



*Sparks-A-Rama Rulebook  
Western Oregon*



# Sparks-A-Rama Rules

## PREFACE

This rulebook is for use in the Western Oregon Awana Ministry only. The National Events Committee has given local Awana Missionaries some discretion in its implementation. This rulebook contains the final and official rules for the Sparks-A-Rama.

## SPARKIES' FUN DAY

Although Sparks-A-Rama is similar to an AwanaGames meet, there are significant differences. It's a day of fun for young children, a day of exciting participation with new friends, not a day of high-pressured competition. Sparks-aged children are not ready for the keen rivalry of an AwanaGames meet. Don't expect or encourage them to compete as fervently as older boys and girls. Sparkies play games for the fun of playing them. Winning can be one gratifying result of their team effort.

Sparks-A-Rama should also be a ministry to parents. It is an opportunity to present clearly the gospel of Jesus Christ. Remind parents not to stress highly competitive attitudes with their children on this special day.

## INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed for team coaches, circle directors, and judges who will participate in an authorized Awana Sparks-A-Rama meet.

## AUTHORIZATION OF SPARKS-A-RAMA MEETS

An Awana missionary must authorize all Sparks-A-Rama meets. If several registered churches with Awana clubs are interested in conducting a Sparks-A-Rama meet in an area where none is scheduled, they should contact their area Awana event coordinator. The number of circles used in a meet depends on the number of teams competing and the size of the facility. The Sparks-A-Rama meet director has final authority to allocate space available and to set registration requirements.

## COMPOSITION OF SPARKS-A-RAMA TEAMS

A team consists of a minimum of 10 players and a maximum of 15 players, of which at least five must be boys and five must be girls. Every player must participate in at least one game.

## REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

### REQUIREMENTS

1. Only currently registered churches are authorized to compete in Sparks-A-Rama meets.
2. A Sparks-A-Rama registration form accompanied by a registration fee is required. The fee covers part of the operating costs of the meet. All game equipment is provided. Until the registration fee is paid, a team cannot be officially registered. Teams are accepted on a "first-paid, first-served" basis. **No refunds will be issued to teams withdrawing their registrations.**

## PROCESSING REGISTRATIONS

Completed registrations will be accepted according to the order in which they are received. When all team lines on all circles available for the meet have been filled, additional team registrations will be accepted only on a standby basis. Such teams will be notified accordingly.

All teams accepting a "standby" position are expected to practice as if they were an accepted team. They must also be ready to participate if notified at least 24 hours before the meet. If a standby team is unable to participate when notified of acceptance, it loses its registration fee. Standby teams that are not asked to replace another team will be refunded the full registration fee following the meet.

## TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

Team assignments to a particular team line/color on a particular circle (where there is more than one circle) will be made by the Sparks-A-Rama meet coordinator.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF TEAM MEMBERS

1. All Sparks clubbers in 2nd grade or lower, who have not reached their 9th birthday by September 1 prior to the meet, may participate.
2. Every team member must have passed 10 sections this club year. This includes the "Sparks Gate."
3. Teams may register for only one Sparks-A-Rama meet.

## GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

An important aspect of the Awana youth program is teaching good sportsmanship. Whether we win or lose is not as important as putting forth our best effort. Maintaining a friendly attitude at all times demonstrates that Christ can give peace and victory in every circumstance. No coach should destroy a Christian testimony by even one moment's display of poor sportsmanship.

Being a winner for the Lord is more important than winning a Sparks-A-Rama meet. We encourage all team coaches to enthusiastically motivate their team. However, one should not mistake enthusiasm for unsportsmanlike outbursts. Officials in all sports make "wrong calls," but our officials are trained, devoted, impartial, born-again people who do their best to officiate according to Sparks-A-Rama rules.

Sparks-A-Rama affords Awana leaders an opportunity to display a charitable spirit under the pressure of competition. Hundreds of unsaved people may be observing. Therefore, we need to watch our actions and testimony, and all coaches should remind themselves and their teams that our testimony for Christ before others is of utmost importance.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## ROSTER SHEET

The team roster sheet, indicating name, age, grade in school, and date of birth of each player, must be submitted to the area event staff at registration on the day of the meet.

## TEAM OUTFITS

Coaches are responsible to be sure that uniforms are respectable and in keeping with Christian standards of dress. Everyone on the playing floor must wear non-marking gym shoes. This includes coaches, judges, circle directors, and team members. Shorts are not allowed.

Team coaches should wear either the Awana uniform or the special uniform chosen for their team. Awana T-shirts, which may be purchased from Awana headquarters, give a team a good appearance on the floor.

It is recommended that churches provide kneepads or coverings for the Sparky Crawl. Rigid plastic knee protectors will not be permitted as they may damage gym floors.

## INSURANCE

Awana does not carry insurance covering team members. All churches should obtain insurance information for church-sponsored activities so they can supply their own protection. The coach must have in his/her possession, a permission slip signed by a parent of each player stating, "emergency treatment may be given if necessary."

Extra players brought by a team on a "standby basis," as well as those recruited from the stands, to fill in short teams **must** have permission slips before they can participate.

## SPARKS-A-RAMA AWARDS

Team plaque — To winning team on each game square.

Participation patch — To all team members and coaches

## PROMOTING INTEREST IN SPARKS-A-RAMA MEETS

The Sparks-A-Rama meet provides an enthusiastic introduction to Awana for people who have not had any previous contact with Awana clubs. Here are some ways to encourage spectators to attend:

1. The Sparks-A-Rama meet should be promoted at Sparks club meetings for several weeks preceding the meet. Clubbers who are not selected for the team can encourage the team to victory by attending the meet and cheering for their friends on the team. Clubbers who are not on the team should be made to feel as much a part of the Sparks-A-Rama as the team members.
2. Sparks-A-Rama should be promoted at Sunday School. Boys and girls who don't attend Sparks club, as well as adults who are unfamiliar with Awana, would attend a Sparks-A-Rama meet if invited. Use stunts, skits, or other interesting methods to give announcements.
3. Sparks-A-Rama should be promoted at church. The Pastor can do much to encourage the support of the Sparks club teams in the weekly church bulletin and his announcements.
4. Sparks-A-Rama should be promoted to parents. People who have never seen a meet may need an extra push to get them there for the first time. A visit or a letter may be all they need.
5. Sparks-A-Rama should be promoted in the neighborhood. An article announcing the team's participation in the area meet may be written for the local newspaper. Radio and TV interviews often can be arranged.

