TEACHING GAME STRUCTURES WITH TAG (GRADES 3–5)

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Teach Game Structures Through Child-Designed Games

What are GAME STRUCTURES?

- Game structures include boundaries, rules, consequences for breaking rules, scoring goals, scoring systems, and/or a competitive/cooperative structure.

Why use GAME STRUCTURES with students?

- Provides more meaning when they design their own game and allows them to solve their own problems with the game structure.

Teaching Considerations for Helping Children Design Games

Rovegno & Bandhauer’s (2013) 3 C’s:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLARIFICATION</th>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>CRITIQUE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide possible options, rules to consider when needed.</td>
<td>Provide criteria for good/bad decisions</td>
<td>Monitor students’ decisions and provide critique of the decisions when needed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The “PLAY-DISCUSS-PLAY” Cycle

**PLAY...**
the game for 2-3 min.

**DISCUSS...**
again

**DISCUSS...**
the game; and make modifications with game structures as needed. Also, allow time to discuss tactics.

**PLAY...**
again!

Tactics

- All games, even simple tag games, have tactics.
- When teachers teach game structures, they simultaneously teach the basic tactics of those games.
- First work on getting good games, then teach tactics.

What Makes a Good Game, and When Is It Working?

- There is balance between offense and defense.
- Time spent playing on offense and defense is roughly equal.
- All children within a group understand and agree on the rules and scoring system.
- The game has flow.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Game Structure</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Examples and Suggestions</th>
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</table>
| Players, skills, and equipment       | • Games have different numbers of players on a team.  
• Games have different equipment and skills.  
• Equipment and skills affect the type of game you design and the tactics.                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Perfect-sized boundaries              | • Boundaries that are too small favor the defense.  
• Boundaries that are too large favor the offense.  
• Design perfect-sized boundaries that provide equal, fair opportunities for both offense and defense.                                             |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Rules                                | • Rules make games fun and fair.  
• Respect for rules is imperative because ignoring rules ruins games.                                                                                                                                 | • You need rules to prevent body contact.  
• Create rules for using equipment safely (e.g., rules to prevent swinging hockey sticks high or throwing balls near opponents’ faces).               |
|                                      | • Rules are needed for safety.                                                                                                                                                                              | • Change or modify your rules if your game is not fair.  
• Take care to change rules at fair times (e.g., don’t stop the game to change a rule just before the other team is about to score).         |
|                                      | • Rules can be (and are often) changed to make games better. (This is true of sports, too.)                                                                                                               | • If you don’t all agree, use a majority vote to change the rule.                                                                                                                                         |
|                                      | • Make rules for the following elements:  
  • Boundaries  
  • Scoring  
  • Violations that ruin the game  
  • Violations for actions that are not part of the task given by the teacher                                                                 | For example, if the teacher says make up a game using only passing and catching, you need a rule against running with the ball.                           |
|                                      | • Make rules for when and how teams change possession of the ball (e.g., when the ball is intercepted, stolen, dropped, or goes out of bounds) and rules about free balls (e.g., when someone misses a pass) that ensure both teams get equal opportunities to play offense and defense. | Base change of possession rules on your ability to switch from offense to defense quickly. If you can do this quickly, your change of possession can be immediate and on the spot of, for example, the interception. If you are just learning gameplay and need time to switch from offense to defense (or the reverse), devise a system that gives you more time, such as stopping play and taking possession at the midline or stopping play and taking possession on the nearest sideline. |
|                                      | • Some games need rules for special situations:  
  • Bases  
  • A no-play zone  
  • A no-standing-still zone                                                                                                                                                                         | For example, tag games using bases need rules to limit the runner’s time on base or the number of players who can be on a base. Some games need rules for having a no-play zone around a base or goal to prevent the offense or defense from having too much of an advantage (e.g., to prevent the defense from bunching up and completely covering the goal area). Some games need rules for having a no-standing-still zone to prevent the offense from planting themselves in front of the goal. |
| Consequences for breaking rules      | • When you break a rule, there are consequences that give the advantage to the opponents.                                                                                                               | Consequences commonly used in invasion games:  
• Giving the ball to the opposing team  
• Awarding points  
• Losing tries  
• Moving a player to a position that gives the opponent an advantage  
• Awarding penalty shots or plays |
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<td>Scoring goals and scoring systems</td>
<td><strong>Invasion games have scoring goals.</strong></td>
<td>For example, basketball hoops and goal cages may be used.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | **You can design different types of scoring goals.** | **Passing to a teammate over the endline (as in football)**
| | | **Shooting a ball into a basketball hoop or target on the wall**
| | | **Shooting a ball into a wide goal on the ground (e.g., cones, portable small soccer goals)**
| | | **Knocking a pin down**
| | | **Passing to a teammate who cuts into one or more hoops behind the endline**
| | | **Dribbling with the feet and balancing the ball on one of several saucer cones over the endline**
| | **The type and number of goals influence the tactics of the game.** | For example, if you have two hoops in which you can pass to a teammate to score, this gives you more options on offense and the defense needs to figure out how to defend two goals. |
| | **Goals need to be the perfect size for your game and the number of players.** | Very large goals make it too easy to score, and very small goals make it too hard to score. However, small goals allow you to play a good game without a goalkeeper. |
| | **Games can assign different numbers of points to different scoring actions.** | For example, in archery you score more points if you shoot the arrow in the center of the target. You need to decide the point system for your game (e.g., 1 point for passing the ball to a teammate over the endline, 5 points for kicking it into the goal, 1 point for intercepting a pass). |
