

Sparks-a-Rama
Official Rules and Regulations



Northern Michigan





Sparks-a-Rama ***Official Rules and Regulations***

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SPARKIES' FUN DAY

Sparks-a-Rama is similar to an AwanaGames meet, but yet it's different. It's a day of fun for young children and a day of exciting participation with new friends. **Coaches, remember this is not a day of high-pressured competition.** Sparks-aged children are not ready for the keen rivalry of an AwanaGames meet. Don't expect or encourage them to compete as fervently as older boys and girls. Sparkies play games for the fun of playing them. Winning can be one gratifying result of their team effort. Sparks-a-Rama should also be a ministry to parents. It is an opportunity to present clearly the gospel of Jesus Christ. **Remind parents not to stress highly competitive attitudes with their children on this special day.**

INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed for team coaches, circle directors, and judges who will participate in an authorized Awana Sparks-a-Rama meet.

AUTHORIZATION OF SPARKS-A-RAMA MEETS

All Awana Sparks-a-Rama meets must be authorized by an area event specialist or Awana missionary. If several registered churches with Sparks clubs are interested in conducting a Sparks-a-Rama meet in an area where none is scheduled, they should contact the area Awana missionary or area event specialist.

COMPOSITION OF SPARKS-A-RAMA TEAMS

A team consists of a minimum of 10 players and a maximum of 12 players, of which at least three must be boys and three must be girls. Team size may vary at the discretion of the Sparks-a-Rama Outreach Missionary or Event Specialist. Every player must participate in at least three games. The number of circles in a meet depends on the number of teams competing.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

REQUIREMENTS

1. Only currently registered churches are authorized to compete in Sparks-a-Rama meets.
2. The Sparks-a-Rama registration form accompanied by a registration fee is required. The fee covers part of the operating costs of the Sparks-a-Rama. All game equipment is provided. Until the registration fee is paid, a team cannot be officially registered. Teams are accepted on a "first-come, first-paid" basis. **No refunds will be issued to teams withdrawing their registration.**

PROCESSING REGISTRATIONS

Completed registrations will be accepted according to the order in which they are received. When all team lines on all circles available for the meet have been filled, additional team registrations will be accepted only on a standby basis. Such teams will be notified accordingly.

All teams accepting a "standby" position are expected to practice as if they were an accepted team. They must also be ready to participate if notified at least 24 hours before the meet. If a standby team is unable to participate when notified of acceptance, it loses its registration fee. Standby teams that are not asked to replace another team will be refunded the full registration fee following the Sparks-a-Rama meet.

TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

The procedure for team assignments to a particular team line/color or a particular circle (where there is more than one circle) will be specified prior to the meet.

QUALIFICATIONS OF TEAM MEMBERS

1. All Sparky clubbers in 2nd grade or lower who did not reach their 9th birthday by September 1 prior to the meet may participate.
2. All Sparks-a-Rama participants must have passed 10 sections this club year by day of the meet.
3. Teams may register for only one Sparks-a-Rama meet.

GENERAL INFORMATION

GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP

An important aspect of the Awana ministry is teaching good sportsmanship. Whether we win or lose is not as important as putting forth our best effort. Maintaining a friendly attitude at all times demonstrates that Christ can give peace and victory in every circumstance. No coach should destroy a Christian testimony by even one moment's display of poor sportsmanship.

Being a winner for the Lord is more important than winning a Sparks-a-Rama meet. We encourage all team coaches to enthusiastically motivate their team. However, one should not mistake enthusiasm for unsportsmanlike outbursts. Officials in all sports make "wrong calls," but our officials are trained, devoted, impartial, born-again people who do their best to officiate according to Sparks-a-Rama rules.

Sparks-a-Rama affords Awana leaders an opportunity to display a charitable spirit under the pressure of competition. Hundreds of unsaved people may be observing. We need to watch our actions, and all coaches should remind themselves and their team that their testimony for Christ before others is of utmost importance.

ROSTER SHEET

The team roster sheet, indicating name, age, grade in school, and date of birth of each player, must be prepared by the team coach and submitted to the area event staff prior to the meet, according to the schedule set by the event specialist.

TEAM OUTFITS

Coaches are responsible to be sure that uniforms are respectable and in keeping with Christian standards of dress. Gym shoes must be worn by everyone on the playing floor. This includes coaches, judges, circle directors, and team members.

Team coaches should wear either their Awana uniform or the special uniform chosen for their team. Awana T-shirts, which may be purchased from Awana headquarters, give a team a good appearance on the floor.

