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Striking and Fielding Games



Striking and Fielding game skills

Striking and Fielding games are those in which one team can score points when a player strikes a ball (or similar object) and runs to designated playing areas while the other team attempts to retrieve the ball and return it to prevent their opponents from scoring.

Striking and fielding game skills	What this is	What it looks like – Success criteria
Batting:		
Hitting the ball	It is batters successfully hitting the ball to where they want it to go. (Note: In <i>MoveWell</i> games, batters should be given the choice of hitting off a tee or cone or having the ball pitched or bowled at them)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A successful hit involves clean contact between bat and ball so that the ball ‘cracks off the bat’. The timing is good, and contact is made in front of the body on the ‘sweet spot’ of the bat (not on the end of the bat but just up from it). The follow-through goes through the ball, and the ball goes where it is supposed to go with the speed and distance the batter wants.
Placing the ball	It is hitting the ball to the best place in the field. This means the batters will read the field so that they know where the fielders are and then hit the ball into open space away from the fielders to give themselves time to run.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A successful placement means the ball is hit into or through open space so that a run is possible. Hitting over the fielders and perhaps the boundary is also possible.
Running	It is making runs, i.e., running between wickets, to bases, or to the other end.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players know when to run and when not to. They run when they should and call to or coordinate with other runners. Players run fast and slide in or slide their bat to successfully make ground.
Fielding:		
Outside-in fielding	It is fielding wide and moving in to field or catch the ball from outside to inside.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players start in a wider fielding position and move in with the hit so that they field or catch the ball moving forwards rather than having to move backwards. • They spread out around the field to ensure that spaces are covered. • They cover infield and outfield spaces, know which space they are covering, and move to field when required. • Players work as a team to cover in close and out wide, talking to one another to coordinate fielding roles.

Positioning to cover space	It is starting in a wide position so that players can move in to field a ground ball or catch a high ball, rather than having to turn and chase the ball to the out-field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They will be spreading out around the field to ensure spaces are covered. • Players will be working as a team to cover in close and out wide and talking to one another to coordinate fielding roles.
Reading the game and anticipating the play when fielding	It is knowing what is likely to happen once the ball is hit and knowing what to do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The players will know what to do with the ball if it comes their way, where and who to throw it to. • They will be backing up. • They will be knowing if runners are running home or to a wicket etc. • Players will be moving into position early to field or back up, throwing to the correct base or end. • They will be talking to other players to help them make the right decision – <i>e.g. 3rd base, this end, wicketkeeper etc.</i>
Fielding a ground ball	It is moving into line behind the ball, getting down and covering it so that it doesn't go past. Then being able to quickly return to their feet and throw to the base or wicket.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player successfully throws to the base or wicket as required. • Players know where and who to throw the ball to when it comes their way. They know to back up if necessary, sensing if runners are running home or to a wicket or base. • They predict which base or wicket to throw to, given the game situation.
Catching a ball	It is moving into the line of and under the incoming ball to prevent it from touching the ground.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players catch the ball without letting it touch the ground. • They use a stable base when throwing, with their opposite arm pointing, strong rotation of their trunk, and whip through with the arm to straighten it at release point.
Throwing to a base or wicket	It is deciding where to throw: to which base, wicket, or end.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players successfully throw to base or wicket as required.
Backing up, covering bases or wickets	It is moving behind the base or wicket to back up or catch the throw when the ball is thrown in by another fielder.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players are in position to catch or stop the ball when it is thrown in as either the first or second catcher.
Pitching or bowling	It is delivering the ball to the batter either by throwing, bouncing, or overarm bowling towards the batsman.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player in this position successfully pitches or bowls (throws) the ball so that the game can start and progress for the full enjoyment and inclusion of all players. • The player delivers the ball in a way that allows the batter to hit it and makes a game of it.

4.1 Move 'n' Catch

This may not seem like a striking and fielding game, but it is an activity that involves moving and catching a bean bag or ball, which is an essential skill for fielding in these games. Move 'n' Catch sounds simple, but the game skill here is to learn to move for the catch!



EQUIPMENT



Net or benches



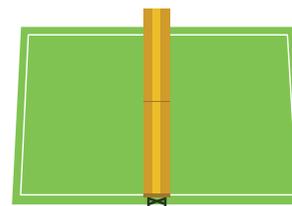
Ropes



Tennis balls



Bean bags



LEARNING FOCUS

The focus of this activity is learning to move and catch. Combining moving *with* catching is an important game skill for players to develop in striking and fielding games.

Focus the children on:

- reading the flight of a ball and
- simultaneously moving into position to be under or behind the ball to catch it.

