



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

millim baeyeetch

'mill-im baey-eetch'



SCHOOL
YEARS
7-9

SCHOOL
YEARS
10-12

Post-school age

Background

One of the favourite games of the Aboriginal people in parts of Victoria was a game of football. There were a few variations of the game and the one outlined here was observed in the 1840s.

The ball was about the size of an orange, and was made of possum skin, with the fur side outwards. It was filled with pounded charcoal and was tied tightly around with kangaroo sinew.

To start the game the players were divided into two sides and organised in opposing lines, which are always of a different 'class' — white cockatoo against black cockatoo, quail against snake, and so on.

Language

Among some people of the western district of Victoria, ball players were referred to as *beiin*. Another Aboriginal group in a nearby area called them *millim baeyeetch*.

Mangut marnameek, mongun ganbony
murrumbinner, marnamuk kunnup; ure
kurruk ngerin karboit.

*We will play at ball; you make it up, very high, don't
you see one? Very good that one, go on kick.*

Short description

This is a keep-away ball game. Players attempt to keep possession by kicking the ball to other members of their team.

Players

- Two teams of six to 12 (or more) players.

Playing area

- A cricket oval or a smaller area suitable for the number of players and their age and skill level. Two separate games using half of a rugby field each would be suitable for six to eight players in each team.

Equipment

- An Australian rules football, size 3 soccer ball or gator skin ball

Game play and basic rules

- Players in a team attempt to keep possession of a ball by kicking the ball to each other. No passing from the hands, throwing or hitting of the ball to another player is allowed. The ball cannot be kicked back to the player from whom the ball was received.

- To start the game the ball is kicked in any direction. Players who do not have the ball may run around the area, but after gaining the ball they run (up to 5 metres) and kick it as soon as they can — and usually as far as they can.
- For safety reasons, and to allow for the involvement of all players, no intentional physical contact or obstruction/blocking of other players is allowed. Players are allowed to kick the ball if they catch it or otherwise gain possession (such as from a dropped catch).
- If the ball is dropped or knocked along the ground players are allowed to pick up the ball and run with it (up to 5 metres).
- The ball may be kicked off the ground or while it is bouncing, as long as this is done safely. It cannot be kicked off the ground if another player is attempting to pick it up.
- If a player puts the ball out of the playing area the other team gains possession with a kick-in. For any rule violations an opposition player will be given the ball and allowed to continue play.

Scoring

The team that kicks the ball the most number of times or retains possession the longest wins the game. The game could be played to a set number of passes to score a point.

Variations

- Kicks have to be 10 metres or longer, or a change of possession results.
- Possession changes if a kick is dropped.
- The first player in position calls for the ball ('mark') and is allowed to try to catch the ball without any other player attempting to do so.
- A team scores one point if they are able to make ten consecutive passes to players on the same team. The team scoring the most points in the game is the winner.
- Allow limited physical contact in attempting to gain the ball (the traditional form of the game).
- Use two balls.

- Have three teams of players in the same area to increase the pressure on players.
- Play 'marks' for catches of the ball as in Australian rules football. The game can be played on half an Australian rules football field and every so often a signal can be given and the player who next marks the ball has a shot at goal to score. Play continues.
- Mark a number of small circles or place hoops about 10–15 metres outside the playing area. After a team makes a set number of passes (such as three or five) they may kick from where they caught the ball to a player of the same team who goes and stands in a circle/hoop. A point is made for a successful kick that is caught by a player who has at least one foot inside the circle/hoop — if a player jumps to catch the ball he or she must land with a foot inside the circle/hoop. Play a game to ten points.

Comment

In the traditional game, the player (*beiin*) who kicks the ball the highest during the game is considered the best player and has the honour of burying it in the ground (keeping the ball) until required the next day.

The game ends with a shout of applause and the best player is complimented on his or her skill. In the traditional context, the fact that a player was a good footballer did not entitle him to assist in making laws for his people.

Suggestion

This game is particularly suited as a skills practice for Australian rules football, rugby union, rugby league or football (soccer).

Teaching points

- Kick and control. Kick and move.
- Move to open spaces. Everybody moving.
- Call for the ball.
- Cover (defend) someone.
- Go to the ball.
- Good catch. Well done.