# SPARKS-A-RAMA DAY SCHEDULE

## ARRIVAL TIME

Teams must arrive at least 45 minutes prior to the starting time of the meet.

## CIRCLE AND TEAM LINE LOCATIONS

Teams should find their assigned circle team line as soon as possible on arrival. No running or practicing on the circle is permitted before the meet begins. Teams will help reduce congestion if they go to their assigned location and stay there.

## MEETING SPARKS-A-RAMA OFFICIALS

The line judges and the circle director will give last-minute instructions to team coaches. Team coaches will be given opportunity to ask last-minute questions of officials before the meet begins.

## FLAG CEREMONY

All team members should be instructed before the meet to face the flag during the ceremony and to place their hands on their heart at the given signal.

All team members on all circles recite/sing in unison:

### **SPARKS YELL**

**Leader** - *Who are we?*

**Sparks** - Sparks!

**Leader** - *Who for?*

**Sparks** - Jesus!

**Leader** - *What to do?*

**Sparks** - Light the world!

## **SPARKS KEY VERSE**

John 3:16

## **GOSPEL PRESENTATION**

While Sparks-A-Rama is meant to be exciting and fun, the purpose of all Sparks special events is to reach unsaved families and friends for Jesus Christ. A brief gospel message is given which is skillfully designed to appeal to adults, yet to be age-appropriate for Sparkies.. Coaches should instruct their team members to sit quietly without talking or whispering during the message and recognition time. Players are not permitted to leave their team line.

## **SPARKS-A-RAMA PERSONNEL**

### **CHAIN OF COMMAND ON EACH CIRCLE**

Team members who have questions should ask only their coach. If the coach has a question or comment, he/she speaks only to the judge on his/her team line. If the judge cannot answer the question satisfactorily, he consults with the circle director. The circle director's decision is final. **Unless requested by the circle director, no team coach is allowed on the game floor to consult him at any time.**

## **SPARKS-A-RAMA DIRECTOR**

He oversees the entire operation from planning through team registrations to supervision of the Sparks-A-Rama meet.

## **CIRCLE DIRECTOR**

Is responsible for:

- Coaches' meeting at start of meet
- Circle operation after official start
- Declaring reruns
- Indicating event winners
- Coordination and ultimate responsibilities of judges
- Scorekeepers' activities
- Final word on all matters not covered in written rules

## **JUDGES**

In each circle, four trained officials who are familiar with all Sparks-A-Rama games, rules governing each, and how to resolve tie events, tie heats, or tie score assist the circle director in watching for false starts, fouls, broken rules, fallen pins, interference, etc.

## **OFFICIAL SCOREKEEPERS**

Two individuals in each circle record the scores for each event as reported by the circle director. Additional helpers post these scores where they are visible to the spectators.

## **OFFICIAL STARTER**

Gives the starting signal for all circles at beginning of most events or heats.

## **TEAM COACHES**

Two coaches are required for each team. Team coaches are **not** permitted in the playing area any time during the Sparks-A-Rama meet, except to position players for the next event. They must give directions from the sidelines only, out of the way of players and judges.

1. Coaches may ask their team judge to review a decision with their circle director.
2. A coach may be asked to leave the floor if the circle director considers it necessary.
3. All coaches are required to attend the Sparks-A-Rama coaches' training session.
4. All coaches must remain behind their team line at all times while Sparks-A-Rama events are in progress (except during Sparky Crawl).

# **GENERAL RULES/DEFINITIONS**

(Arranged alphabetically for quick reference)

## **ADHERENTS**

No adherents are permitted on gym shoes, including everything from professional adherents to wet cloths. Violators may be disqualified. The best safety measure is a good pair of gym shoes with a clean tread. No cloths will be allowed on the gym floor.

## **BALLOONS**

Nine-inch balloons are inflated to about eight inches in diameter.

## **CENTER BEANBAG**

In game events that finish in the middle of the circle, and which have second place, a beanbag is placed on the intersection of the two diagonal lines with the center pin on top of it. At the conclusion of the event or heat, second-place points are awarded the team of the player who has possession of the center beanbag (see *General Rules* "Possession").

## **CENTER PIN**

In events that finish in the middle of the circle, a game pin is set at the intersection of the two diagonal lines. (It is placed on top of the center beanbag when first- and second-place points are to be awarded.) First-place points are awarded the team whose player has possession of center pin at end of the event or heat (see *General Rules* "Possession").

## **CIRCLE PINS**

(See Game Circle Diagram) All circle pins must be passed with both feet outside the circle in all running events. No jumping of pins is allowed. If a pin has fallen, that point on the circle normally marked by the pin must be passed with both feet outside the circle as if the pin were in its proper place. (Runners may cut inside the circle between circle pins, but they must be outside the circle at each pin.) Anyone knocking over a circle pin during a game disqualifies his/her team for that event or heat.

## **DISQUALIFICATION**

The circle director and/or judges may disqualify a team at any time during an event for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Unnecessary roughness or poor conduct
2. Knocking over a circle pin
3. Causing interference to other participants
4. Breaking other game rules not listed here, but described elsewhere in this book
5. Play that is not according to the spirit of the game (see *General Rules* "Spirit of the Game")

Coaches should instruct team members to go all the way into the center for each event — no matter how hopeless it may seem — because the apparent winners may have been disqualified.

## FALSE START

The circle director and judges will call a “false start” when action is started in an event before the starting signal. The event in that circle is brought to a halt as rapidly as possible, and then restarted by the circle director. Two false starts in one event or heat by a single team disqualifies that team for that event or heat. The remaining teams will be restarted.

## FLOOR MARKINGS

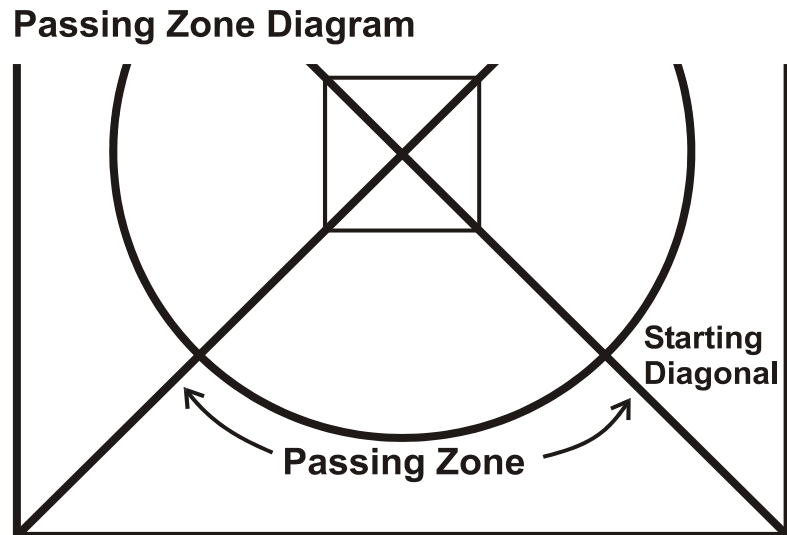
Lines are marked on the floor with tape. The width of the tape provides a margin for error in games that use tape boundaries. If any player's foot protrudes beyond the tape in these games, his/her team will be disqualified for that event or heat.

