Makyang / Jumping on One Leg

Site of Documentation

Luang Prabang Children’s Cultural Centre, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR

Description

Makyang is a simple, yet entertaining game of ‘Catch’ played by children living in and around Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. In the game, players have to try to catch their opponents while hopping on only one leg.

Who Plays?

This game requires at least 16 participants and can be played by both boys and girls, usually aged between 6 and 14 years.

Accessories/Equipment

This game requires only an item to draw out the game area. This could be chalk, a stick or sharp stone, depending where the game is being played. Alternatively, players can also take off their shoes and line them up.
Time and Place

This game can be played either indoors or outdoors throughout the year, as long as the weather is cool and dry. As the game requires a lot of running and hopping, it is best played on smooth, flat surfaces such as lawns or school yards where the children are less likely to hurt themselves if they fall over. Indoor tiled areas should be avoided as they are often found to be slippery, when hopping. For a game consisting of 16 players, a space of approximately 5 x 10 meters is required.

Skills, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player

Players need to be quick, agile and alert to be able to avoid being caught by their opponents. The best players are those that have fast responses and are good at running and hopping. Those with an excellent sense of balance will also have an advantage over others, as they can be confident and quick when maneuvering on only one leg.

Popularity

This game is most popular with children under the age of 14 years. It is most often played in school where there is plenty of space and lots of eager participants. The game is played for exercise, to improve balance, teamwork skills and above all, fun. Typically, children learned this game from peers, by watching television or were taught it at the local Cultural Centre.

History of the Game

This game has been played by generations of children, although the rules and the structure of the game have evolved greatly over time. Many years ago, the game area comprised of two lines of shoes that were about 8 meters apart from each other. Between the two lines was placed a small object such as a pen. Each player in both teams would be given a corresponding number and would have to play in that order, against each other. One by one, they would hop forward and try to pick up the object and hop back towards their team, while being chased by their opponent. If the player made it safely back, they would win a point. But, if the player put both feet on the ground or was caught, the opposing team would win the point. Once all players had taken their turn, scores would be added up and the team with most points would win the game.

Preparation

1. To prepare, players need to draw a large rectangle that measures 5 x 10 metres on the ground.
2. Players can draw on the ground with chalk; use a stick or stone to drag a line in the sand or simply take off their shoes and line them up, to define the area.

How is the Game Played?

Step 1. First players all play Rock, Paper and Scissors to determine two teams. Winners (Team A) play the ‘Runners’ while losers (Team B) play the ‘Chasers’.
**Step 2.** All the players from Team A then stand inside the rectangle, while Team B players stand just outside of it.

**Step 3.** Team A then selects one of the Team B players to be the ‘Chaser’. The Chaser will enter the rectangle hopping on one leg and try to catch one of the players in Team A. The Chaser is not allowed to put two feet on the ground while inside the game area.
**Step 4.** Players in Team A have to run around the game area try to dodge their hopping opponent. They must be careful at all times not to step outside the rectangle.

**Step 5.** If a Team A player is caught by the Chaser, they are eliminated from the game. However, if during the game the Chaser puts two feet on the ground or hops out of the game area, they are eliminated instead and Team A picks a new Chaser. The game continues until only one player is left. The team that the last surviving player belongs to wins the game.
Rules

1. If a Runner is caught by the Chaser or steps outside the rectangle, then they are eliminated.

2. If the Chaser stands on two feet or exits the game area during play, then they are eliminated.

3. The Runners always select which opponent will be the Chaser.

4. The team of the last surviving player wins the game.