



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

pukamitjal

'puka-mit-jal'



SCHOOL
YEARS
4-6

SCHOOL
YEARS
7-9

Background

A popular ball game of keep-away was played by adults in camps on Mornington Island in northern Australia. Grass and/or leaves were rolled into a ball and bound with hair-string or a piece of fishing net. The adults formed two teams and energetically threw the ball to each other until they tired.

Language

The ball used in this game was called a *pukamitjal*.

Short description

This is a keep-away throwing and catching ball game.

Players

- Two teams of six to 12 players

Playing area

- A suitable area with lines marked 10–15 metres apart

Equipment

- A ball such as a volleyball or gator skin ball

Game play and basic rules

- The game consists of the players of one team throwing the *pukamitjal* back and forth to each other. The players of the other team are in a middle area attempting to intercept passes.
- The team passing the *pukamitjal* splits into two groups and stands next to each other and on lines 10–15 metres apart.
- If a pass is dropped, goes past the players on the line or is intercepted by a middle player, the team that is responsible swaps over with the team in the middle. A change-over also occurs if a player holds the *pukamitjal* for more than three seconds or does not have at least one foot on the line when he or she catches the *pukamitjal*.

- No physical contact is allowed and the players in the middle may not move any closer than 1 metre from the players on the outside line.

Variations

- Half the players from each team are in two groups about 15 metres apart. The players from one team attempt to throw the *pukamitjal* to a player from the same team who is with the other half of his or her team in the group opposite. The opposing team players attempt to intercept the *pukamitjal* and throw it back to one of their players.
- The teams throw the ball to each other from about 10–15 metres away. If a player from one team drops the ball, the other team scores one point. Use two balls.
- Play with three teams of six to eight players. The team in the middle replaces a team on the outside after a number of turns, after a set time or if a mistake is made.
- The passing team stands around in a circle — perhaps with a line through the middle.
- The other team is in the middle of the circle.

Teaching points

- Teams ready. Start passing.
- Quick passes. Pass to a free player.
- Change over.
- A quick game is a good game. Hot potato.
- Hands up to catch. Reach towards the ball.