| Competition and cooperation | **Invasion games have a competitive structure, in that the goal is to outwit and outplay your opponent and score points in some way (even if you do not keep track of the score).** | When you work with teammates, you are cooperating. When you play against another team, you are competing. Cooperative games, such as trying to kick passes with a partner as many times in a row without missing, can also have competitive aspects. You can try to beat your own best score or you can try to beat the score of other individuals or pairs. |
| | **Invasion games have both competitive and cooperative aspects.** |  |
| | **You can decide to play a competitive game while keeping score, a competitive game and not keep score, a cooperative game while trying to beat your own record, or a cooperative game and not keep score.** |  |
**Table 19.2 Level 3 Tactics for Tag Games**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tactics to Teach First</th>
<th>Tactics to Teach Second</th>
<th>Tactics to Teach Third</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protect the Flag</strong></td>
<td><strong>Use Boundaries Tactically</strong></td>
<td><strong>Offensive Support: Blockers, Picks, and Decoys</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You can protect your flag by turning your body, doing jump spins, and keeping the flag between the boundary and your body.</td>
<td>• Boundaries work like a defender by denying space constraining the offense. Defenders try to force the offense into the corner by running at them and constraining space, cutting off their likely avenue of escape, and shifting if the offense shifts.</td>
<td>• Run behind a blocker to avoid being tagged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avoid Defenders</strong></td>
<td>• Offensive players try to stay away from the boundaries, especially the corners, to avoid defenders trapping them.</td>
<td>• If you lose your flag, you can block for teammates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To avoid taggers, run on different pathways, changing directions quickly, changing speeds, running fast, and using body feints.</td>
<td>• Especially stay away from the boundaries when you have both flags because if the defense traps you, you will lose both flags.</td>
<td>• Sometimes you need to help players who are trapped or who have lost their flags by trying to steal the flag from those players trapping your teammate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use Bases Tactically</strong></td>
<td>• When on offense, if you are about to be tagged and can’t score, going to a base (safety zone) is the next best option.</td>
<td>• In tag, decoys and sacrifices can enable some runners to score.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When on offense, you must guard both the base and the scoring zone.</td>
<td>• When on defense, you must guard both the base and the scoring zone.</td>
<td>• Run by a teammate who “blocks” your defender so your defender must stop and run around the block. We call this a pick in basketball.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Defensive Tactics for a Person-to-Person Defense</strong></td>
<td>• In person-to-person defense, each defender guards one person on the other team (1v1).</td>
<td><strong>Offensive Tactics for Beating a Person-to-Person (1v1) Defense</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Select the person whom you will guard ahead of time based on matching abilities.</td>
<td>• To beat a 1v1 defense, use picks and blockers.</td>
<td>(We typically do not teach a zone defense at the elementary level unless children try to do a zone defense in their tag games. If they do so, we help them if necessary.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tag (pull the flag) by watching the runner, anticipating his or her direction, and watching eye and body movements.</td>
<td>• Two offensive players crossing pathways can counteract a 1v1 defense by confusing the defense and forcing them to take time to shift positions around each other or to shift the players they are defending.</td>
<td>• To beat a 1v1 defense, use picks and blockers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Stay with the person you are guarding until he or she loses the flags, unless your team needs you to double-team someone.</td>
<td>• Two offensive players crossing pathways can counteract a 1v1 defense by confusing the defense and forcing them to take time to shift positions around each other or to shift the players they are defending.</td>
<td>• Try to cut off the angle on which the offense will run to score.</td>
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<td>• Avoid “doggie chases the tail” (running behind the runner in a circle and never changing your pathway). Doggie chases the tail will not result in pulled flags.</td>
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<td><strong>Defensive Support: Double-Teaming, Covering for Other Defenders</strong></td>
<td>• “Double-teaming” involves two teammates working together to stop one offensive player. Two defenders are better for trapping an offensive player because they deny more space in which the offensive player can escape.</td>
<td><strong>Defensive Support: Blockers, Picks, and Decoys</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• If a teammate gets beat and his or her opponent is about to score, go off your opponent and try to stop the person about to score.</td>
<td>• If you get beat, run back and help a teammate.</td>
<td>• Run behind a blocker to avoid being tagged.</td>
</tr>
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<td>• If you lose your flag, you can block for teammates.</td>
<td>• Sometimes you need to help players who are trapped or who have lost their flags by trying to steal the flag from those players trapping your teammate.</td>
<td>• In tag, decoys and sacrifices can enable some runners to score.</td>
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| • Run by a teammate who “blocks” your defender so your defender must stop and run around the block. We call this a pick in basketball. | • In tag, decoys and sacrifices can enable some runners to score. | • Run by a teammate who “blocks” your defender so your defender must stop and run around the block. We call this a pick in basketball.
### Game Progressions with Tag

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designing perfect boundaries</th>
<th>Teach 1st</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Designing rules &amp; consequences for breaking rules</td>
<td>Protecting your flag</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting scoring goals and scoring systems</td>
<td>Avoiding defenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using bases in tag-type games</td>
<td>Teach 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal-oriented tag-type games</td>
<td>Teach 3rd</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Teaching 1st: Protecting your flag
- Teaching 2nd: Using boundaries tactically, Using bases tactically
- Teaching 3rd: Offensive support: blockers, picks, and decoys, Offensive tactics for beating a person-to-person defense, Defensive support: double-teaming, covering for other defenders

Unit Plan: Tag_Segment 1: Perfect Boundaries

Motor & Cognitive Knowledge:

Game Structures:

1. Boundaries of the wrong size can be a reason a game is not working; boundaries that are too large favor the runners (offense); and boundaries that are too small favor the taggers (defense).
2. For a game to work, it has to provide reasonably even opportunities for defense and offense. If the offense gets out immediately or if the defense rarely thwarts the offense, the game has no suspense and no excitement, and is not at the appropriate level of challenge to foster learning for both teams.