It is recommended that churches provide kneepads or coverings for the Sparky Crawl. Rolled-up tube socks provide a good cushion. Rigid plastic knee protectors will not be permitted as they may damage gym floors.

INSURANCE

Awana does not carry insurance covering team members. All churches **must** obtain insurance information for church-sponsored activities so they can supply their own protection. The coach must have in his/her possession on the gym floor a permission slip signed by a parent of each player stating, "emergency treatment may be given if necessary."

Extra players brought by a team on a "standby basis," as well as those recruited from the stands, to fill in short teams **must** have permission slips before they can participate.

SPARKS-A-RAMA AWARDS

Team plaque - To winning team of four teams participating

Participation patch - To all team members and coaches

Ribbon / Bookmarks -To all team members and coaches

PROMOTING INTEREST IN SPARKS-A-RAMA MEETS

The Sparks-a-Rama meet provides an enthusiastic introduction to Awana for people who have not had any previous contact with Awana. Here are some suggestions for encouraging spectators to attend:

1. The Sparks-a-Rama meet should be promoted at Sparks club meetings for several weeks preceding the meet. Clubbers not selected for the team can encourage the team to victory by attending the meet and cheering for friends on the team. Clubbers not on the team should be made to feel as much a part of the Sparks-a-Rama as team members.
2. Sparks-a-Rama should be promoted at Sunday school. Boys and girls who don't attend Sparks club, as well as adults who are unfamiliar with Awana, would attend a Sparks-a-Rama meet if invited. Use skits, or other interesting methods to give announcements.
3. Sparks-a-Rama should be promoted at church. The Pastor can do much to encourage the support of the Sparks club teams in the weekly church bulletin and his announcements.
4. Sparks-a-Rama should be promoted to parents. People who have never seen a Sparks-a-Rama meet may need an extra push to get them there for the first time. A visit or a letter may be all they need.
5. Sparks-a-Rama should be promoted in the neighborhood. An article announcing the team's participation in the area meet may be written for the local newspaper. Radio and TV interviews can often be arranged.

SPARKS-A-RAMA DAY SCHEDULE

ARRIVAL TIME

As announced at your coaches' meeting and/or in confirmation communication. A general guideline would be for teams to arrive about 30 minutes prior to the starting time of the event.

CIRCLE AND TEAM LINE LOCATIONS

Teams should find their assigned circle team line as soon as possible on arrival. **No running or practicing on the circle is permitted before the meet begins.**

MEETING SPARKS-A-RAMA OFFICIALS

The line judges and the circle director will give last-minute instructions to team coaches and lead in prayer. Team coaches will be given opportunity to ask last-minute questions of officials before the meet begins.

FLAG CEREMONY

All team members should be instructed before the meet to face the flag during the ceremony and to place their hands on their heart at the given signal.

PRAYER

SPARKLE TIME (suggested order)

All team members on all circles recite/sing in unison:

SPARKS THEME SONG

"Sparks for Jesus"

SPARKS YELL

Leader - *Who are we?*

Sparks - Sparks!

Leader - *Who for?*

Sparks - Jesus!

Leader - *What to do?*

Sparks - Light the world!

SPARKS VERSE

John 3:16

BIBLE VERSES

I Corinthians 15:3

I Corinthians 15:4

GOSPEL PRESENTATION

While Sparks-a-Rama is meant to be exciting and fun, the purpose of all Sparks special events is to reach unsaved families and friends for Jesus Christ. A brief gospel message is given which is skillfully designed to appeal to adults, yet to be age-appropriate for Sparkies and where unsaved parents and friends (as well as team members) are confronted with the plan of salvation. **This is a central focus of the meet,** since many parents, relatives and friends who might never attend a church-based Awana function may have their only opportunity to hear the gospel. It is most commonly done just prior to the start of the events, or at a "halftime" break during the event.

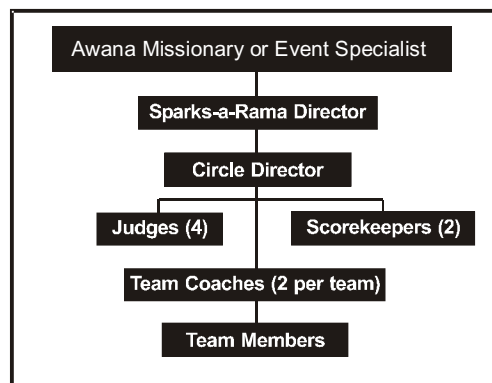
Recognition may also be given to Sparkies for their outstanding achievements.

Coaches should instruct their team members to sit quietly without talking or whispering during the message and recognition time. Players are not permitted to leave their team line.

