Name/Title: Chop Down the Christmas Trees!

Purpose of Event: To practice correct form of the overhand throw and catching using the theme of chopping down and planting Christmas trees.

Prerequisites: Students are able to throw with opposition and catch a ball thrown to them.

Suggested Grade Level: 3-5

Materials Needed: 16-20 plastic bowling pins, the same number of poly spots, about two dozen 7 inch soft coated foam balls.

Description of Idea

Divide the gym in half with the center line or gymnastics mats and call it the "River." They cannot cross this river during the game.

At the far end of each half, scatter the bowling pins on poly spots. The distance from the center line may vary by the age and ability of your students. Scatter the soft coated balls in the play area.

On the signal "GO" the students begin throwing the balls at the "trees", attempting to chop them down. If students are successful in catching a ball thrown from the opposite side, they are allowed to pick up a pin and place it back on a poly spot. (plant a tree)

Students may not pick up trees that are accidentally knocked over during play.

Play for a few minutes, then signal "STOP". If you are keeping score, the side with the most trees standing wins the round. The purpose isn't in winning, but in having many opportunities to throw and catch by playing many rounds.

Before the start of the next round, students jump over the river (the center line or mats) to the next forest and start all over again.

Students may guard the trees but must also throw the balls that come their way.

Variations:

Younger students can also play this game. Just leave out the directive for picking up the pins when the ball is caught.

Assessment Ideas:

This game is perfect for assessing "step in opposition" and "catching."

Catching cues:

• Keep eye on ball
• Reach arms towards ball
• Give with ball as ball hits hands (bring ball into body)
• Pinkies together if ball is below waist
• Thumbs together if ball is above waist

Throwing cues:

• Point non-throwing side/shoulder to the target
• Throwing arm way back behind head
• Step with your opposite foot towards target
• Follow through by letting your throwing arm come across the opposite side of your body

Teaching Suggestions:

Adjust the throwing distance and ball size to suit the ability of the students.

Adaptations for Students with Disabilities:

Submitted by **Susan Donovan** who teaches at Guiteras School in Bristol, RI. Thanks for contributing to PE Central! **Posted on PEC: 2/25/2009**.

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