## INTERFERENCE

The circle director and judges may declare “interference” if, in the opinion of these officials, a team's fair chance of winning is impaired by something other than normal breaks and hazards of the game. This includes hampering of teams' or players' progress by someone other than players participating in a particular event or heat, such as officials, spectators, coaches, and nonparticipating players of opposing teams. When a team member or coach causes interference, his/her team will be disqualified from that event. Interference may also be called when foreign matter or water on the floor hinders players' progress. When interference is called, the circle director will declare a rerun.

## PASSING ZONE

In the Relay event (Sparky Safari), the beanbag must be passed within that section of the circle contained within the team zone assigned to each team (see Diagram). Passing the beanbag in any other zone — including passing it over a starting diagonal — disqualifies that team for that event.



## POSSESSION

In events using the center pin and center beanbag to determine the winners, the player must have possession of the center pin or center beanbag to be awarded points. Touching the pin or beanbag is not enough. However, if the player who has possession of the center pin or center beanbag has been disqualified, the next player into the center will be awarded points (see *General Rules* “Winner of an Event”).

## RERUN

A rerun of an event or heat will be held for interference calls. A rerun is also in order when, in the opinion of the circle director and judges, the awarding of points cannot be determined fairly.

A team will not be allowed to participate in the rerun if:

1. Any of its members were the cause of an interference call, **or**
2. The team had already been disqualified for a violation previous to an interference call or other situation requiring a rerun (see *General Rules* “Interference”).

## SCORING

The scoring for each event is stated in the game rules. The circle director determines who the winners are and reports to the scorekeepers. Players should not leave the circle or set down the center pin or beanbag until the circle director has determined their team standings.

## **SPIRIT OF THE GAME**

When a team deliberately stretches existing rules to play a game differently from that planned by the national event team, the spirit of the game has been violated. The circle director and judges will declare the team disqualified for that event or heat, even though the team may have followed the letter of the rules as written.

## **STARTING DIAGONAL**

(See Game Circle Diagram) Events that are run around the circle will be started with the player outside the circle and behind the starting diagonal for his/her team color. All running events are run in a counterclockwise direction.

## **STARTING SIGNAL**

When each team is ready, the judge on that line signals the circle director. When all judges in a circle have indicated their teams are ready, the circle director signals the Official Starter. When all circle directors have signaled, the Official Starter will start the event.

## **TEAM LINES**

(See Game Circle Diagram) Red, blue, green, and yellow lines forming a square outside the circle give team boundaries. Team members not participating in an event must stay seated behind these lines.

## **TEAM ZONE**

The triangle within the square bounded by the team line and the two diagonal lines forms the team zone.

## **TIE GAME (EVENT)**

When two teams, in the opinion of the circle director, gain possession of the center pin or center beanbag at the same instant, a tie is declared. Available points are divided equally between the tied teams. If it is a tie for first place in a game having second place, first- and second-place points are added together and split, eliminating second place. If it is a tie for second place, second-place points are split. Should this result in a half-point, the half-point is set aside until the end of all events and is used to break a final tie.

## **TIE SCORE**

When two or more teams are tied at the end of the last event, the tie may be resolved by playing one heat of the Sparky Balloon Pop – coaches choose a girl to pop the balloon.

## **WINNER OF AN EVENT**

The circle director declares the winner(s) of each event. (He may consult with the judges to determine the winner.) Players should hold the center pin or center beanbag until the circle director indicates which teams have won. If the player holding the center pin has been disqualified, the player with possession of the center beanbag will receive first-place points. If the circle director can determine the third-place player, that player will be awarded second-place points. If the player with the center beanbag is disqualified, the circle director will award second place to the third-place player. Where it is not possible for the circle director to determine the winner, he may call for a rerun.

