

# Sparks A Rama Sample Guidelines

Dear Sparkie Coach,

The two purposes of the Sparks-A-Rama are to present the gospel message of Jesus Christ to the Sparks and their family members that attend and to have **FUN**. It is critical that our actions and reactions portray Jesus Christ during practices at your local church or while participating in the Sparks-A-Rama. This booklet is designed to assist you as a coach or official in the Sparks-A-Rama.

Thanks again for your willingness to serve with us as we endeavor to tell people of their need of Jesus Christ.

*Because Kids (and their parents) Matter to God*



## SPARKIES' FUN DAY

Sparks-A-Rama is similar to an AwanaGames meet, but yet it's different. 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

### GENERAL INFORMATION

#### GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

An important aspect of the Awana ministry 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.

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.

### 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**

### **CIRCLE AND TEAM LINE LOCATIONS**

Teams should find their assigned circle team line as soon as possible on arrival.

### **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.

### **SPARKLE TIME**

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 THEME SONG**

"Sparks for Jesus"

#### **SPARKS KEY VERSE**

John 3:16

#### **SPARKS MOTTO**

"My Friend for Christ"

#### **BIBLE VERSE**

I Corinthians 15:3

*...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures.*

#### **BIBLE VERSE**

I Corinthians 15:4

*And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.*

#### **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.

Recognition may also be given to Sparkies for their outstanding achievements.

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.

## **GENERAL RULES/DEFINITIONS**

Arranged alphabetically for quick reference

### **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

### **CENTER PIN**

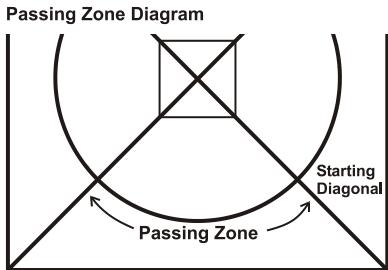
In events that finish in the middle of the circle, a game pin is set at the intersection of the two diagonal lines. (It is placed on top of the center beanbag when first- and second-place points are to be awarded.) First-place points are awarded the team whose player has possession of center pin at end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

### **CIRCLE PINS**

(See Game Circle Diagram) All circle pins should 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 should 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 should be outside the circle at each pin.)

## PASSING ZONE

In the Relay event (Sparky Safari), the beanbag should 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.



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 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 who plays.

## POSSESSION

In events using the center pin and center beanbag to determine the winners, the player should have possession of the center pin or center beanbag to be awarded points.

Touching the pin or beanbag is not enough.

## SCORING PINS

For all events which finish in the center of the circle, the scoring pins will be placed on the diagonal line at the 5 foot hash mark. To finish the event, the appropriate clubber should touch the scoring pin with his/her hand only. Scoring pins should not be batted since they may cause interference. .

## STARTING DIAGONAL

(See Game Circle Diagram) Events, which 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.