Game Tactics:

3. To fake out and dodge taggers by running on different pathways, changing directions quickly, changing speeds, running fast, and using body feints.
4. To protect your flag by turning your body, doing jump spins, and keeping the flag between the boundary and your body.
5. To look at the tagger and select a pathway away from the tagger’s intended direction.
6. To tag runners by watching and anticipating their pathway.
7. To avoid the boundary on offense and to use the boundary to trap and corner a runner on defense.

Thinking Skills:

8. To identify and solve problems with game structures.

Social Skills:

9. To listen to everyone’s suggestions and respond respectfully to their opinions.

Observation Plan:

1. In the first task, watch to see if students get tired, bored, or frustrated...when done switch taggers.
2. Watch to see if all students are chased or if some stand and watch...when done, intervene and find out why, and have students refocus on solving the problem.
3. Assess if the games are working well with perfect-sized boundaries.
### Instructional Plan:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Task</th>
<th>Content Development</th>
<th>Organizational Considerations</th>
<th>Learning Cues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| I            | **Identifying problems with boundaries that are too large:**

Today, you are going to be playing tag and learning how to:

- identify problems in games,
- solve these problems,
- design your own tag games.

I am going to put you in groups of 4. Each person needs to get a flag belt with two connecting flags. I want you to decide on an order for each of you to be a tagger, find a large space on the field, and then play tag. I will call out when to switch taggers. **This game is designed not to work well, thereby allowing students to experience the problems with boundaries that are too big. Without boundaries, the defense (tagger) will have a very difficult time catching the offense (runners).**

After all students have been taggers, have a problem-identification and problem-solving discussion.

Stop, come in, and stand in front of me. I saw many problems with this game. That’s okay—the games were supposed to have problems. Our goal today is to learn how to identify and then solve problems in games.

1. What are the problems with this game? (Can’t catch anyone. I get tired of chasing them, no one is nearby to chase.)
2. What could you add to give the tagger a better chance to tag the runners? (Boundaries)
3. Do you think it is a fair game if you have to chase someone you can never catch (no)?

| Th           | **Identifying Problems with Boundaries That Are Too Small**

Great answer. Pick up 3 cones each (12 total for group of 4) to form boundaries. As a group, you will now experiment with boundaries of different sizes to see what effect this has on the game. You just played with a boundary so big that it reached across the state border! Now set a boundary that is too small and play several rounds.

Stop. Who had an easier time with small boundaries—the tagger or the runners? Who had an easier time when you played with a huge boundary? What would be a perfect boundary? (one that gives an equal chance to both the runners and tagger).

| E            | **Identifying Problems with Boundaries That Are Too Small**

Great answer. Pick up 3 cones each (12 total for group of 4) to form boundaries. As a group, you will now experiment with boundaries of different sizes to see what effect this has on the game. You just played with a boundary so big that it reached across the state border! Now set a boundary that is too small and play several rounds.

Stop. Who had an easier time with small boundaries—the tagger or the runners? Who had an easier time when you played with a huge boundary? What would be a perfect boundary? (one that gives an equal chance to both the runners and tagger).

| Th           | **Identifying Problems with Boundaries That Are Too Small**

Now design a perfect boundary for your group and play several rounds of tag. I will call out when to rotate taggers.

Stop. Summarize what you learned about the size of boundaries. **(Boundaries of wrong size can be a reason a game is not working; boundaries that are too large favor runners/offense while boundaries too small favor taggers/defense).** For a game to be fair, fun, and exciting, it has to have equal opportunities for defense and offense. Avoid the tagger.

| E            | **Identifying Problems with Boundaries That Are Too Small**

Now design a perfect boundary for your group and play several rounds of tag. I will call out when to rotate taggers.

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<th>E</th>
<th>Identifying and Solving Tactical Problems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Play again, and pay attention to the tactics you use to tag and avoid the tagger tagging you. See what you can learn about tactics by paying attention.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stop. Discuss within your group which tactics you used to keep the tagger from pulling your flag and what you did when you were the tagger.</td>
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<tr>
<td>However before you do that, let's consider the concept of group discussion:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Tell me some behaviors that make group discussions good. <em>(Everyone listens, no one interrupts, on one is bossy, and everyone gets to give an opinion.)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>• What are some behaviors that ruin group discussion? <em>(Making fun of someone’s idea, saying someone’s idea is stupid or bad.)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>So, in your discussion today with your small group, focus on everyone listening and responding respectfully to everyone’s ideas and opinions.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Now we will go around and have each group share one tag tactic. <strong>Look for the following responses to be elicited:</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fake out and dodging by running on different pathways,</td>
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<tr>
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<td>• Protecting your flag by turning your body and doing jump spins,</td>
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<td>• Look at the tagger and select a pathway away from tagger’s intended direction,</td>
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<td>• Tag by watching the runner and anticipating their pathway (look at their waist-level!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discuss with your group which ideas you think you need to improve. Play again and see if you can improve your tactics.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Same groups of 4, use same boundaries as before.</td>
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<td>Have students meet in the middle circle for discussion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perfect boundaries = no adv.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoid the tagger.</td>
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<td>Good Group Discussion Behaviors:</td>
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<td>Poor Group Discussion Behaviors:</td>
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<td>• Making fun of others’ ideas</td>
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<td>• Tag by watching the runner and anticipating their pathway (look at their waist-level!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students still in groups near teacher and middle circle area. Students leave after next lesson segment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social**