SPARKS-A-RAMA PERSONNEL

CHAIN OF COMMAND ON EACH CIRCLE

Team members should ask questions only of their coach. If the coach has a question or comment, he/she speaks only to the judge on his/her team line. If the judge cannot answer the question satisfactorily, he consults the circle director. **The circle director's decision is final. Unless requested by the circle director, no team coach is allowed on the game floor to consult him at any time.**



SPARKS-A-RAMA EVENT SPECIALIST

He oversees the entire operation from planning through team registrations to supervision of the Sparks-a-Rama meet.

CIRCLE DIRECTOR

Is responsible for:

- Coaches' meeting at start of meet
- Circle operation after official start
- Declaring reruns
- Indicating event winners
- Coordination and ultimate responsibilities of judges
- Scorekeepers' activities
- Final word on all matters not covered in written rules

JUDGES

In each circle, four trained officials who are familiar with all Sparks-a-Rama games, rules governing each, and how to resolve tie events, tie heats, or tie score, assist the circle director in watching for false starts, broken rules, fallen pins, interference, etc.

OFFICIAL SCOREKEEPERS

Two individuals in each circle record the scores for each event as reported by the circle director.

OFFICIAL STARTER

He gives the starting signal for all circles at beginning of most events or heats.

TEAM COACHES

Two coaches are required for each team. Team coaches are **not** permitted in the playing area any time during the Sparks-A-Rama meet, except to position players for the next event. They must give directions from the sidelines only, out of the way of players and judges.

1. Coaches may ask their line judge to review a decision with the circle director.
2. A coach may be asked to leave the floor when the circle director considers it necessary.
3. All coaches are advised and encouraged to attend the Sparks-a-Rama coaches' training session.
4. All coaches must remain behind their team line at all times while Sparks-a-Rama events are in progress (except during Sparky Crawl).

GENERAL RULES/DEFINITIONS

Arranged alphabetically for quick reference

ADHERENTS

No adherents are permitted on gym shoes, including everything from professional adherents to wet cloths. No cloths will be allowed on the gym floor. Violators will be disqualified. The best safety measure is a good pair of gym shoes with a clean tread.

BALLOONS

Nine to eleven inch balloons are inflated to about eight inches in diameter.

CENTER BEANBAG

In game events that finish in the middle of the circle, and which have second place; a beanbag is placed on the intersection of the two diagonal lines with the center pin on top of it. At the conclusion of the event or heat, second-place points are awarded the team of the player who has possession of the center beanbag (see *General Rules* "Possession").

CENTER PIN

In events that finish in the middle of the circle, a game pin is set at the intersection of the two diagonal lines. (It is placed on top of the center beanbag when first- and second-place points are to be awarded.) First-place points are awarded the team whose player has possession of center pin at end of the event or heat (see *General Rules* "Possession"). It is recommended that 6 oz. of sand be added to each pin.

CIRCLE PINS

(See Game Circle Diagram) All circle pins must be passed with both feet outside the circle in all running events. No jumping of pins is allowed. If a pin has fallen, that point on the circle normally marked by the pin must be passed with both feet outside the circle as if the pin were in its proper place. (Players may cut inside the circle between circle pins, but they must be outside the circle at each pin). Players knocking over a circle pin during a game disqualifies his/her team for that event or heat. It is recommended that 6 oz. of sand be added to each pin.

DISQUALIFICATION

A team may be disqualified by the circle director and/or judges at any time during an event for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Unnecessary roughness or other poor conduct.
2. Knocking over a circle pin
3. Causing interference to other players.
4. Breaking other game rules not listed here, but described elsewhere in this manual.
5. Play which is not according to the spirit of the game. (see General Rules "Spirit of the Game")

Teams are not disqualified if a player steps outside of the game square during a running event.

Coaches should instruct players to go all the way into the center for each event — no matter how hopeless it may seem — because the apparent winners may have been disqualified.

FALSE START

The circle director and judges will call a "false start" when action is started in an event before the starting signal. The event in that circle is brought to a halt as rapidly as possible, and then restarted by the circle director. Two false starts in one event or heat by a single team disqualifies that team for that event or heat. The remaining teams will be restarted.

FLOOR MARKINGS

Lines are marked on the floor with tape. The width of the tape provides a margin for error in games, which use tape boundaries. If any player's foot protrudes beyond the tape in these games, his/her team will be disqualified for that event or heat.

