



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

# turlurlu

'tur-lur-lu'



SCHOOL  
YEARS  
4–6

SCHOOL  
YEARS  
7–9

SCHOOL  
YEARS  
10–12

Post-school age

## Background

*Turlurlu* is the name of a traditional ball rolling and hitting game played by boys in the Great Sandy Desert of central Australia. A rough ball called a *kamikami* was cut from the thick root of the *ngulyungu* tree. Each player held a *mukurru*, or fighting stick, as a bat. The boys formed teams and each side took turns to bowl the ball to each other.

## Language

The words of the Walmajarri language:

**Turlurlu palu rijikarrinyani yapangu jarlu pujja.**

*The children used to play turlurlu in the bush in the old days.*

## Short description

A continuous hitting and stopping activity played between two teams.

## Players

- Two teams of four to six players facing each other. Players spread out behind a line next to each other (1–2 metres apart) and no further back than 2 metres from the line.

## Playing area

- An indoor or outdoor area about 15–20 metres long and 8–10 metres wide

## Equipment

- Kanga cricket stumps are ideal to use as a *mukurru* (fighting stick). Unihoc sticks or small Kanga cricket bats may also be used.
- Use a unihoc ball, tennis ball or similar as the *kamikami* (ball).

## Game play and basic rules

- Teams toss a coin to decide who will have the first turn. A player of the starting team hits a *kamikami* at the opposing team and aim to make it pass through the line. A defending player attempts to stop and/or hit (push passes are recommended) the ball using his or her *mukurru*.
- The ball is hit back and forth in a continuous play (stop the ball and hit the ball or just hit the ball — but keep it below knee height). Players take turns at hitting the *kamikami* to the other team when play stops. Players may also stop the *kamikami* and pass to a team-mate to hit.
- Players hit the ball from behind their line. No 'wild' swings of the bottom of the *mukurru* above the waist are allowed. The *mukurru* can be taped just below halfway and the stick must be held in both hands with one hand on this mark and one above it.
- The hitting team must not allow the *kamikami* to contact any part of their body. A turn that is delivered outside the playing area or is otherwise unsatisfactory is taken again.

## Scoring

The aim is to make the play fairly continuous. A team only scores if the *kamikami* is stopped or hit when they have it directed at them. If a player hits the *kamikami* it is counted as catching *kuyi* (game). If the *kamikami* passes through the line of players this ball is retrieved by a player while another ball can be used to continue play.

The teams keep score of how much *kuyi* they catch. The 'winning' team is the one to make the most hits in the time allowed, or the first to reach a set score (such as 11).

## Variations

- Allow an overarm throw/bowl (instead of a hit) so long as the *kamikami* hits the ground before the half-way line between the two teams. The *kamikami* must not be bounced above knee height.
- Play with a set number (five to ten) of turns for each team then swap over. Use a supply of balls.

- If the *kamikami* passes through the opposing line of players then the bowling team scores one point. If the hitting team take a 'wild' swing or infringe in any other way then the bowling team also gains a point. The hitting (or receiving) team gains a point when one of the players is able to hit the *kamikami*.
- Each team has a set number of turns (for example, five) before the other side has its turn. Each set of turns by players in a team constitutes a game. Have a number of games in a match.
- Play a mini-version of the game with two to four players per team on a badminton or volleyball court.
- Use unihoc or hockey sticks. Players hit the ball to each other and it must be stopped cleanly to count.
- Play in a circle (diameter of 8–10 metres) with a line through the centre. Players pass over the line to the other team.
- Sets of stumps can be placed behind players for them to defend.

## Suggestion

This could be used as a hockey or cricket practice game or warm-up activity.

## Teaching points

- Line up next to each other.
- Teams facing each other.
- Hit the ball.
- Keep the ball down.
- Sticks below the waist.
- Keep going. Faster.
- Stop the ball and hit the ball.
- Stick behind the ball. Take it in turns.
- Pass to the next person if you like.
- Keep the ball away from your body.