**Th**

**R/Social**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Th</td>
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<tr>
<td>CE</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th</td>
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</table>

- **E** = Early Morning
- **Th** = Throwing
- **CE** = Cooperative Exercise
- **R** = Resting
Tag Unit: Segment 1 (Perfect Boundaries) Reflection

1. Based on your experience today with this unit segment of Tag, describe aspects of this lesson that were similar or different from how you remember being taught in K-5 physical education. Provide an example if you can.

2. Imagine that this lesson is going to be taught to a class of 3rd graders...what aspects, related to the structure of the lesson (not the actual lesson content), do you think students will like? Dislike? Explain why.

3. What teaching skills did you pick up on that are necessary for a Constructivist-type of lesson (like the one taught today) to be effective? Explain why you believe the skills you chose are considered “effective”.

Name _______________________________
Unit Plan: Tag Segment 2: Rules and Consequences for Breaking Rules

Motor & Cognitive Knowledge:

Game Structures:

1. Rules make games fun and fair. Respect for rules is imperative because ignoring rules ruins games.
2. Rules are needed for safety.
3. Rules can be (and are often) changed to make games better.
4. When you break a rule, there are consequences that give the advantage to the opponents.
5. Some consequences are inappropriate in physical education, such as having someone sit out or doing exercises such as jumping jacks and push-ups. Consequences must be sport-like (e.g., get your opponent’s flag, help the defense, lose a tag).

Game Tactics:

1. Blocking: To avoid being tagged, you can run behind a blocker.
2. Sometimes you need to help players who are trapped or who have lost their flags by trying to steal the flag from those players trapping your teammate.
3. “Double-teaming” is using two defenders for trapping an offensive player.
4. In person-to-person defense, each defender guards one person on the other team (1v). Select the person whom you will guard ahead of time based on matching abilities. Stay with the person whom you are guarding until he or she loses the flags, unless you are needed to double-team someone.

Thinking Skills:

1. To identify and solve problems with game rules.

Social Skills:

2. To interpret other children’s actions more accurately and resolve problems when they think someone “cheated.”

Observation Plan:

1. Watch for safety violations.
2. Watch to see if children have equitable participation in the game and discussions.
3. Watch for discussions eliciting negative reactions or feelings.
4. Watch tactics.
| Instructional Plan: |
|---|---|---|
| **Type of Task** | **Content Development** | **Organizational Considerations** | **Learning Cues** |
| I | **Set Induction:**
Today, we will be adding to what we ended with last class. Last class, our focus was to identify the perfect boundaries for a tag game as well as practice tag tactics. Additionally, you worked on being able to work together within your group by demonstrating respect for one another by listening to each others’ ideas without ridiculing one each other. However, there are still plenty to add to designing tag games and that’s where we will continue our discussion today!

**Safety Rules:**
Today, we will be designing tag games again. All games have rules, and if you break those rules there are consequences. The first rules you must make are safety rules. Which safety rules do you think might be important for tag? *(No pushing or shoving, no hitting anyone’s hands, no grabbing clothes and yanking on them).* Okay. Those are great rules for a start. I will put you in groups of 4-6. Quickly design a tag game and try it out. Decide on these following rules:
- What the boundaries will be
- Whether you will play 2v2, 3v1 (or 4v2 or 3v3)
- How many flags each of you will wear
- How you will change taggers

Have students meet in the middle circle for discussion.

Groups of 4 (6 is okay too). for odd numbers. Grouping will be determined by favorite food choices: 1) Apples; 2) Grapes; 3) Bananas
Additional students are spread to other groups.

**Start & Stop Cues:**
Start = Go.
Stop = Stop
Raise arm = Come over to teacher.
You have 10 seconds to sit or kneel on the middle circle area.

Students will spread out and get the equipment which is located on the equipment cart.

Design a game with initial rules established.

Use Tag Tactics from Previous Unit Segment:
- *Fake out and dodging by running on different pathways,*
- *Changing directions quickly,*
- *Changing speeds,*
- *Running fast,*
- *Using body feints,*
- *Protecting your flag by turning your body and doing jump spins,*
- *Look at the tagger and select a pathway away from tagger’s intended direction,*
*Tag by watching the runner and anticipating their pathway (look at their waist-level!)*
**Problem Solving to Avoid Elimination:**
Stop. (Teacher note: *Stop the games relatively quickly*. I saw some problems with your games. Which problems did you see? *I was tagged quickly and then just stood around watching, it was boring.* Right...in physical education, we want everyone to participate all of the time. Can you participate if you are eliminated from the game? *(no).* If you are not playing, can you practice your skills and tactics and improve? *(no).* You all know that PE is the chance for all of you to learn and improve, because we have talked about this concept before. The first problem I want you to fix with your game is elimination.

