

CATEGORY: NICARAGUA: NOW

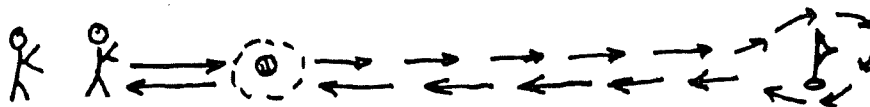
CONCEPTS: LEISURE ACTIVITIES, education

ACTIVITY: RELAY GAME FOR PRACTICING SOCCER SKILLS. The Ministry of Education of Nicaragua has developed a series of games to teach physical coordination and build physical fitness. Since soccer is one of the major sports of Nicaragua (as well as the rest of Latin America), some of the skills stressed are those that will make a successful soccer player. While the most popular U.S. sports tend to stress hand-eye coordination, soccer depends on agile footwork and the use of other parts of the body.

OBJECTIVES: Students will begin to develop a physical skill not common to U.S. sports but vital to soccer, perhaps the world's most popular game. They will become aware of how certain aspects of physical fitness and sports coordination respond to cultural factors.

MATERIALS: Soccer balls or other similar round balls; powdered chalk or other to make circles on field or gym floor; stakes, posts, flags or similar to serve as goals.

PROCEDURE: Form teams of 4-6 students. Place them in lines for a relay activity. About 20 feet in front of each team mark a circle of about 2 feet in diameter. Some 40 or 50 feet further on place stakes, flags, poles or some similar object. Balls should be placed in each circle and at the word "go" the first students run towards the circle, take the ball with short kicks up to the stake, dribble kick around the stake and return the ball to the circle in the same manner. The ball must be left in the circle: if it rolls out the player must return.



Upon depositing the ball the player races back to the line, tags the following player, and goes to the back of the line. The following and all successive players repeat the maneuver. The first team whose final player returns successfully to the starting line wins. Hands can never touch the ball. Tell the students that short, precise kicks will be better since long, hard kicks will only make them lose control of the ball. (Source: Programa de Quinto Grado, Ministerio de Educación Dirección de Programación Educativa, República de Nicaragua.)

RELATED ACTIVITIES: This activity will be much more meaningful if students discuss the following:

1. Do they feel strange or uncomfortable not being able to use their hands? Is it frustrating? Why?
2. What types of skills and physical training are needed for the sports they normally practice or watch?
3. Can they think of games they played when they were younger that prepared these or other skills?
4. What role do sports play in our lives?

