Tudung tin / Bottle Caps

Site of Documentation

Rural Malay communities, Titi Teras, Balik Pulau, Penang

Description

Tudung Tin is a competitive game that is played by rural Malay children living in the village of Titi Teras, Penang, Malaysia. The game tests a player’s bottle cap shooting skills. In it, players have to shoot a number of bottle caps and also successfully throw them up and catch them again to win points. The player to reach the target number of points first, wins the game.

Who Plays?

This game requires two or more players. Both boys and girls can play, aged 10 to 12 years old. Players usually play the game one against one, rather than in teams so that groups of players are kept small and the waiting time between turns isn’t too long.

Accessories/Equipment

The game requires 5 rust-free metal bottle caps and candles (the wax from the candles is used to fill the caps to make them heavier). Bottle caps can be easily found in the home of in local stores that sell soft drinks in glass bottles.
Time and Place

On average, a game of *Tudung Tin* takes around 15-30 minutes, depending on the number of players and the maximum points that they are playing for. Children are most likely to play the game during their lunch break at school or whenever they have free time with friends. The game can be played indoors or outdoors throughout the year, no matter what the weather is. The game is best played on a large, smooth surface such as a flat floor or table, where there are no bumps or obstructions that could stop the rubber bands from scattering.

Skills, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player

The game requires the players to have both excellent skill when using their fingers to shoot the caps and catching them during “Timbung”. Players who are good at judging distance, aiming and shooting the bottle caps with accurate speed, will be the best players. As it is harder for players to shoot the bottle caps when the bottle caps are in a ‘closed’ position it is in their opponents interest to call ‘closed’ before the shooting commences. Shooting the caps is easier when the caps are heavier, thus players usually fill them with a small quantity of wax before playing.

Popularity

This game is played regularly for fun, particularly by boys in the local community. It is mostly learned from teachers at school or by watching older friends.

History of the Game

This game is thought to have begun being played when metal bottle caps were introduced in the 1960's. These days, metal caps are often used to seal cheap carbonated soft drinks that are a drunk by children, so it’s easy to collect them for use in the game. Over time the game has become increasingly complex, with more rules and scenarios added to the game to make what is essentially a simple game more interesting.

Preparation

1. Players have to collect 5 rust free metal bottle caps. These can be found in the home or from local stores.

2. Next, light a candle and as the wick burns, drip the wax into each of the bottle caps. Try to fill each cap with a small quantity of wax and then let them cool and harden, before playing.

3. Finally, players need to agree on the maximum number of points they are playing for. This will depend on their skill and the time they have available.
4. Once decided, the players must “Timbang” to determine who starts the game. To do this one of the players stacks the five caps on the palm of their hand.
5. Next, they throw the caps into the air and catch as many as they can, using only the back of their hand.

6. While the caps are still balanced on the back of the player’s hand, they once again toss the caps into the air again and catch them using one of two techniques:

   a. They can raise their hand and catch them while they are in mid air. Each cap caught is worth 20 points.
b. They can hold their palm out and catch the caps as they fall back down. Each cap caught is worth 10 points.

7. Each player takes a turn at ‘Timbang’ and the one with the most points, starts the game.

How is the Game Played?

**Step 1.** The first player (Player A) stacks the five caps, one on top of each other, on a smooth, flat surface. Next they have to scatter the caps; there are two ways they can do this:
a. **The ‘Thumb’ Technique:** The player places both thumbs on either side of the bottle cap at the bottom of the stack, and pulls both thumbs in opposite directions, spinning the stack and scattering all the caps across the game area.

b. **The ‘Twist’ Technique:** The player places their hand over the stack and using their fingers, twists the stack, so it spins and the caps scatter in different directions.

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**Step 2.** At this stage of the game, all the caps should be facing in the same direction, either ‘opened’ (upside down with the wax showing) or ‘closed’ (with the metal top up, and the wax inside hidden from view). If one or more cap is different, Player A must call for the caps to be either ‘opened’ or ‘closed’. If any other player calls first, Player A has to follow that player’s orders for the caps to be opened or closed.
Step 3. Now, Player A chooses one of the five caps to eliminate and removes it from the game. Their opponent (Player B) then selects which of the four remaining caps will be used to hit one another. For example, if Player B decides that Cap ‘W’ should be used to shoot Cap ‘Y’, then Cap ‘X’ will have to be used to shoot Cap ‘Z’.

Player A must then flick Cap ‘W’ at Cap ‘Y’. If one of these two caps hits Cap ‘X’ or Cap ‘Z’ then Player A is eliminated from the game. If the shot is accurate and Cap ‘W’ hits Cap ‘Y’ then both caps are removed from the game. Player A must then shoot Cap ‘X’ at Cap ‘Z’.

If the angle of the shot is difficult, Players are allowed to use one of their hands as a ‘Tampan’ (block). If used correctly the cap should bounce off their hand and hit the target cap. Players can only use a ‘Tampan’ once during the game.
Step 4. It is possible that the caps did not scatter correctly at the beginning of the game. There are four common scenarios that could occur during the game, each with their own rules:

**Scenario A: Two Caps Stacked Together**

In a case where two caps remain stacked on top of each other, Player B must use both thumbs to spin the lower cap and scatter the stack. Before they do this, Player A must indicate the amount of force that Player B must apply to the caps when they spin them. They can choose ‘Kuat’ (Strong), ‘Sederhana’ (Medium) or ‘Perlahan’ (Soft). Once the caps have been scattered, the game commences from Step 3.

**Scenario B: Three Caps Stacked Together**

When three caps remained stacked on top of each other, the players re-arrange the caps into a formation called a ‘Jamban’ (Squat toilet) and the two remaining caps are placed a palm’s distance either side of the ‘Jamban’. Player A can then use one of two techniques to scatter the caps:
**Stabbing:** Using one finger the player has to ‘stab’ the cap on the top of the ‘Jamban’ and push it off the pile.

**Flicking:** Using one of the other caps, the player must ‘flick’ a cap towards the ‘Jamban’ and hit the cap on the top if the pile off.

**Scenario 3: Four Caps Stacked Together**

When four caps remain stacked together, players pick them up and arrange them in a square to create a ‘Bunga’ (flower) formation. The player must then place the remaining cap, on top of the ‘Bunga’ right in the middle of the four caps.
Player B can use one finger to push down on this middle cap (a technique called ‘Jentik’) the force of which should scatter the remaining four caps beneath it. Before they do this, once again Player A must indicate the amount of force that Player B must apply to the caps when they spin them. They can choose ‘Kuat’ (Strong), ‘Sederhana’ (Medium) or ‘Perlahan’ (Soft).
Step 5. Once the players have solved one of these scenarios and continued onto Step 3, Player A will ’Timbang’ once again to gain points.

Each player must add keep score of their points gained during ‘Timbang’. The first player to reach the target number of points wins the game.

Rules

1. If the game is being played on the floor, players are allowed to adopt any position they like such as crouching and lying, in order to prevent themselves from hitting, knocking over or pushing other bottle caps.

2. If a player fails Step 3 or does not catch any caps in ‘Timbang’ - it is the next player turn.

3. The player that reaches the target number of points first wins the game.