## 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 should stay seated behind these lines.

## TEAM ZONE

## **EVENT 1—SPARKY CRAWL**

10 players - two heats

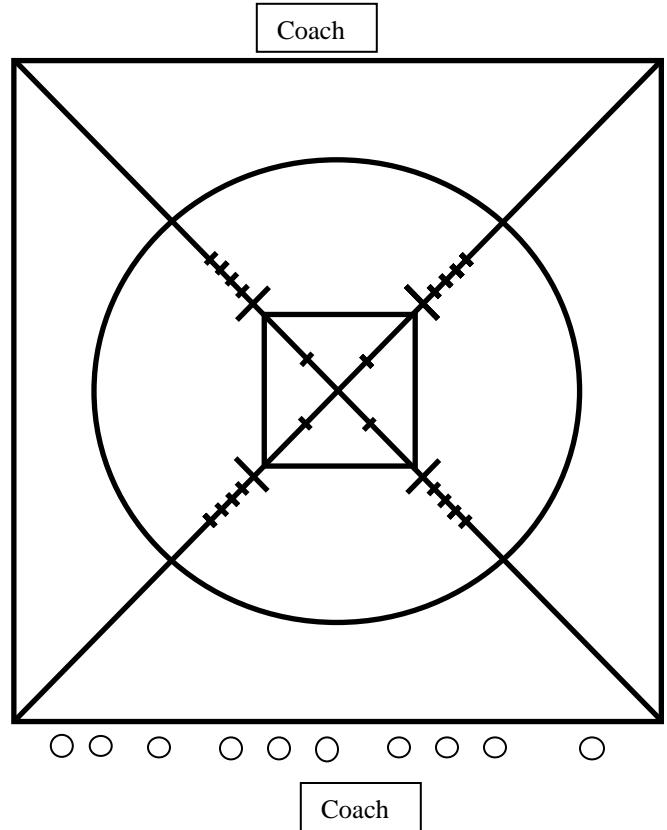
1st place - four points

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 their hands and knees across to opposite team line. When center of circle is clear of players, the Circle Director places the center pin and beanbag in position side-by-side in center of circle. As soon as entire team has reached the team line opposite its starting line, the team coach sends a player into the center for the pin or beanbag. Reaching the opposite side is defined as breaking the plane which extends upward from the team line with any part of the body.

The game will be played a second time with players crawling back to their original team line. Coaches wishing to substitute Sparks in after the first heat may do so. It is recommended that churches provide kneepads or coverings for the Sparky Crawl. Rolled-up tube socks provide a good cushion.



## **COACHES INSTRUCTIONS**

Coaches Position:

Anywhere along Team Line, usually near the center. One Coach on opposite side.

Before the Game:

Be sure there are 10 players.

Be sure all are kneeling with their hand and knees behind the team color line.

Hands are behind the line. Heads may be over the line.

During the Game:

When all players have crawled to and broken the plane of the line of the opposite team line with hand or head the coach sends a player in to the center for the bean bag or pin.

Watch for Sparkies who do not stop when they cross the team line. Do not let them crawl across the next circle.

After the Game:

Have a bag to place knee protectors in after this event. Do not allow them to be lying around so they won't get lost or inadvertently end up in the playing area and cause an injury, interference or a disqualification.

Coaching Tips

It is necessary to spread the players evenly along the team line. They cannot be bunched together or in groups.

Players should look for the other coach to know when to stop crawling.

The player to go to the center should be chosen ahead of time and should crawl to the coach.

Runners going to the center tend to leave early, therefore physically hold onto them until the last player has reached the team line.

## **EVENT 2—SPARKY BEANBAG – IN AND OUT**

10 players - two heats

1<sup>st</sup> Heat – Girls

2<sup>nd</sup> Heat – Boys

1<sup>st</sup> place - four points

2<sup>nd</sup> place - two points

**Equipment:** Four small containers, four beanbags, four circle pins and four scoring pins

Players line up on their team's circle line. Container is set in team's small triangle, and the beanbag is given to player #1 (farthest from his/her team's starting diagonal). At signal, player #1 runs to container and places beanbag into container, returns to team line and tags player #2. Player #2 retrieves beanbag and brings it back to player #3. Players may not proceed into the circle before being tagged or given the beanbag. Action continues until all team members have participated. The last player with beanbag in hand runs into touch the scoring pin with his/her hand. The winners should retain possession of their beanbag when they touch the scoring pin.

## **COACHES INSTRUCTIONS**

### Coaches Position:

Any where along the team line.

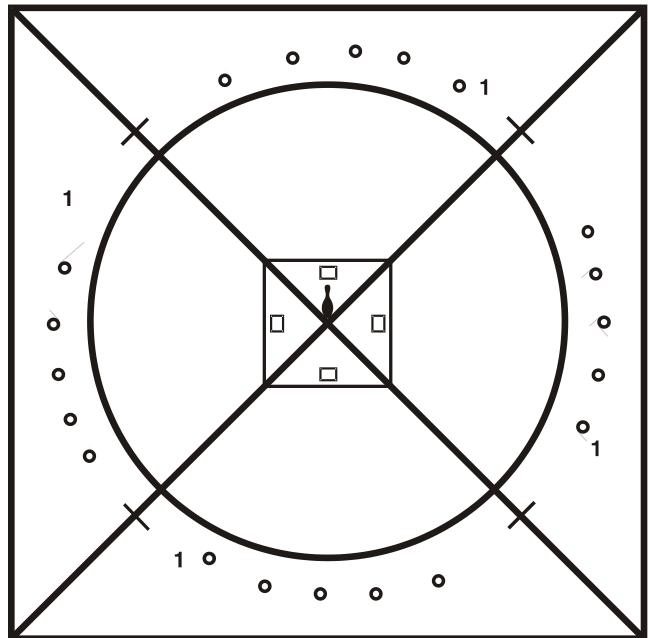
### Before the Game:

Be sure there are 5 players. No order for the players is required. Height or grade makes no difference.

