Iceman / Ice water

Site of Documentation
Urban Indian, George Town, Penang, Malaysia

Description

Iceman is a simple game of ‘Catch’ enjoyed by Indian children from George Town in Penang, Malaysia. The aim of the game is to for the ‘Iceman’ to catch all the ‘Water’ players and freeze them to the spot! Once all ‘Water’ has been turned to ice, the Iceman wins the game.

Who Plays?

This game requires a minimum of three participants. Both boys and girls can play aged 8 years or older.

Time and Place

On average, this game takes around 30 minutes to play. It can be played at any time of the day, as long the weather is cool and dry. As the players the game requires a lot of running, it requires a large outdoor space so that the children have plenty of room to maneuver.
**Skills, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player**

The Water players need to be quick and alert to be able to avoid being caught by the Iceman. The best players are those that have fast responses and good running skills so they can remain one step ahead at all times. The Iceman also needs to be quick and keep an eye out for Water players being rescued or moving from their frozen position.

**Popularity**

Played frequently for fun and to pass free time, children learned this game from peers or older siblings.

**History of the game**

Although the origins of this game can not be easily be traced, it was played by members of the older generations when they were young. Back then, the game was slightly different as the children did not play 1-2, SOM! to find the loser at the final stages of the game.

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**How is the Game Played?**

**Step 1:** First, the players need to select who will play the role of the ‘Iceman’. To do this they play an elimination game called *La-La-Li-La-Tam-Plom*. There are two rhymes that they can choose from:

1. All the players stand in a circle with their hands outstretched and chant either:

   **Rhyme 1:**
   
   *Lai-Lai-Lai-Tam-Plom,*
   
   *A pêk pêk a pom,*
   
   *A pêk pêk no hai,*
   
   *A pêk câk ka sai,*
   
   *A pek pi pang sai.*

   **Rhyme 2:**
   
   *Lai-Lai-Lai-Tam-Plom,*
   
   *Apom pi apom,*
   
   *Mak Minah balik kampong,*
   
   *Bieranak dalam tong,*
   
   *Namanya sotong.*

2. While the players chant they each wave one hand in front of them. At the end of the chant the players each freeze with their palms turned either up or down.
3. The odd player out (e.g. the only player with his palm up while all the other players have their palms down) becomes the Iceman.

4. If more than one person has their palm in a different direction compared to all the others, then the game continues until finally one player is selected. The remaining players play the role of ‘Water’.

**Step 2.** Once selected, the Iceman then counts, “One, Two, Three” and on “Three”, starts to chase the other ‘Water’ players. ‘Water’ players must run around the game area and try to avoid being caught by the Iceman.

If a Water player is caught by the Iceman they turn to ‘ice’ and freeze in whatever position they are in. If a frozen player moves, they are disqualified from the game and must play the Iceman in the next round.
Step 3. Water players can rescue their frozen team mates by running to them and touching them. Once touched, their team mate is free to join back in the game as a Water player.

Step 4. The Iceman must freeze all the Water players to win the game.
**Step 5.** Once all the Water players have been frozen by the Iceman, the Iceman, once again counts to three. As they say, “Three”, the Water players must all quickly squat down on the ground. The last Water player to squat down loses, and becomes the Iceman in the next game.

![Image of children playing](image1.jpg)

**Step 6.** If there is a draw between two or more players, the loser must be determined by playing 1-2-SOM. All the players must face each other and say, “1,2, SOM!”

As the players say, “SOM!”, they must form a Bird, Rock or Water shape with their hand. The winner is determined by, Rock defeats Bird, Bird defeats water and Water defeats Rock.

![Image of children playing](image2.jpg)
Rules

1. If a frozen Water player moves after being caught, they lose the game and must play the Iceman in the next game.

2. If a Water player is the last to squat down when the Iceman counts to three, they lose the game and must play the Iceman in the next game.