



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

pirrha

'pir-rha'



SCHOOL
YEARS
4–6

SCHOOL
YEARS
7–9

SCHOOL
YEARS
10–12

Post-school age

Background

The Lake Eyre women made small gypsum balls to spin. The game was played by several players at once. The player whose ball spun the longest was the winner.

Sometimes two women competed against each other. In another form of the game two balls were spun in a large bowl (*pirrha*) and there was excitement when the balls collided.

Language

The name for the game is taken from the large bowl (*pirrha*) used for spinning balls.

Short description

The game is one of ball spinning. The object is to try to make the ball spin for as long as possible.

Players

- One to ten players

Playing area

- A suitable indoor or outdoor area

Equipment

- Use a number of discs (frisbees) — the discs should all be the same. The underside of the disc can be smoothed and the surface waxed.
- Use balls such as wooden balls, billiard balls or large marbles.

Game play and basic rules

- The ball is spun on the surface of an upturned disc (frisbee) or similar object.
- The player prepares by holding the disc in one hand — or placing it on a flat surface — with the other hand ready to spin the ball. The spin is

usually made by flicking the thumb and first and second fingers.

- The signal to start is given and the ball is spun.
- The ball can be moved around the surface of the disc by changing the angle of the disc. For best results the ball should be kept in the middle of the disc.
- A stop-watch is used to time how long the ball spins. When the spin is timed, the stop-watch is started as the hand is lifted away from the ball and the time is recorded until it stops turning.
- Players aim to achieve their best time or beat a set time (such as 45 seconds).

Scoring

The player whose ball spins for the longest time wins the game. Players have three attempts and the best time counts.

Variations

- The game can be played by several players at once. On the signal to start, all players start the ball spinning. The longest-spinning ball is the winner.
- Players in groups of three at a time compete in an elimination contest to determine a winner.
- For a team competition the ball must be spun and hands lifted away quickly on the signal to start. If there is any delay the turn does not count.
- Players attempt to guess which ball will spin the longest before the turn has started.
- Have two balls spinning in the same *pirrha* and attempt to have them collide with each other. This is not a competition.
- The game can be played by the players in teams of three or five and with each player competing against a member of the other team at the same time.
- Spin a basketball on a smooth wooden floor. Use two hands to start the ball spinning.

Top-spinning technique

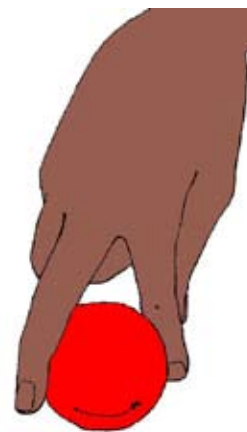
- The spin-ball is spun by being pressed between the first and middle fingers, on either a patch of smooth, hard ground, or more usually on a flat board.
- Another method is to spin the ball by holding it between the thumb and first two fingers and giving it a quick twist.

Suggestion

This activity could be ideally used as a classroom activity or as a night-time activity as part of an outdoor education unit.

Teaching points

- Spin balls ready. Thumb and one or two fingers on the ball.
- Grip and flick hard to spin.
- Hands each side of the disc. Try to keep it still or move it around.
- Count the time.
- Keep going.
- Try again. A little faster. That's the idea.



Spinning technique