### During the Game:

When setting colored bean bag in the container, bean bags should be placed in the container not dropped or thrown. The definition of “placed” is that the entire bag should be set into the container.

## **Sparky Beanbag — In and Out Diagram**



No part of the bag may be outside the container.

When returning to the circle, bags should be handed to the next player.

Players on the circle may not step over the circle line before being handed a bean bag or tagged.

However a player stepping over the circle line without a bean bag may return to outside the circle before going in to the center triangle.

After all 5 players have participated, the last player with beanbag in hand runs into touch the scoring pin with his/her hand.

The winners should retain possession of their beanbag when they touch the scoring pin.

Each player will run into the center one time.

### Coaching Tip:

It is important that bags are placed in the container, not dropped or thrown.

### **EVENT 3—BALLOON BATTLE**

10 players - two heats

Five different players (girls and/or boys) per heat.

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

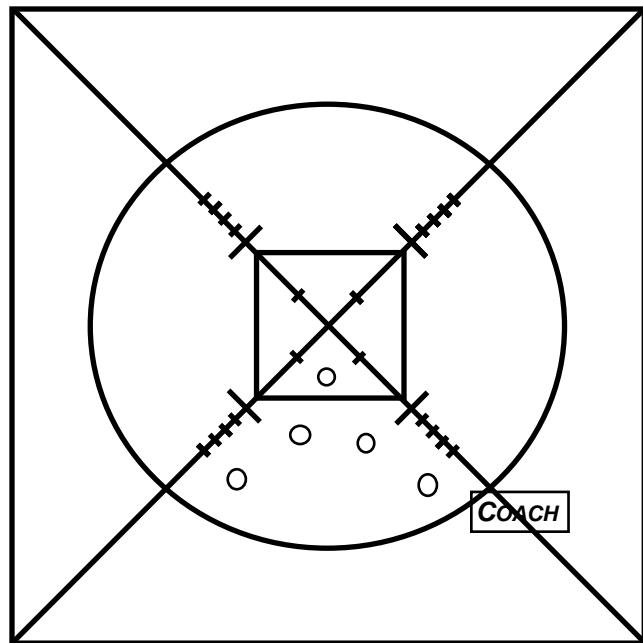
2nd place (2nd lowest number of units) - four points

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 across the circle, making visible boundaries to help players stay within their triangles. (Balloons do not have to go over the rope.) Coaches holding the rope should remain silent during the heat

Players stand anywhere within their own playing area. The Circle director holds the balloons and stands in the center of the circle. At the signal, the balloons are tossed into the air. Players bat the balloons with their hands to keep them from touching the floor in their area. Players may not hold the balloons or step out of their area. Hits made by a player not standing completely in his/her area do not count for scoring units. (See floor markings definition) Striking the balloon with a downward motion of the hand is permitted. When a balloon touches the floor within a team's playing area, that team receives one unit. The Circle Director or a Line judge will restart that balloon from the center. Each heat will last 60 seconds. The Circle Director starts each heat in the center of the circle. If a balloon lands outside of playing areas, the Circle Director or a Line Judge restarts that balloon from the place the balloon left the playing area until time runs out. Players may participate in only one heat.



### **COACHES INSTRUCTIONS**

Coaches Position:

Anywhere along the Team Line

Second Coaches Location:

At the intersection of Colored Diagonal and Team Circle Line, just outside of the circle. Coaches hold the rope at the player's waist level, and hold it steady.

Coaches holding the ropes are not to be instructing the players during the event.

Coaches:

Be sure there are new players for each heat.

Players may stand anywhere within their own playing area.

The Line Judge will count the number of times the balloon hits the floor in the team zone.

The balloon is not required to go over the rope. There is no rule about the balloon going under the rope.

The team with the fewest number of hits will be awarded first place points.

Note that the balloons that go outside the circle

or into the area not occupied in a three-way circle will not be taken back to the center, but will be restarted from the place where the balloon touched the floor. The balloon should not be hit back outside the playing area.

#### Coaching Tips

Players should be aware that there will be two balloons in play.

Players are allowed to move around in the team zone.

## **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 the signal, the hunters toss the balls, trying to hit the rabbits. Any ball legally thrown hitting a rabbit will cause the rabbit to be out even if the ball hits the floor or another rabbit first.

When hit, the rabbits should leave circle, returning to their team line. Rabbits are out if they step outside circle before being hit. Hunters may not step inside circle while tossing ball. Hunters may enter the circle to retrieve a ball, but should completely exit the circle to throw it at a rabbit. Action stops after **30 seconds** and rabbits still in the circle are counted. Play is repeated until all teams have had a turn to be rabbits. The team with the most rabbits left in the circle wins.

