

## Polis Chab Chaor / Cops and Robbers



### Site of Documentation

Phnom Pehn, Cambodia

### Description

*Polis Chab Chaor* (Cops and Robbers) is an action packed game of 'Catch' played primarily by boys living in Phnom Pehn, Cambodia. To win the game, a team of 'Policemen' have to track down and capture a gang of crafty 'Thieves'.

### Who Plays?

This game requires a group of four or more children and is most suited to boys aged between 7 and 10 years old.

### Time and Place

*Polis Chab Chaor* can be played either indoors or outdoors throughout the year. As each round only takes around 15 minutes, it is perfect for playing during school break times when there are plenty of other participants to join in. As the game requires a lot of running, it is best played on smooth flat surfaces such as lawns or school yards where children are less likely to injure themselves.

## Skills, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player

Players need to be quick, agile and alert to be able to avoid being caught. The best players are those that have fast responses and good running skills. Those that can work well as a team will always have an advantage over their opponents.

## Popularity

This game is most popular with boys under the age of 10 years. Not only a game of speed and stamina, the game also teaches the children how important the role of policemen is in the society, and how wrong doers are ultimately caught and brought to justice.

## History of the game

Members of older generations played a similar game called *Kenh Chor (Spies and Robbers)* when they were young. In this game children were divided into two equal teams of 'Spies' and 'Robbers'. The Robbers would have to run away and do all they could to avoid being caught. This particular game was traditionally played out in harvested rice fields at night when the moon was full and the sky was bright. Modern day *Cops and Robbers* is likely to have evolved from *Spies and Robbers* and reflects what children have seen around them in local society and on television.

---

## How is the Game Played?

**Step 1.** To start the game, players need to decide on an object or small area (this could be a tree, a doorway or dustbin etc.) to be the 'Police Station'. All the players gather at the Police Station and divide themselves into equal sized teams using *Oulampe*.



**Step 2.** A representative from each team then plays *Rock, Paper and Scissors* to determine a winner. The winner's team takes on the role of Policemen while the loser's team plays the Thieves.



**Step 3.** Once the two teams are selected, the Thieves run away from the Police Station as quickly as possible, dispersing to all corners of the game area.



**Step 4.** Shortly afterwards, the team of Policemen set off to track down the Thieves. Once a Policeman catches a Thief, they must hold the Thief's arms behind their back and 'frog march' them back to the Police Station, where they are held until the end of the game.



**Step 5.** At the station, a couple of Policeman must guard the captured Thieves to stop them from escaping.



**Step 6.** When all the Thieves and are safely 'behind bars' both teams switch roles and the game begins again.



---

### Rules

1. Once the Policemen have caught all the Thieves it is time for the teams to swap sides and start a new game.
2. Policemen must remember to guard the imprisoned Thieves. If they escape, Policemen need to hunt them down and bring them back to the station.