the other team starts from their goal line and has four plays to try and score. The only time a team doesn't start from its own goal line is if they intercept a pass. In this case, they start from where the pass was intercepted. No one is allowed to advance the ball by running with it. An offensive play is over as soon as the ball is caught or it hits the ground.

#### **Go for the Gold**

Objective: Chasing; fleeing

Equipment: A beanbag or small, soft object

How to play: The children play this game in 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. 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.

How to play: The children form pairs. Each pair stands around a hoop lying on the ground. One player has the ball. 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 in 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; hand/eye coordination; quick reaction; agility.

Equipment: 1 or 2 soft balls or objects for every group of five players.

How to play: Place the children in groups of five. Four players form a square (corner players) and the fifth player stands in the center of the square (center player). The square should be approximately 10' x 10'. The corner players attempt to toss the ball around or through the square without the center player touching it. If the corner players lose control of the ball, or if the center player steals it, touches it, or knocks it away, the last corner player to have touched the ball switches places with the center player.

Variation: The center player may also get out of the center by tagging a corner player who is in possession of the ball.

Tips: Remind corner players to stay in one spot. You may want to mark the spots with poly spots so they know where to stand. The center player can use his/her hand or feet to touch or stop the ball.

### Kickball (3 on 3 or 4 on 4)

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

**How to play:** Set four cones up in a diamond (home, 1<sup>st</sup> base, 2<sup>nd</sup> base, and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 three (or 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 two field players stand in right field and left field. If playing with four players, the fourth player stands in centerfield. 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 three 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 left field (or centerfield if playing with four players), and the left fielder comes into pitch. After all three (or four) kickers have had a chance to kick and all three (or four) fielders have had a chance to pitch, the teams switch roles and continue.

### KnockDown

**Objective:** Throwing; catching; hand/eye coordination; quick reaction; agility; teamwork; aerobic endurance.

**Equipment:** 1 Koosh (soft) ball for every group of 6-8 players.

**How to play:** Set up two hoops approximately 40-60 feet apart. Place a plastic water bottle in the center of each hoop. Place the children in teams of 3 or 4 players. One team is on offense and begins with the Koosh ball. 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 court players must pass the ball to each other. A ball that hits the floor 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 and intercept and knock down passes. Defensive players are not allowed to touch offensive players.

### Math Toss

**Objective:** Tossing; catching; cooperation; thinking; problem-solving; communication; addition; subtraction; multiplication.

**Equipment:** One soft (foam) ball or bean bag for every two players.

**How to play:** The students form pairs. Each pair has a ball. The player with the ball calls out a number (i.e., 17) and tosses the ball to the other player. The player catches the ball and must call out a math problem that equals the number called (i.e.,  $14 + 3$ ;  $10 + 7$ ;  $20 - 3$ ; etc.). Once the problem is called out, the player with the ball calls out a new number and tosses the ball back. The object is to see how many problems can be correctly solved in a certain amount of time. No numbers can be duplicated.

### Pass & Chase

**Objective:** Tossing & catching; cooperation; aerobic endurance; agility.

**Equipment:** One soft (foam-type) ball for every two players; music.

**How to play:** The children form pairs. Each pair has a ball. The game begins with the partners tossing the ball back and forth to each other. When the music begins, the tag game begins. The partner with the ball is "IT" and must tag the partner with the ball (no throwing). Once a successful tag is made, the "tagger" simply drops the ball on the ground and quickly gets away from their partner. The partner now must pick up the ball and chase the other partner, attempting to tag him/her. This continues until the music goes off. The music going off is the signal to begin tossing and catching again. When the music comes back on, another tag game begins.

**Variation:** Instead of just tossing the ball back and forth, the players can roll the ball back and forth from push-up position; kick it back and forth from crab position, or toss it after performing a sit-up.

### Shuttle Transfer

**Objective:** Aerobic endurance; agility; cooperation.

**Equipment:** Hoops and beanbags.

**Set-up:** The students form partners. Each partner stands in a hoop on opposite sides of the area. One partner has 5 (or more) beanbags in her hoop.

**How to play:** On the signal to begin, the player with the beanbags picks up one beanbag at a time and runs out to the middle of the area. The other partner runs out to the middle and takes the beanbag from the other partner and returns it to his hoop. The other partner returns to her hoop and retrieves another beanbag and the process continues. The object is to transfer all of the beanbags to the other hoop and back again in the quickest time.

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### **Team Juggle**

Objective: Tossing; catching; teamwork; problem-solving; group dynamics.

Equipment: Foam balls or other soft objects.

How to play: The children form groups of five and stand in a circle. Each group is given one ball to start. The group passes the ball around the circle in a "star" pattern, with each player always throwing to the same person. After the children have mastered one ball, another ball is added. The challenge is to see how many balls or objects each group can juggle at one time without dropping or missing the balls. To make it more challenging the group can juggle balls forwards, backwards, and while standing inside another group.

### **Team Touchdown**

Objective: Throwing; catching; teamwork.

Equipment: Foam ball or soft object (e.g., rubber fish or pig); 4 cones.

How to play: Players are divided into two teams (2, 3, or 4 on a team are best). The playing field is set up as a rectangle approximately 30-40 yards long and 15-20 yards wide. The cones are used to mark the corners of the rectangle. The object of the game is to move the ball down the field and throw it to a teammate who is standing in the opposing team's end zone. The end zone is the area at the end of the rectangle past the cones. Players cannot run with the ball, but are allowed to pivot (as in basketball). No contact is allowed. The ball cannot be grabbed or knocked out of an opponent's hands. If the ball lands on the ground the team that had possession last loses possession. The other team picks the ball up and begins moving down field. Thrown passes can be intercepted by the opposing team. One point is scored for each touchdown. Once a team scores a touchdown they drop the ball on the ground and then get ready to play defense. The other team picks up the ball and begins moving on offense. The game is continuous.