# GAME EVENTS

## EVENT 1—SPARKY CRAWL

Entire team plays - two heats

1st place - four points

2nd place - two points

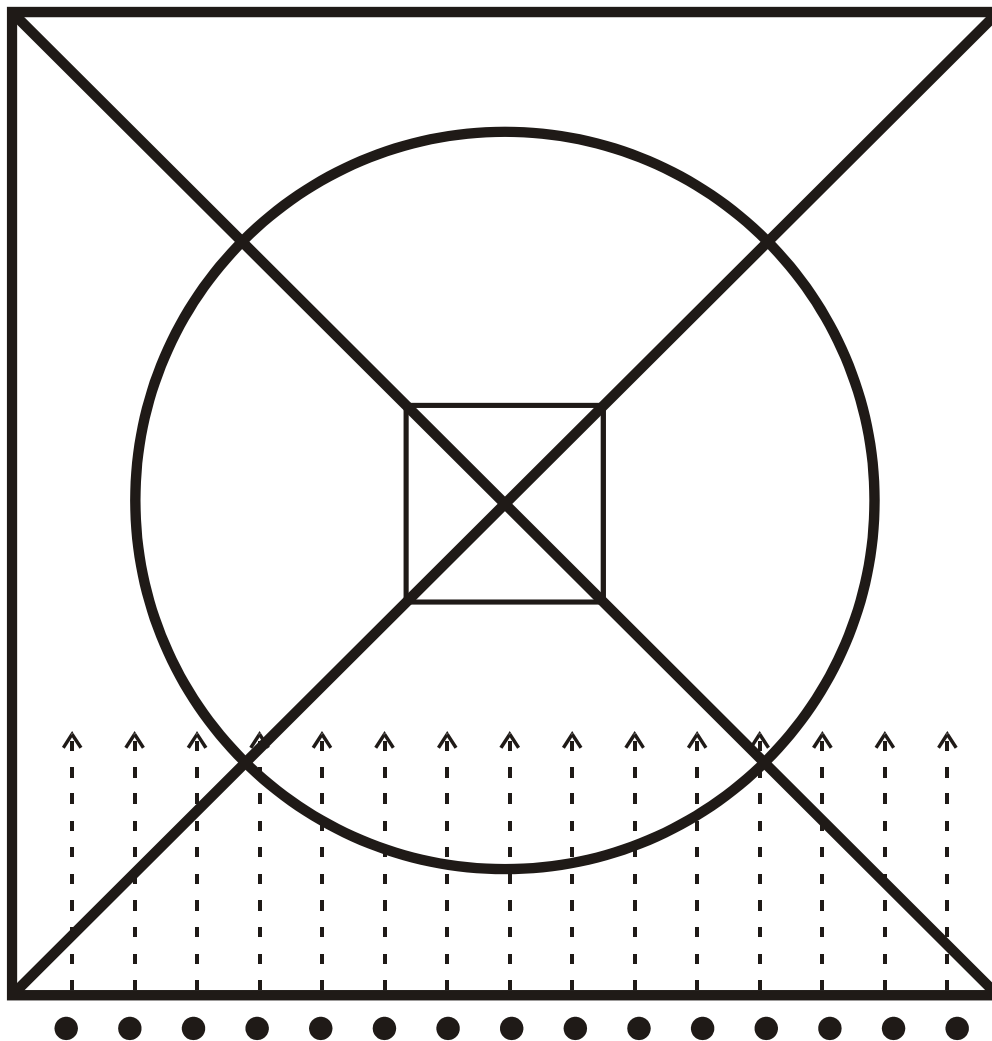
**Equipment:** center pin and beanbag

Players spread out along the entire line on their hands and knees behind team color lines. One coach from each team crosses to the opposite color line. At signal, all teams crawl on hands and knees across to opposite team line. When center of circle is clear of players, circle director places center pin and beanbag in position side-by-side in center of circle. As soon as entire team has completely crossed the team line opposite its starting line, the team coach sends a player into the center for pin or beanbag.

Game will be played a second time with players crawling back to their original team line.

It is recommended that churches provide kneepads or coverings for the Sparky Crawl. Rigid plastic knee protectors will not be permitted as they may damage gym floors.

## Sparky Crawl Diagram



## EVENT 2—SPARKY SAFARI

Six players (one lap each) - two heats

1st heat - three girls

2nd heat - three boys

1st place - four points

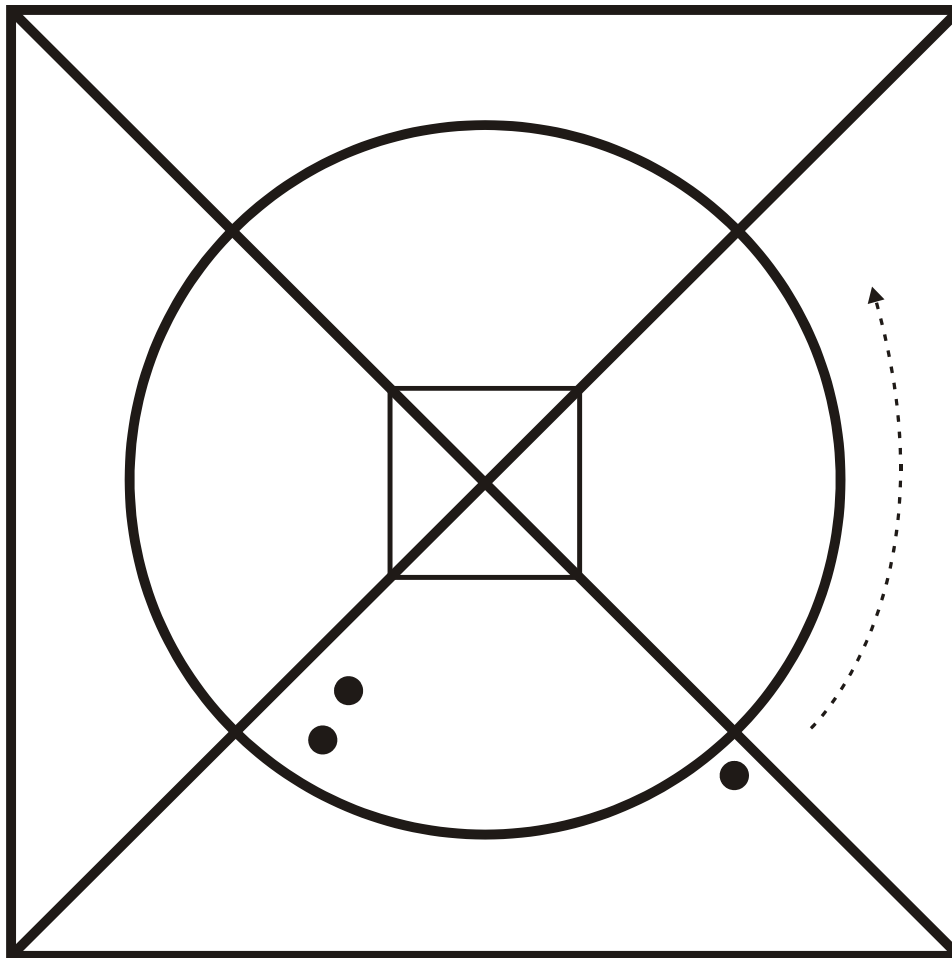
2nd place - two points

**Equipment:** Four circle pins, four beanbags, center pin and beanbag

First player is positioned at starting pin. The other two runners wait inside the circle within their team zone. Beanbag is placed on first player's head. At signal, player #1 runs around circle and passes beanbag to player #2, who places beanbag on his/her head and runs around circle. Player #2 passes beanbag to #3 who runs around circle, around player's starting pin, and into center for pin or beanbag. Player #3 must have beanbag on head until he/she crosses the circle line for the approach to the center pin. If bag falls off while player is running around circle, player may not touch bag with hands until it hits the floor. Player must then **stop** and place bag back on the head **before** continuing. While moving, player may not touch bag with his/her hands. Beanbag must be passed (handed off, not thrown) and placed on the next player's head within passing zone. After passing beanbag, player returns to team line.

Hairstyles and accessories should not be used to enhance winning.