SET UP & PLAY

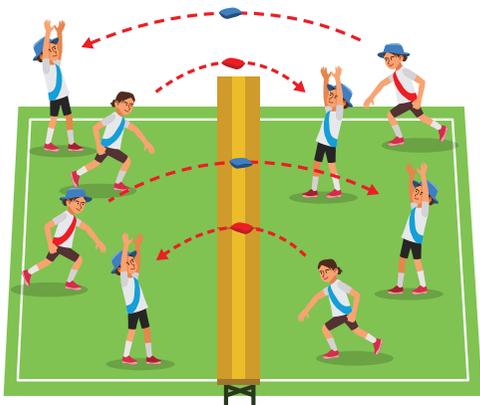
Set up:

- The set-up will vary depending on the age and ability of the children.
- For older children, use a small court area with a bench or net halfway across.
- After some play, a net can be raised (badminton height) and the court size increased to encourage higher tosses and more movement to get under the ball.
- For younger children, use bean bags or larger balls and dispense with the bench.

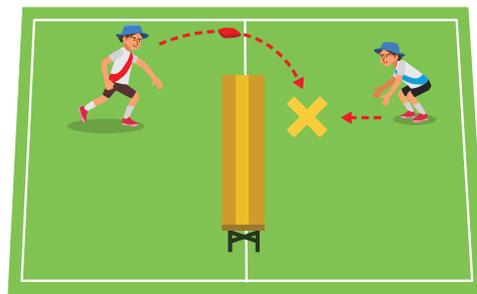
Play:

- Children toss the ball above head height to bounce it in their opponent's half. The opponent tries to catch it on the first bounce or full and toss it back.

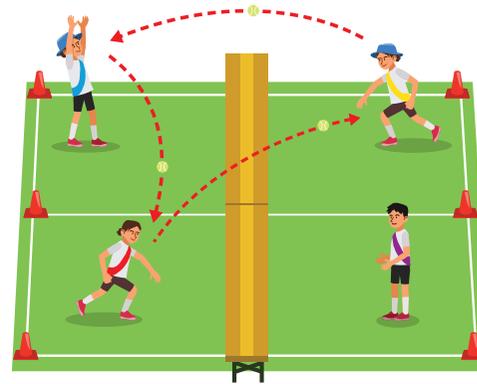
PROGRESSIONS Using the following progressions, think about simplifying, shaping, focusing, and enhancing.



Step One:
Have the children toss the bean bag or ball in front of the player on the other side of the bench or net so that they move forward to catch it. Try to avoid having the children standing still as they catch and throw the bean bags or balls back. It is important that the children learn to move into position to catch.



Step Two:
Add a competitive element with one player tossing the ball away from the other player so that it bounces into either square, requiring the player to move to catch it. Include different objects, such as stars or quoits. This places the focus on tracking and moving rather than how they use their hands.



Step Three:
Raise the net to badminton height. Use the whole court in a 1 v 1 situation so that the children have to cover the whole court and move to catch the ball or object.

LEARNING QUESTIONS

- How do you track the ball in flight and move underneath or behind it to catch it?
- Why should you watch the bean bag or ball into your hands?
- How do you read the bounce of the ball?
- How do you watch both the ball and the opposite player?
- Which one is the most important of these? Why?
- Can you show your group three important things about moving to catch?

REFLECTION

After the activity, can the children:

- read the flight of a ball, that is, track the ball's flight?
- coordinate their movement with the ball's flight to be under it to catch it on the full?
- coordinate their movement to be behind a bounced ball to catch it at the top of its bounce?
- keep their eyes open as they catch?



Moving to catch

Catching involves being able to track the incoming flight of an object and move under it to catch it. In learning to catch, children need guidance on technique and variation in their practice. Emphasise that they need to move into position to catch. A simple rule of thumb is: *If you're teaching a skill and they are standing still, then you are probably doing something wrong.*

Some guidelines for helping children learn to catch include:

1. Simplify the task by slowing the trajectory of the object being caught and use a larger ball or bean bag at first.
2. Provide a target for the thrower to aim at. A good throw is critical to learning to catch, so use mats, hoops, or other things as targets.
3. For beginners, provide early success by tossing a ball low into their hands. But as soon as possible, have them move to catch.
4. Include variation by using large and small toys, large and small balls, on-the-full or on-the-bounce.
5. Observe to ensure that the child tracks the flight of the ball (eyes on the ball, reading the flight) and simultaneously moves into position to be under or behind the ball to receive and catch it.

4.2 Cone Ball and Tee Ball

Cone Ball and Tee Ball are two enjoyable striking games, which are good for children of all levels. The batters hit a stationary ball from a cone or tee and run to a nearby marker cone and back while the fielders return the ball to home base.



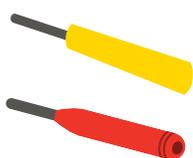
EQUIPMENT



Cones/markers



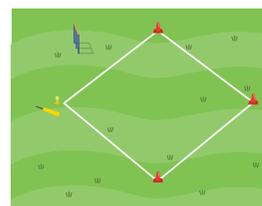
Tennis balls



Cricket and softball bats



Softball batting tee



LEARNING FOCUS

The focus of this game is on batting and fielding. Tolerance, understanding, and empathy are also important because many children may need help and encouragement.