**Decide:**
- What happens when someone is tagged and when someone loses all of her/his flags. You must figure out a way for that person to continue to play.
- If you will have a scoring system, what it will be, and if you will keep track of the score.

**Play again.** (Teacher note: *Watch to see if the games are working. If you see problems, work with that group; if the problems are widespread, stop the class*).

Stop. These games are working much better. Let’s share ideas about how you solved your problems. What were some of your rules? (see examples below)
- *When you are tagged...*
  - you lose a flag
  - join the chaser/s
  - give the chaser one of your flags
  - you become “it”

**Problem-Solving Rules for Boundaries**
Now focus on rules for boundaries. Which problems did you have with boundaries? *(They were too small/large. It was hard to see. Some people run out of boundary).* Why are some people running out of bounds? *(They couldn’t see the boundary, they forgot, we didn’t make a rule against running out of bounds).* What can you do to fix these problems? *(Change the size of the boundary, add more cones so you can see the boundary better, use more cones or line strips, have a penalty for going out of bounds).* Good ideas, now decide on how to fix your problems and play again.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Th</th>
<th>Have students meet in the middle circle for discussion.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Fix the elimination component of your tag game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th</td>
<td>Avoid being tagged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Have students meet in the middle circle for discussion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Big boundaries = runner adv. |
| Small boundaries = tagger adv. |
| Perfect boundaries = no adv.  |
| Create rules to fix problem of players going out of bounds. |
| Use tag tactics. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Social</strong></th>
<th><strong>Problem-Solving Rules for Fairness</strong></th>
<th><strong>Interpreting “Cheating” Behaviors</strong></th>
<th><strong>Identifying and Solving Tactical Problems</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Stop. Now discuss anything that has happened in your game that didn’t feel fair or anything that might happen in a tag game that you would not consider fair. (Teacher note: Give students time to discuss these issues within their groups.) Without giving names, share with the class some of the ideas you discussed about what doesn’t seem fair. (see examples below)  
  - People bumping into each other  
  - Guarding their flags with their hands  
  - Pushing the tagger’s hands away  
  - Pulling their shirt down over their flag  
  - Rolling on the ground  
  - Holding their flag belt with their hands  
  - People cheating | Try to remember that if you don’t make a rule about something and if you don’t tell everyone in your group about the rule, then it isn’t cheating. Set some rules and consequences for breaking the rules for flag guarding, body contact, and any other action you think isn’t fair. Be sure everyone hears the discussion and knows the rules. Remember, not everyone plays games in a league after school. Maybe you take for granted that everyone knows a certain rule, but, in fact, your teammates and opponents might have never heard of the rule before. Then play again. | Your games are working great. Now I want you to focus on tactics. Start by discussing the tactics you are using to successfully tag and avoid the taggers. Let’s share with the class. (Teacher note: Elicit information about two or three of the following tactics. Select on tactic you think students most need to learn. Have one group demonstrate or set up a demonstration on how to use the tactic and then discuss the tactic, providing explicit information about how it works. Then have the students play again to practice the tactic).  
  - Using a blocker  
  - Blocking for teammates  
  - Helping trapped teammates  
  - Double-teaming  
  - Person-to-person defense | Have students meet in the middle circle for discussion yet have group members sit next to each other for small-group discussion.  
  Set rules for “cheating” behaviors  
  Same groups, working within their own boundary areas.  
  Avoid the taggers. Use tag tactics (not cheating tactics!)  
  Have students meet in the middle circle for discussion.  
  Move to group’s area if necessary or let demo group move to their tag game area while others observe in middle circle area.  
  See tag tactics above. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| E    | **Culminating Activity**  
As a class, we are going to make two lists on the board about what makes games fair and fun, and what ruins games. First, discuss these issues with a partner, and then you can tell the class some of your partner’s ideas.  
(Teacher note: *Give students time to talk with their partners*). Now let's put our ideas together. When I call on you, tell me one thing your partner said about what makes games fair and fun.  
(Teacher note: *Call on students until there are no new ideas*).  
What ruins games?  
(Teacher note: *Continue calling on students that have not been called on before*). | Have students meet near the board for discussion. |
| Cl   | (Teacher note: *Discuss the goals for day and whether or not the students met the goals*).  
- Why are rules needed?  
  (Safety; makes games fun & fair)  
- What does ignoring rules to a game do for others?  
  (Ruins it)  
- When rules are broken, what can be done to help?  
  (have consequences)  
- How does the “blocking” tactic work in tag?  
  (to avoid being tagged, you can run behind a blocker).  
- How can you help a trapped teammate from being tagged?  
  (steal flags from those who are trying to tag your teammate).  
- What is “double-teaming”?  
  (using two defenders for trapping an offensive player)  
- What does person-to-person defense mean?  
  (each defender guards on person on the other team 1v1. It’s important to select the person whom you will guard ahead of time based on matching skills. Stay with that person whom you are guarding until he/she loses their flag/s, unless you are needed to double-team someone).  
- What is the best way to prevent cheating before it ever has the chance to occur?  
  (Agree on rules and modify them if needed until they are perfect for your group!) |
Unit Plan: Tag Segment 3: Rules and Tactics About Bases

Motor & Cognitive Knowledge:

Game Structures:

6. Locating a base near a boundary limits its use by the offense; locating a base in the middle makes it harder for the defense to guard the base.
7. Rules need to be made to limit how long a runner can stay on base, when the runner can return to the base, and how many runners can be on the base.
8. In some games, a zone needs to be added around bases or goals to keep offense or defense from getting too close and having too much of an advantage.