### Sparky Safari Diagram



### EVENT 3—BALLOON BATTLE

Entire Team - three heats

Five players (girls and/or boys) per heat

1st place (lowest number of units) - six points

2nd place (2nd lowest number of units) - four points

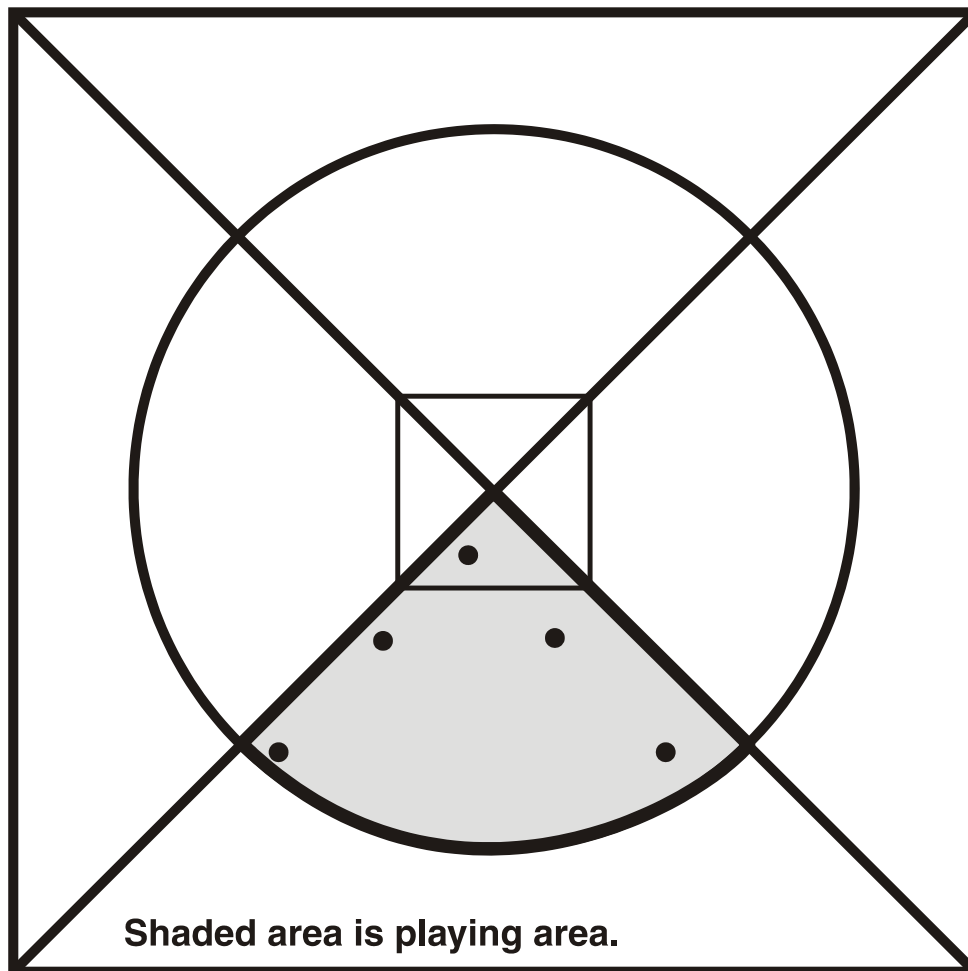
3rd place (3rd lowest number of units) - two points

**Equipment:** two nine-inch balloons, two sixty-foot lengths of lightweight rope

One coach from each team holds rope stretched from corner to corner, making visible boundaries to help players stay within their triangles. (Balloons do not have to go over the rope.)

Players stand anywhere within their own playing area. Circle director holds balloons and stands in center of circle. At signal, balloons are tossed into air. Players bat balloons with their hands to keep them from touching the floor in their area. Players may not hold balloons or step out of their area. When a balloon touches floor within a team's playing area, that team receives one unit. The line judge will then restart the balloon in the center. There is a **60-second** time limit for each heat. Circle director starts new heat in center of circle. If a balloon lands outside of playing areas, circle director or line judge restarts play from center of circle until time runs out. All players must participate in at least one heat.