## **COACHES INSTRUCTIONS**

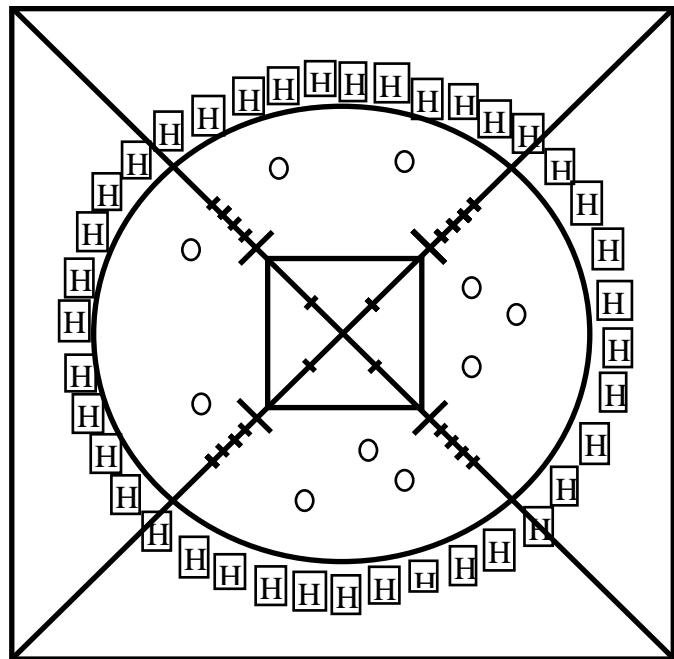
Coaches Positions:

Anywhere along the Team Line:

During the Game:

A player that is hit with a ball on any part of the body should leave the circle. The ball may hit the floor first, roll on the floor, bounce off another player, etc. Any player touched by a ball while inside the circle should leave the circle immediately.

If the ball stays inside the circle, a player may go in and get it, but should return to outside the circle before throwing the ball.



Balls thrown from inside the circle do not count. The Line Judge will keep any rabbits hit this way inside the circle. Instruct rabbits to go to the center of the circle to be counted when action stops. When your team members are the “hunters” they do not need to be in their color sector. They should spread out evenly around the circle.

## Coaching Tips

Running around in the circle may not be the best tactic. Watching the balls may be more important.

Instruct hunters to not hold onto the ball on the circle, but to throw the ball quickly.

## **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

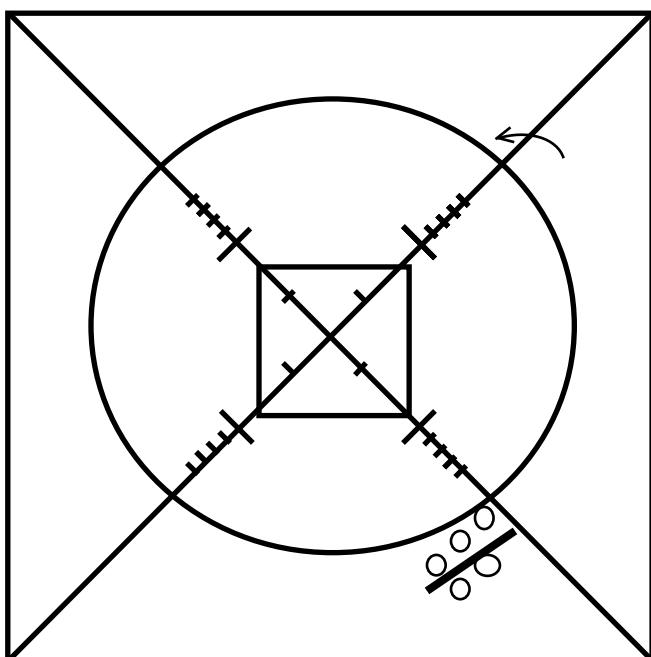
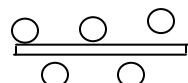
**Equipment:** Four circle pins, four scoring pins, four pool noodles

Players line up behind one another outside their circle line and behind their starting diagonal, as pictured on diagram. At the signal, the train runs around the circle. If the train becomes disconnected (a player loses hold of the “pool noodle”), the train should stop, rejoin itself, and then continue. When all five players cross the starting line, the last player “caboose” separates from the train and runs into touch the scoring pin with his/her hand.

