



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

Munhanganing

'mun-hang-an-ing'



SCHOOL
YEARS
4–6

SCHOOL
YEARS
7–9

Background

The game of *Munhanganing* was played by children of the Arnhem Land area in northern Australia.

Children played this, and other running games, in the flickering lights from firebrands of the grownups, sitting about a camp site.

Language

The game is named after the small nocturnal 'gecko' lizard. A gecko is called *munhanganing* in the Datiwuy language spoken in the Arnhem Land area.

Short description

A running-and-chasing team game in which players attempt to touch players on the opposing team.

Players

- Up to 20 players in two even teams — teams of six to ten are suggested. One team is called, *munhanganing* (gecko lizard), and the other team is named after a beetle or other insect, for example, a fly (*wurrurlurl*).

Playing area

- Use an area 40–50 metres long and 20–30 metres wide. A tree area 3 metres square is marked 10 metres in from one end and in the centre of the area.

Equipment

- A set of party clickers for each player (if possible)

Game play and basic rules

- One team (*wurrurlurl*) is scattered around the playing area while the other team (*munhanganing*) starts behind the line at one end of the playing area.
- On a signal to start the *munhanganing* players begin chasing the players of the *wurrurlurl* team. The players in the *munhanganing* team must keep clicking the party clickers — in imitation of the sound of the *munhanganing* — as they move around the playing area. The *munhanganing* players attempt to catch (touch) the *wurrurlurl* players and must make a noise with their party clickers while moving about. Only the hand without the party clicker can be used to make a touch.
- The players that are caught are sent to the tree area, where they remain until all the other players in the team are caught.
- As well as being touched, players from the *wurrurlurl* team can be ‘caught’ if they go outside the playing area when they are being chased.
- If agreed by the players the game can be played with players being ‘released’ from the tree area if they are touched by a player on the same team who has not been caught. (This avoids an elimination aspect of the game.)
- When all players are caught, swap the team roles and start again.
- On their turn, the *wurrurlurl* team can use the party clickers although they could make buzzing noises (for a fly) continuously instead.
- (If the *wurrurlurl* team chooses to make buzzing noises they place one hand on their hip and use the other hand to touch *munhanganing* players).

Variations

- Competitive game. The teams take turns in running and chasing by swapping about their names/roles. Teams are timed to see which team can catch the other team in the fastest time.
- Continuous play. When the referee calls, ‘swap’, the teams change roles. All caught players become ‘free’ when a swap is called.

- Players who are caught (touched) sit down where they are touched. Only the *wurrurlurl* players that have not been touched are able to move around the playing area.
- Players from the *wurrurlurl* team wear a velcro belt or a piece of cloth tucked into their shorts. They are caught when this is removed. The caught players go to the tree area and the belts/ pieces of cloth are placed in a hoop just outside the playing area.

Safety

Players need to be aware of the risk of running into other players and falling, and safety aspects need to be considered. Allowing time for players to rest and have a drink needs to be considered.

Teaching points

- Two teams ready. Go.
- Spread out and keep moving.
- Use your clickers.
- Go to the tree when you are caught.
- Catch them all. Good work.
- Change over. Let’s go.