### Balloon Battle Diagram



## EVENT 4—RABBIT HUNT

10 players - four heats

1st place - six points

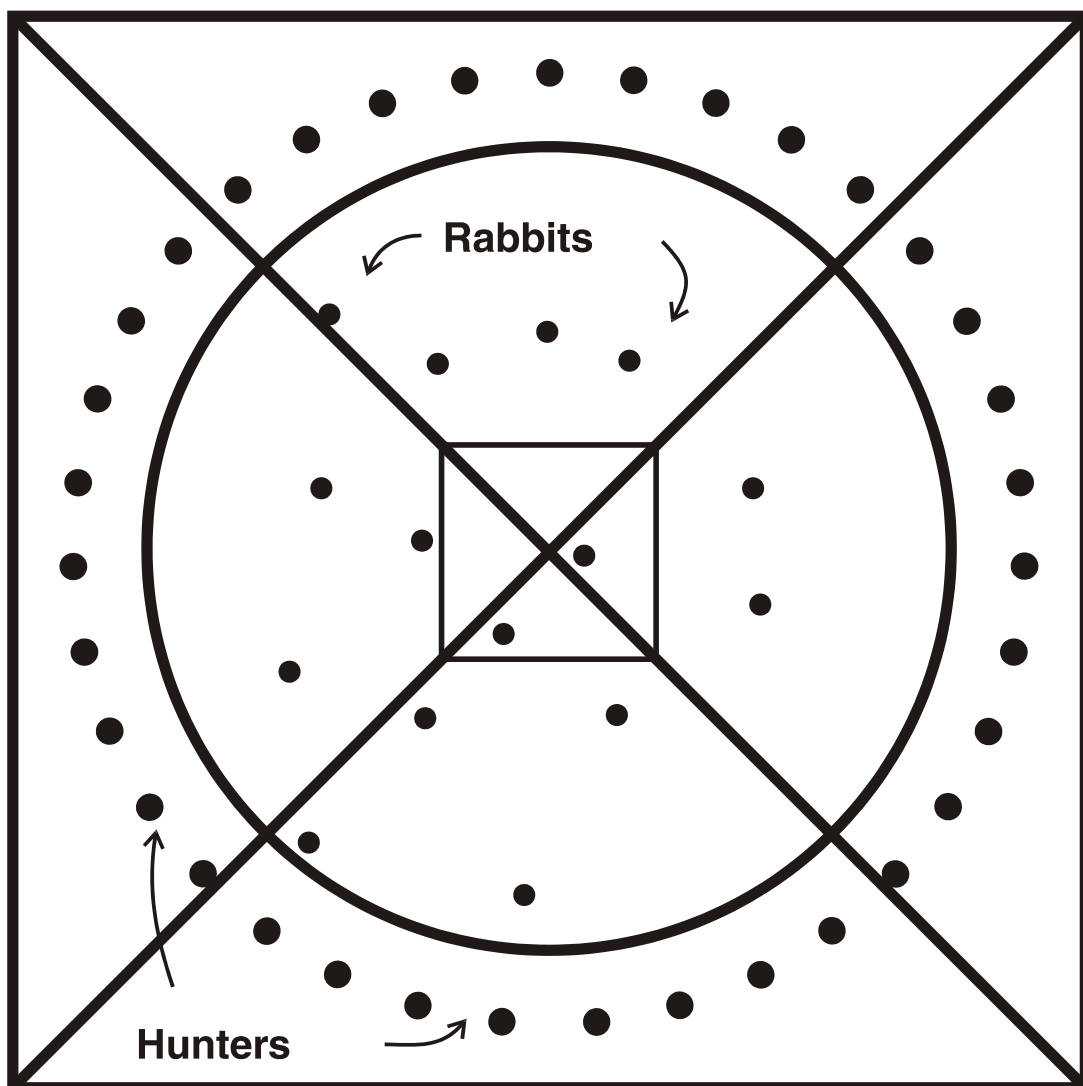
2nd place - four points

3rd place - two points

**Equipment:** two sport balls

One team (rabbits) stands anywhere within the circle. The three other teams (hunters) position themselves evenly anywhere around the circle. At signal, hunters toss balls, trying to hit rabbits. When hit, rabbits leave circle, returning to their team line. Rabbits are disqualified if they step outside circle before being hit. Hunters may not step inside circle while tossing ball. Action stops after **30 seconds**; rabbits still in circle are counted. Play is repeated until all teams have had a turn to be rabbits. Team with the most rabbits left in the circle wins.

### Diagram 5



## EVENT 5—SPARKY TRAIN

10 players (one lap each) - two heats

1st heat - five girls

2nd heat - five boys

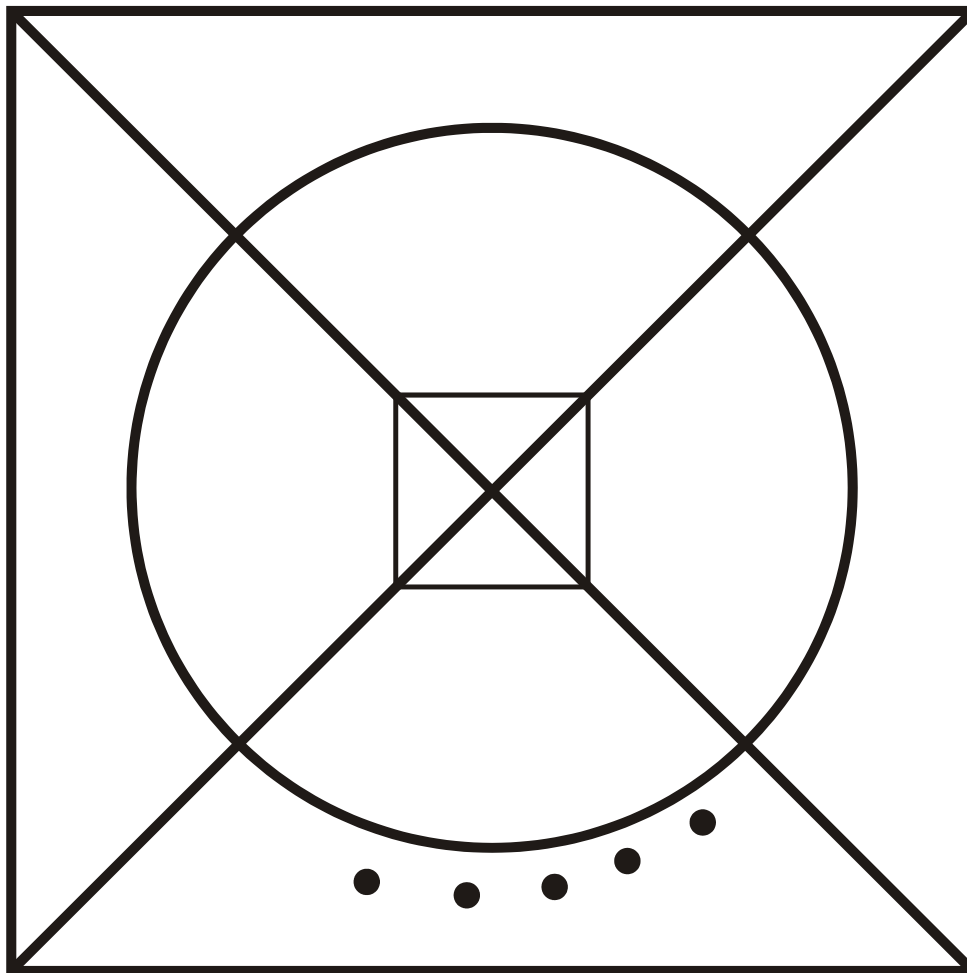
1st place - four points

2nd place - two points

**Equipment:** Four circle pins, center pin and beanbag

Players line up behind one another outside their circle line, as pictured on diagram. Using both hands, each player grasps the waist of player in front of him/her to form a train. (If you prefer, you may have the players all hold onto a "swimming noodle" which you must supply.) At signal, train runs around circle. If train becomes disconnected (player loses hold of another player), train must stop, rejoin itself, and then continue. When all five players cross the starting line, the last player separates from the train and runs into the center for center pin or beanbag.