Game Tactics:

(In addition to any previous objectives that have been introduced in this tag unit)

9. Bases or safety zones add options for the offense to outmaneuver the defense, and add responsibilities for the defense to defend the base and chase the runners.
10. Bases in the corner favor the defense; bases in the middle favor the offense.
11. It is better to score, but if you are about to be tagged, going to a base (safety zone) is the next best option.

Thinking Skills:

12. To identify and solve problems with bases.

Social Skills:

13. TO appreciate the excitement while playing a game between equal opponents (Teacher Note: Consider grouping students by ability during games).

Observation Plan:

- Watch to see if the offenses and defenses are balanced.
- Watch for discussion eliciting negative reactions or feelings.
- Watch tactics.
Set Induction (Predicting as Part of Problem-Solving):
Today, we will continue designing tag games yet this time we will focus on incorporating bases. To begin I want you to predict how your tag games will change if you add a base for the runners to be safe. Predict if there will be any problems. (Teacher Note: If students do not predict problems, have them add a base and try the game. Often, students will predict that too many players will get on the base at once and end up staying there too long or simply hover near the base...thus changing the game dynamics...either way, promote the exploration of game ideas to occur!).

Solving Problems to Get the Game Working Well
With your predictions, design a tag game with a base or bases, and devise rules you think might solve anticipated problems. What are the rules that you always must include?

- Taggers/Runners ratio
- Rules for safety
- No body contact other than tagging with hands
- Boundary rules
- Flag guarding
- How to score and if you want to keep track of score
- # of flags
- Consequences for breaking these rules
- Lastly, don’t forget about adding a base or bases (try to anticipate any problems)

Once you have designed your rules and consequences, try out your game.

Did you find any problems with bases?
- Some people stayed on the base the whole time
- Most of their team stayed on the base
- People would jump off an then immediately jump back on
- The defense surrounded the base so you could never get off.

What can you do to solve these problems?
- Make a rule you can be on the base for only 3 seconds
- Make a rule you can go on a base only once during each round
- Make a rule that only one person can be on the base at one time
- If someone gets on the base, you must get off.
- The defense must stay one arm’s length away from the base.

Discuss in your group what rules you want to add about bases, and then play your game again to try the new/revised rules.
### Identifying and Solving Tactical Problems

Stop. Now, in your group, share with each other the tactics you are using that are successful. (Teacher Note: *After 1-2 minutes, share ideas with the class. Try to elicit the following tactics:*

- **On offense, if you are about to be tagged and can’t tag someone on the other**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Stop. I noticed some groups have their base in the middle and some in the corners or near the endline. What difference does it make where you locate your base?</td>
<td>Same groups, working within their own boundary areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Th</td>
<td>• Putting the base in the corner gives the advantage to the taggers</td>
<td>Have students meet in the middle circle for discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Why?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Because it denies the runners space to get away once they get on base and the defense can trap them.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What if you put the base in other locations?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Putting the base in the middle is harder on the defense. Putting the base on the sideline is harder on the offense, but not as hard as putting the base in the corner.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discuss with your group what you might do to improve your game by adding another base or changing the location of your base. You might also want to have different rules for different bases. Then play.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stop. Which problems are you having with your games now?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Once you lose your flag, there isn’t much you can do to help your team.</td>
<td>Same groups, working within their own boundary areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The game is over quickly because we can steal the flags quickly.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Those are problems. Which suggestions do you have to solve the problems?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Once you lose your flag, block for your teammates (without making body contact).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Put captured flags on the base and allow the other team to recapture them.</td>
<td>Have students meet in the middle circle for discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Put captured flags over the endline so the other team can take them back.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In your groups, discuss these suggestions and come up with your own to solve the problems with your games and then play it out to see what happens.</td>
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**Effects of Base Location:**
- **Corner bases** = tagger adv.
- **Middle bases** = runner adv.
- **Sideline bases** = Still difficult for runners, yet not as hard as corner bases.

### Effects of Base Location:

- **Corner bases** = tagger adv.
- **Middle bases** = runner adv.
- **Sideline bases** = Still difficult for runners, yet not as hard as corner bases.
team, going to a base (safety zone) is the next best option.

- On defense, you must both guard the base and try to tag runners.
- You can assign some students to guard the base and some to chase within the boundary area.
- Players with 2 flags can try to entice the defense away from the base.
- Block for your teammates if you don’t have a flag.

Great suggestions! Discuss with your teammates which tactics you need to practice the most, and work on them. Play your game again and see if you can improve your tactics. (Teacher Note: Use play-discuss-cycle, repeat this and the previous task several times if needed until the students have learned the tactics).

Same groups, working within their own boundary areas.

Revise your tactics and improve your gameplay.

**Ways to Extend this Learning Segment Further**

Stop. Let’s summarize what you have learned about tactics and bases. (Teacher Note: Select 1 or 2 of the following questions below that best capture what you think the students learned during the lesson) Play your game again and work on those tactics.