Players will be connected by holding a “pool noodle.” All members should be holding the noodle while running around the circle.

Players **may** alternate sides of the noodle.

The last player may hold the end of the noodle.



## **COACHES INSTRUCTIONS**

### Coaches Position:

Anywhere along the Team Line.

### Before the Game:

Be sure there are 5 players per train..

Players are to hold onto a “Pool Noodle”

Players are to maintain contact with the pool noodle either with their hand or with their arm around the noodle (the noodle is in the crook of their elbow)

The last player may hold the end of the noodle.

### During the Game:

The train should stop if it becomes disconnected or not properly connected.

All team members should pass over the team diagonal so that the caboose may go around the circle pin before going in for the center pin or bag. The locomotive does not go in.

The train should be connected until the caboose passes the team diagonal.

### Coaching Tips:

Keeping the train properly attached may be more important than speed. Speed that causes the caboose to swing wide often causes the train to come apart.

## **EVENT 6—SPARKY BALLOON POP**

10 players - two heats

1st heat – last player is a girl

2nd heat – last player is a boy

1st place - four points

2nd place - two points

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

All team players straddle their team diagonal line with their backs toward the center of the circle, as close together as they wish. The last player in line stands on the eight-foot hash mark. Player #1 holds the balloon with both hands on the back of his/her head. At the signal, the balloon is passed through the legs of all the players to the last player. It is not necessary that each player touch the balloon. When the last player in line has possession of balloon, he/she runs into his/her team's inner triangle, places the balloon on the floor, and sits on balloon until it breaks. The first player to break the balloon within his/her triangle wins. If the player attempts to sit on the balloon and it scoots out from under him/her, the player may retrieve the balloon, bring it back to his/her triangle, and attempt to pop the balloon as long as they do not interfere with another team. If the balloon breaks before it gets to the last player the Line Judge may insert another balloon at the point where the first balloon popped.

## **COACHES INSTRUCTIONS**

Coaches Position:

Anywhere along the Team Line:

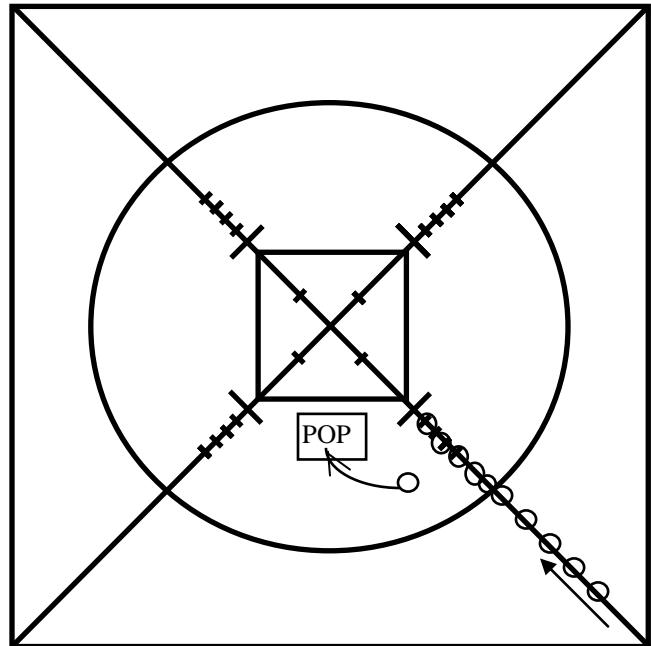
**Before the Game:**

Be sure there are 10 players.

Be sure the last player stands on the 8 ft line.

Be sure player one has the balloon and holds it on the back of his/her head.

All team members should straddle the diagonal to start



The last player should have the balloon inside of the inner triangle when he/she pops the balloon.

There are two heats. The coach selects the girl and boy to be the last player and break the balloon.

The players are not required to spread out all the way to the corner.

The winning player's balloon should be within the team triangle when breaking the balloon. Fingernails are not to be used to break the balloon.

If the balloon does not break or gets away from the player it can be retrieved back into the triangle and additional attempts made until the balloon is broken.

## Coaching Tips

Be sure that the player chosen to break the balloon has enough weight to do so.

The player may hold on to the neck of the balloon or the sides of the balloon when sitting on the balloon.

*Placing the balloon on the floor and then trying to sit on it often causes the balloon to move out from under the player.*

*It is not necessary for every player to touch the balloon as it passes through each players legs.*

## Official Awana Circle

The Awana 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
- D—Team Lines or Olympic Square

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