Focus the children on:

Batting

- developing eye-hand coordination to hit a stationary ball
- running to a cone and back before the fielder throws the ball in.

Fielding

- fielding, catching, and throwing the ball into home base or a wicket.

SET UP & PLAY

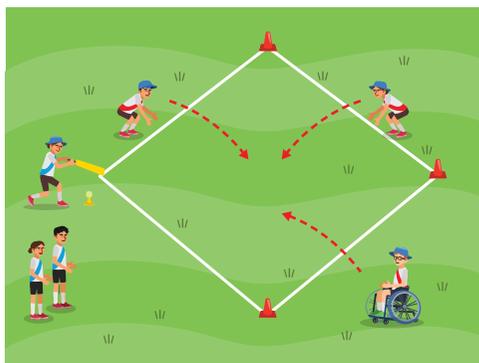
Set up:

- Place a batting cone at one end of the court or field and another marker cone 10 metres away at an angle.
- Place another cone or wicket near the batting cone but far enough away that the catcher can't be hit by the bat when swung or thrown. (Some children may instinctively let it go when they hit or run.) They should carry it with them around the cone and back.

Play:

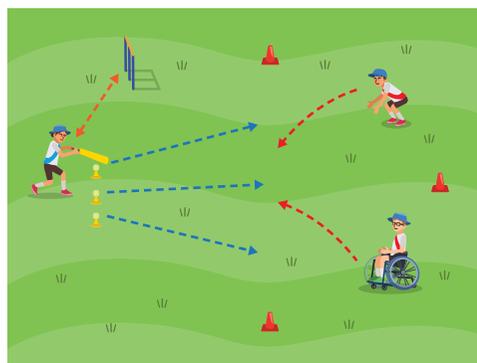
- Use small groups, and each person has a turn at batting while most of the others field. The batter tries to get as many runs as possible before the ball is returned to the cone or tee.

PROGRESSIONS Using the following progressions, think about simplifying, shaping, focusing, and enhancing.



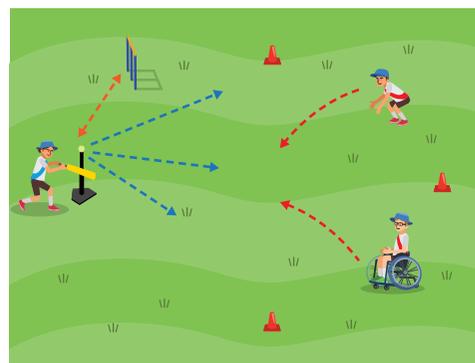
Step One:

Play as in Set up and Play, using small groups, with each person batting and trying to get as many runs as possible before the ball is returned to the cone or tee by the fielders.



Step Two:

Play by hitting three balls into the playing area. Children now carry their bat to the wicket out to the left. Players try to run as many times as they can to the wicket and back before the balls are fielded and replaced on the cones. Introduce the idea of sliding and grounding their bat to the wicket to cover ground and beat the returning balls.



Step Three:

Introduce batting with a softball bat and softball tee. Stand side-on to bat with hands positioned at the top of the bat to swing fully. Others watch to see if the batter moves their feet in line beside the tee and that feet remain on the ground as they make contact. Batters practise following through and directing the ball to where they want it to go.

LEARNING QUESTIONS

- Are you a right- or left-handed batter, and which hand should you put at the top of the bat to get the best swing? (See Concept Clinic for answers).
- How did you choose the best place to contact the ball to hit it off the cone or tee?
- How did you decide the best place to hit the ball to?
- Why should you try to bat leading with your shoulder and elbow?
- What should you think about when you are deciding whether or not to run?

REFLECTION

After the activity, can the children:

- hold and swing the bat with the correct grip at the top of the bat?
- hit a stationary ball off a cone and a batting tee?
- show tolerance, empathy, and support to children who cannot hit the ball and may need help?



Batting

Developing confidence in batting is important in striking and fielding games. Adults can help children develop this through giving children time to experiment with ...

1. **Grip:** Good batting starts with being able to hold the bat in a way that allows the player to swing the bat through a full range of movement. For right-hand batters, this means having the left hand at the top, and for left-handers, the right hand at the top of the bat.
2. **Stance:** A good stance is one that provides stability and a base for producing power through the batting swing. Generally, this means standing side-on to the ball, feet apart with knees bent, and bat raised behind the batter. This allows power to come from rotating the torso and freely swinging the bat through a complete arc of swing.
3. **Point of contact:** Perhaps the hardest part of batting is making contact with the ball. To practise the coordination required, simplify the practice by slowing down the action. This can be done by hitting the ball off a stationary tee, throwing the ball with a bounce, or bowling at a slow speed to the batter.