### Sparky Train Diagram



## EVENT 6—SPARKY BEANBAG – IN AND OUT

10 players - two heats

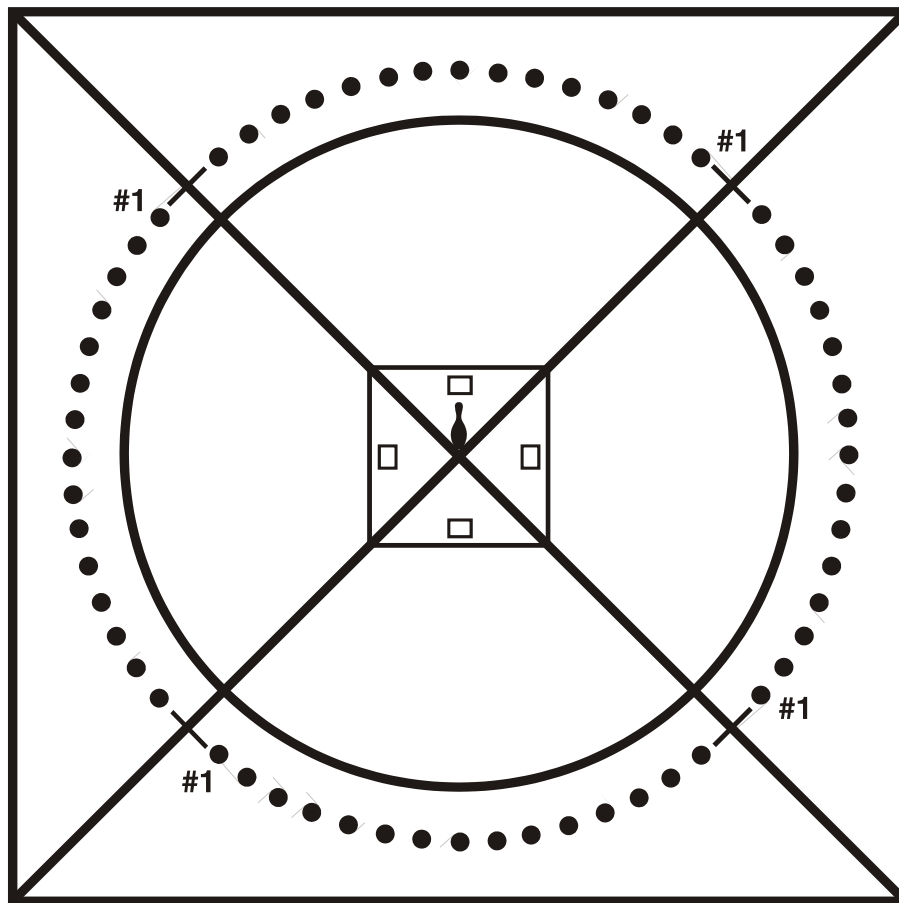
1st place - four points

2nd place - two points

**Equipment:** Four small containers, four beanbags, four circle pins, center pin and beanbag

Players line up on their team's circle line. Container is set in team's small triangle, and the beanbag is placed in the bucket. At signal, player #1 runs to container and retrieves the beanbag from the container, returns to team line hands it off to player #2. Player #2 returns the beanbag to the container, returns to the line and tags player #3. Play continues in this manner until player # 10 drops the beanbag in the bucket and continues on to get the center pin or beanbag. Players may not proceed into the circle before being tagged or given the beanbag. All players must compete in at least one heat.

### Sparky Beanbag — In and Out Diagram



**EVENT 7—SPARKY BALLOON POP**

10 players - two heats

1st heat - player #10 is a girl

2nd heat - player #10 is a boy

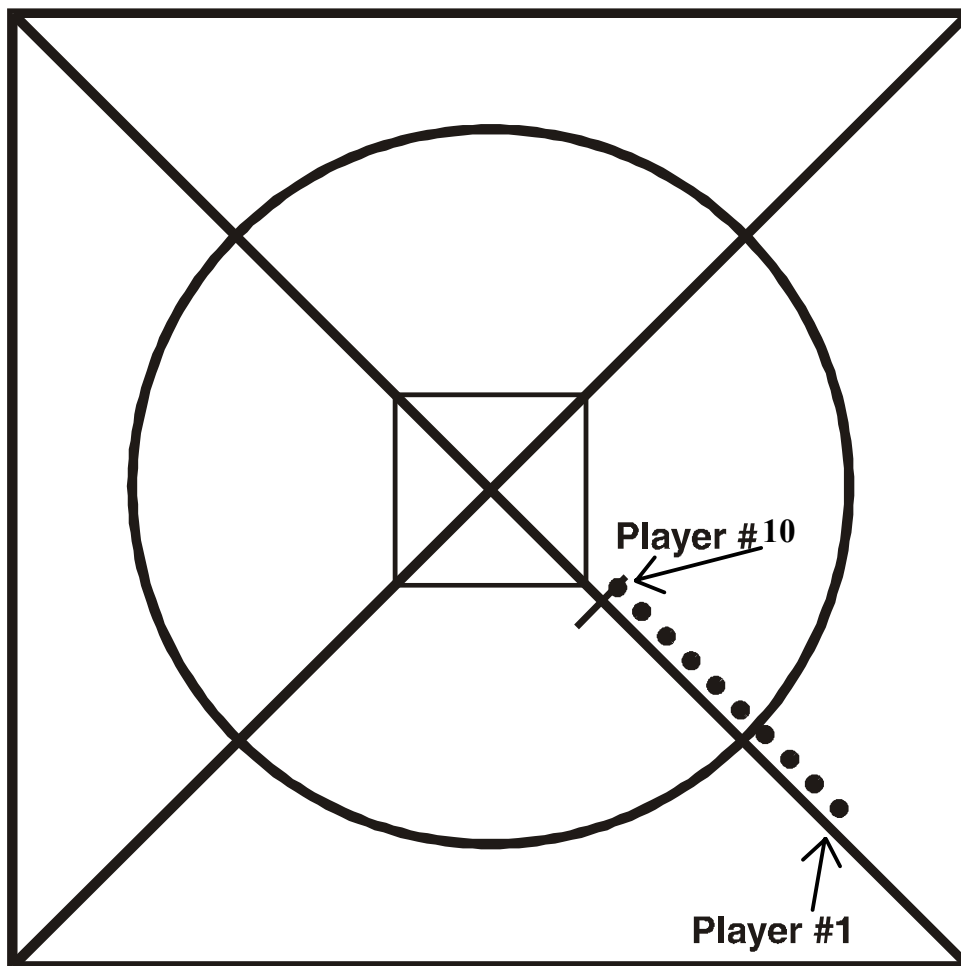
1st place - four points

2nd place - two points

**Equipment:** Four nine-inch balloons per heat

All team players straddle their team diagonal line with their backs toward center of circle, as close together as they wish. Player #10 (last in line) stands on the eight-foot hash mark. Player #1 holds balloon on back of his/her head. At signal, the balloon is passed through the legs of the first 9 players to the 10th player. It is not necessary that each player touch the balloon. When last player in line has possession of balloon, he/she runs into his/her team's inner triangle, places balloon on the floor, and sits on balloon until it breaks. First player to break balloon within his/her triangle wins. If balloon breaks before it gets to player #10 the line judge may insert another balloon if it is available.