Possible Questions to Ask:

- What would make it harder to get on base? What would make it easier to get on base?
- What would be different if the base were in a different location? What were your team tactics?
- What did you do on defense to deny space to the offense? What did you do to cover space the offense wanted?
- What did you do on offense to create space? How did you get the defenders to move out of position?
- What do you think about when you are off the base and the tagger is starting to go after you? How do you decide which runner to chase as a tagger?
- What are all of the jobs you have to do on defense?
- What might be jobs you could do on offense that would help your team?

Using the play-discuss-play cycle, repeat the task above several times by asking different questions and working on different tactics.

Have students meet in the middle circle for discussion.

Same groups, working within their own boundary areas.

**Culminating Activity Options:**

Teach your game to the class. Plan how to present your game so all group members have a role in the presentation. Then we will try different group’s games.

Have students meet in the middle circle for discussion yet be ready to spread out into small groups and then for game demos.
Tactics
2. The importance of planning team tactics and how to plan a particular tactic related to a particular defense or offense.

Offense:
3. To beat a 1v1 defense by using picks and blockers.
4. Two offensive players crossing pathways can counteract a 1v1 defense by confusing the defenders and forcing them to shift their positions around one another or to change the players they are defending.
5. Decoy and sacrifices can enable some runners to score.

Defense:
6. Defensive tactics to deny space by using boundaries, double-teaming to trap the offense, and person-to-person defense.
7. With 1v1 defense, you select the player whom you will guard ahead of time based on matching abilities.
8. If you get beat, run back and help out a teammate.
9. If a teammate gets beat and his or her opponent is about to score, go off your opponent and try to stop the person about to score.
10. Cutting off the pathway used by the offense can keep them from scoring.

Thinking Skills
11. To identify and solve problems in designing goal-oriented games.
12. To think critically about tactics and devise ways to improve them.

Social
13. Good sportsmanship means congratulating opponents on a good play and a good game.

Observation Plan

Content Development
- Forecasting as Part of Problem Solving

In the next few lessons, we will be designing goal-oriented tag games in which the runners have to cross from one endline or their side of the court to the other endline without getting tagged. Forecast how your tag games will change now that you have a goal. [We won't have as many places to run; the other team will know we need to run to the goal; on defense we will know when the other team is in a dangerous area for scoring and if they are in an area in which they probably won't score.] Predict if there will be problems you have not encountered before with rules and boundaries.

(continuous)
Designing a Goal-Oriented Tag Game

E Using jump ropes for boundaries, design a goal-oriented game in which you must score using endlines. Which kinds of ways might you score? [For possible answers, see game structures in this lesson's observation plan and objectives.] Those are great suggestions. In your groups, design your game. I have put out cones in case you want to score by stealing the cone and running it back across the centerline.

Solving Problems to Get the Game Working Well

Th Stop and identify any problems in your games. Which changes in the boundaries, rules, and consequences can you make to improve your game? Are you happy with your scoring system? Are your goal areas too big or too small? Do you need to have more than one goal?

E Decide whether you want to keep track of the score. Play again. [You might need to repeat this task several times using the play-discuss-play cycle until the games are working well.]

Identifying and Solving Tactical Problems

[This segment of the unit might take several lessons.]

Th Stop. Now that your games are working well, let's work on tactics. Get together with your teammates and plan your team tactics. Think critically about and discuss what has worked well and what hasn't. Think about your opponents' speed. Do they do the same thing every time?

E Then decide what you will try to do in this round of tag and play again.

Social Tell me some things you can do to show good sportsmanship. [Various answers. Select one idea presented by a child on which to focus.] Let's take the suggestion to congratulate your opponents on a good play and a good game, and try to work on that today.

Th Stop. I am seeing some great offensive tactics. Share with your classmates which tactics your team has used successfully to score. [Elicit and discuss one or two of the offensive tactics listed in the objectives. If some children do not understand a tactic, demonstrate and explain how it works.]

R Play again and see if you can use the tactics your classmates suggested. [Repeat this process several times using the play-discuss-play cycle until the children learn all of the offensive tactics listed in the objectives.]

Sample Questions to Ask

- Which tactics did you use to avoid the tagger? Which tactics did you use to tag a runner?
- What were your team's offensive tactics?
- What did you do on offense to create space? How did you get the defenders to move out of position?

Th Stop. Now let's focus on defense. Share with your classmates which tactics worked on defense. [Elicit and discuss one or two of the defensive tactics listed in the objectives. If some children do not understand a tactic, demonstrate and explain how it works.]

R Play again and see if you can use the tactics your classmates suggested. [Repeat several times using the play-discuss-play cycle as needed until children are successfully using the defensive tactics listed in the objectives as described in more detail in Table 19.2.]

Sample Questions to Ask

- What did you do on defense to deny space to the offense? What did you do to cover space the offense wanted?
- How do you play a person-to-person defense?
- What are the different starting positions for a zone defense for your game?
- Which ways did you beat the zone defense? Which ways did you beat a person-to-person defense?

Eliminating Activity

A I am going to switch your team to play against a team from another group. Use one of the games you already designed or design a new game that has elements of both of your games. Play your new game.

Th What did you learn from playing against a different team? How did you have to adjust your tactics to deal with different players?

Extending the Game Structures in Future Lessons

E If you want, you can add bases to your game. Do all players need to have access to the base? [Yes.] Which modifications might you make for classmates in wheelchairs or who wear leg braces? Decide how many bases and where to place them. What did you learn in previous lessons about how the placement of the base affects the defense and offense?
Intent of Game: Provide students with a pre-designed “goal-oriented” tag game that incorporates boundaries, rules/consequences, scoring goals & scoring systems, and safety zones; all of which is flexible to tweaking. Tag tactics are heavily emphasized which can lead up to Invasion/Territorial games. Additionally, many variations/extensions of this game are available to keep this game ever-changing.

