

My Favorite Tag Games presented by Chris Cavert

Tag Games: Basic Principles (generally) – Larger boundaries, faster movement; Smaller boundaries, slower movement; Longer games lead to less interest; Shorter games lead to more interest – “let’s play that again!” Tag with a soft tossable – not throwing; tag with a noodle; tag with a light touch! Leading energy determines the level of game success – players match the energy you put into the game. Have fun! Why not?

Everybody’s It – Basically, everyone is IT in this game. Start with boundaries large enough so each player has about 8 square feet of space. When you say “GO” players try to tag other players – if a player is tagged he or she kneels down on one knee. Tags can be on any part of the body below the shoulders (you can limit the tag areas like “just the arms” to make the game last a bit longer) – appropriate areas may need to be clarified. Players kneeling down may also continue to tag other players still moving around. However, if a kneeling player touches the ground with his or her hand (i.e., falls over), he or she can no longer tag standing players. Games go pretty fast until the last four or five players. At this point call “showdown” which means the players who are still standing can no longer move backwards – they can move sideways and forward. Let the showdown play for about 20 seconds, give a five second countdown to call the game over – the last players standing win the round. Start up another game if the energy is there. (Plays well with 20 or more.)

Step Tag – Start this tag game the same way you start Everybody’s – be sure players cannot simply reach out to tag someone from their starting points. In this game you will be telling the players when they can move by saying “Step!” When you say “Step” each player can move one step in any direction – this means one foot is stationary and the other foot moves. Players are trying to tag other players frozen – this means that when a player is tagged anywhere below the shoulders he or she can no longer move his or her feet. However, any tagged player can still play the game by tagging anyone who moves near enough to be tagged. Also, if a player moves more than one foot during a “step” he or she can no longer move. So, until a player is tagged he or she can move one step every time you, the facilitator, say “Step!” Once tagged feet are stuck to the ground but hands can still tag. When there is only two or three players left call a “Showdown!” The remaining players are no longer allowed to step backwards. When tags are a tie both players are frozen. No, a player does not need to step when you say “Step!” Games are short. Rematches are often requested.

Toilet Flush Tag – You can play this one like Everybody’s It or choose a couple of players to be it – be creative. When a player is tagged he or she needs to kneel down on his or her right knee with the left leg up forming a place to sit. The tagged player will also put up his or her right arm parallel to the ground forming the toilet flushing handle. Toilet sculpted players can get back into the game if another player sits on the left leg of a frozen player and pushes down the player’s right arm flushing the toilet – yes, there must be a flushing sound. Once flushed the frozen player can return to the game – of course not being allowed to tag the flushing player right away. You can add a couple noodles giving one to each of the two Its. When an It tags someone he or she turns into a flushable toilet to be flushed by other players. Play two-minute rounds switching taggers after each round.

Transformer Tag – Have half of the players put one hand on their head, have the other half put one hand on their hip. Players tag those players who are opposite of them turning them into their opposite. For example, if I have my hand on my hip I’m going after those players with their hand on their head. When I tag a player, anywhere below the shoulders, with a hand on his or her head, with my hand that is not on my hip, he or she then places his or her hand on his or her hip. This new hip-handed player now goes after tagging head-handed players, unless of course in the process he or she gets tagged back to a head-handed player who then will go after hip-handed players. Play can sometimes end up with everyone being on the same team with no one to tag – so, who wins? If it doesn’t get to this point in three minutes, stop for a break, change teams and start another round or a new game.

Eye Contact Partner Tag – Pair up players – it is important to pair up players of approximately the same height. In this game the only person a player will be tagging is his or her partner. To make a tag the It player must make eye contact with his or her partner. Rules of FUN: Eyes must stay open (accept for the occasional blink); players must be looking into other player’s eyes during the game (or at least trying to); players may not look into the same person’s eyes for more than two seconds. When a tag is made (eye contact with a partner) the new It must spin around (carefully) three times before going off to find his or her partner for the tag back. Boundaries do not have to be very big, play can stay fun for about three minutes. If possible, and desirable, change up players (same height) and play another game.