**Sparky Balloon Pop Diagram**



### Official Awana Sparks-A-Rama Circle

The Sparks-A-Rama Circle is 30 feet in diameter surrounded by a 37-40 foot square. Each team is designated by a color and occupies a quarter-circle or one side of that square.

#### Key to diagram:

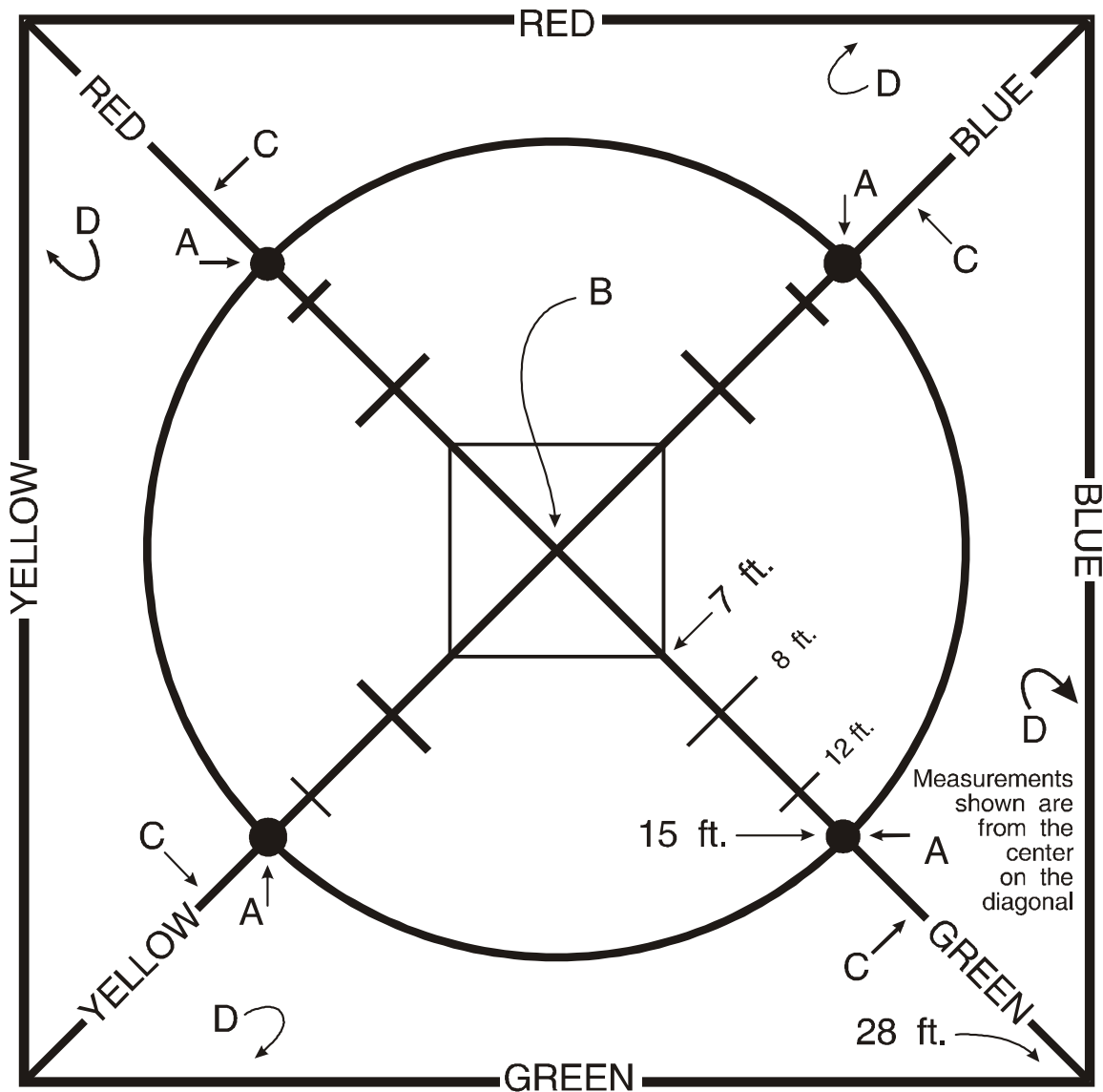
A—Circle Pins

B—Center Pin; Center Beanbag

C—Diagonal or Starting Line

D—Team Lines or AwanaGames Square

Starting position of player(s) is indicated with the rules for each event. Make sure your team is familiar with the Awana Circle.



<b>Event</b>	<b>Scoring</b>
<p><i>SPARKY CRAWL</i>  <b>Entire team plays - two heats</b></p>	<p><b>1st place - four points</b>  <b>2nd place - two points</b></p>
<p><i>SPARKY SAFARI</i>  <b>Six Players – Two heats</b>  <b>1<sup>st</sup> heat – three girls</b>  <b>2<sup>nd</sup> heat – three boys</b></p>	<p><b>1st place - four points</b>  <b>2nd place - two points</b></p>
<p><i>BALLOON BATTLE</i>  <b>Entire Team - three heats</b>  <b>Five players (girls and/or boys) per heat</b></p>	<p><b>1st place (lowest number of units) - six points</b>  <b>2nd place (2nd lowest number of units) - four points</b>  <b>3rd place (3rd lowest number of units) - two points</b></p>
<p><i>RABBIT HUNT</i>  <b>10 players - four heats</b>  <b>(Entire team plays when opposing teams are in the center)</b></p>	<p><b>1st place - six points</b>  <b>2nd place - four points</b>  <b>3rd place - two points</b></p>
<p><i>SPARKY TRAIN</i>  <b>10 players (one lap each) - two heats</b>  <b>1st heat - five girls</b>  <b>2nd heat - five boys</b></p>	<p><b>1st place - four points</b>  <b>2nd place - two points</b></p>
<p><i>SPARKY BEANBAG – IN AND OUT</i>  <b>10 players - two heats</b>  <b>(Every player must play in at least one heat)</b></p>	<p><b>1st place - four points</b>  <b>2nd place - two points</b></p>
<p><i>SPARKY BALLOON POP</i>  <b>10 players - two heats</b>  <b>1st heat - player #10 is a girl</b>  <b>2nd heat - player #10 is a boy</b>  <b>(Every player must play in at least one heat)</b></p>	<p><b>1st place - four points</b>  <b>2nd place - two points</b></p>