Overall Goal of Game: Score points for your team by running through the gates without being tagged by the defending team. Likewise, the defense attempts to stop runners from making it through the final zone. All of this is done within a specified period of time.

Suggested Set-up of Game:

- 3 teams of 6 players each (use 3 sets of colored pinnies to represent team color); each player receives a flag belt (2 flags per belt); 2 large cones represent 1 gate each (10 gates total = 20 cones), floor tape for safety zone lines, popsicle sticks (used to keep track of points)

Rules for original game:

1. One team is on defense and is positioned to “guard the gates” in play area while other 2 teams are the attacking teams on offense (see starting positions on diagram).
2. To score, attacking team players must stay in bounds, make it through 1st gate then across zones 1-3 (only 1 gate per zone needed), all while w/out being tagged to score a point. If player makes it past zone 3, the player then travels via the outside perimeter to the original starting point of the game, puts popsicle stick in team collection area (hula hoop or bucket can be used) to score a point for her team, then the cycle starts again by attacking the zones from the start area.
3. Safety zones (located directly after successfully making it past each zone) are available for attacking team players to rest or strategize before entering the next zone.
4. Defending team can only tag attacking team players when they are in the attack zone. Defensive players are not allowed to change the zone they are assigned to defend from the start of the game.
5. If attacking player is tagged, she must immediately stop, return to the start area by traveling via the outside perimeter, and try again.
6. Play each round for designated time period (90 sec to 2-min is suggested); each team is on defense at least one time.
Tips:

Extend this game with Play-Discuss-Play Cycle and ask for how the game can be modified, enhanced, improved, or focus on tactics (pick one focus...don’t do all of this at once!). Use the general questions provided or use the more specific questions for defense & attackers. Lastly, another option is to use additional extensions provided.

Additional extensions:

1. Have offensive team nominate one player (in writing) who they intend to get through the final gate zone. This employs different tactics such as offensive players deliberately getting tagged to make it easy for the designated player to get through the gates. Having the defensive team try to figure out what is going on is also a defensive tactic associated with communicating with teammates and anticipating the offensive tactics.

2. This game can be modified to other invasion games by simply having the students perform skill-related tasks (such as dribbling with soccer ball without having the ball kicked away or basketball or hockey). Additional variations can be added once equipment is introduced by having it individually-based challenges or making it a team-based event. It could even be several 2-3 person offensive teams competing against other 2-3 person offensive teams while the defense is always the same.

3. Similar to how I use this original game with a scoring system, it can be modified to give 1 point to everyone who gets to level 2 (past 1st set of gates), 2 points to those who get to level 3 (past 2nd set of gates), 3 points to those who reach level 4 (past 3rd and final set of gates).

General questions to ask students for this game:

- How did you score in this game? What did you do to have to score?
- What tactics are involved in this game? In other words, what are things that you had to consider other than just simply being able to run as fast as you can?
- How do you create space for players on your team?
- How can you take advantage of space?
- What type of decisions did you have to take? When did you decide to act upon these decisions? How did you know when it was appropriate to do so (act upon these decisions)?
- What type of team-based decisions were used in this game?

More Specific Questions to ask attackers:

Q: What attacker positioning strategy at the start of the game will disadvantage the defenders?

- Spreading out and being prepared to go through either gate.

Q: Is there an advantage to delaying entry into level 1?

- Yes. By delaying, the attacker can see what the defender is going to try to do and put doubt in his mind about when the attack will come.

Q: How can the attackers make it difficult for the defenders once they get into level 2?

- Again, they can spread out and fake attacks on the gates.

Q: What is meant by trying to attack while the defense is in transition, or square?

- Attackers wait until the defenders get caught changing their relative positions of one in front and one behind. At one stage they become ‘square’, which gives the attackers more room in which to attack.

Q: Is it possible to fake an attack?
Yes, but attackers should remember that once they enter play, they cannot go back to the safe zones.

More Specific Questions to ask defenders:

Q: How does the placement of the cones, or gates, help the attackers or defenders?

- The closer they are together, the easier it is for the defense to create congestion. The further they are apart, the more width the attackers have to move in.

Q: What does the effect of the placement of the cones, or gates, indicate about a basic strategy for defending in a game?

- A congested, or compact, defense is much more difficult to penetrate than one that is spread out. Hence, attackers are always trying to draw out defenses, and defenders are always trying to maintain a tight structure.

Q: The level 1 defender cannot stop all the attackers. What might be his main function against the attack?

- To slow down the attack by channeling the players in one direction and then trying to tag selected or targeted players.

Q: How can the defender at level 1 best achieve the functions listed in the previous question?

- He can discuss with teammates who the key attacking players are on the other team and make it difficult for those players to get through one gate and encourage them to channel through the other gate. When they see the key opposition player(s) committed to a gate, they then try and effect a tag on those players.

Q: How can two defenders defend three gates at level 2?

- They can use a sliding zone defense by coming forward and both standing to one side of the cones.

Q: Is it best to have the defenders in a line or one player slightly forward of the other?

- One should be slightly forward of the other; defenders should not be in a straight line.