INTERFERENCE

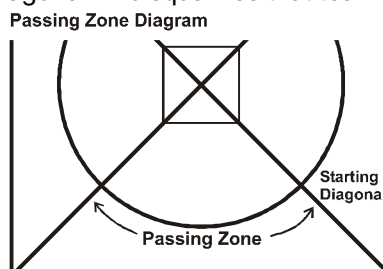
The circle director and judges may declare "interference" if, in the opinion of these officials, a team's fair chance of winning is impaired by something other than normal breaks and hazards of the game. This includes hampering of teams' or players' progress by someone other than players participating in a particular event or heat, such as officials, spectators, coaches, and nonparticipating players of opposing teams. When a player or coach causes interference, his/her team will be disqualified from that event. Interference may also be called when players' progress is hindered by foreign matter or water on the floor. When interference is called, the circle director may declare a rerun.

PARTICIPATION

All players must play in a minimum of three events and no more than of six events.

PASSING ZONE

In the Relay event (Sparky Safari), the beanbag must be passed within that section of the circle contained within the team zone assigned to each team (see Diagram). Passing the beanbag in any other zone — including passing it over a starting diagonal — disqualifies that team for that event.



POSSESSION

In events using the center pin and center beanbag to determine the winners, the player must have possession of the center pin or center beanbag to be awarded points. Touching the pin or beanbag is not enough. However, if the player who has possession of the center pin or center beanbag has been disqualified, the next player into the center will be awarded points (see *General Rules* "Winner of Event").

PRACTICES

In preparing for the Sparks-a-Rama, practices are recommended. Each team is allowed an unlimited number of practices in preparing for the Sparks-a-Rama meet.

RERUN

A rerun of an event or heat will be held for interference calls. A rerun is also in order when, in the opinion of the circle director and judges, the awarding of points cannot be determined fairly.

A team will not be allowed to participate in the rerun if:

1. Any of its players were the cause of an interference call, **or**
2. The team had already been disqualified for a violation previous to an interference call or other situation requiring a rerun (see *General Rules* "Interference").

SCORING

The scoring for each event is stated in the game rules. The circle director in consultation with the line judges determines who the winners are and reports to the scorekeepers. Players should not leave the circle or set down the center pin or beanbag until the circle director has determined their team standings

SPIRIT OF THE GAME

When a team deliberately stretches existing rules to play a game differently from that planned by the national event team, the spirit of the game has been violated. The circle director and judges will declare the team disqualified for that event or heat, even though the team may have followed the letter of the rules as written.

STARTING DIAGONAL

(See Game Circle Diagram) Events, which are run around the circle, will be started with the player outside the circle and behind the starting diagonal for his/her team color. All running events are run in a counterclockwise direction.

STARTING SIGNAL

When each team is ready, the judge on that line signals the circle director. When all judges in a circle have indicated their teams are ready, the circle director signals the official starter. When all circle directors have signaled, the official starter will start the event.

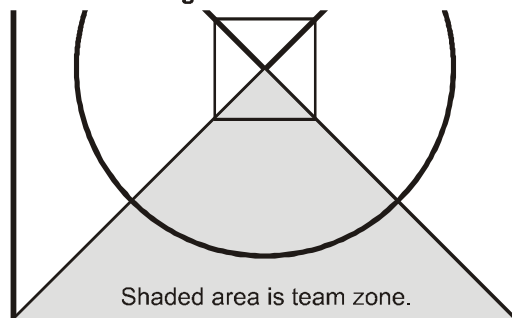
TEAM LINES

(See Game Circle Diagram) Red, blue, green, and yellow lines forming a square outside the circle give team boundaries. Players not participating in an event must stay seated behind these lines.

TEAM ZONE

The triangle within the square, bounded by the team line and the two diagonal lines, forms the team zone.

Team Zone Diagram



TIE GAME (EVENT)

When two teams, in the decision of the circle director, gain possession of the center pin or center beanbag at the same instant, a tie is declared. Available points are divided equally between the tied teams. If it is a tie for first place in a game having second place, first and second place points are added together and split, eliminating second place. If it is a tie for second place, second place points are split.

TIE SCORE

When two or more teams are tied at the end of the last event, the tie may be resolved by playing one heat of the Sparky Balloon Pop – coaches choose who plays.

WINNER OF AN EVENT

The circle director declares the winner(s) of each event. He may consult with the judges to determine the winner. Players must hold the center pin or center beanbag until the circle director indicates which teams have won unless utilizing scoring pins. If the player holding the center pin has been disqualified, the player with possession of the center beanbag will receive first place points. If the circle director can determine the third place player, that player will be awarded second place points. If the player with the center beanbag is disqualified, the circle director will award second place to the third place player. Where it is not possible for the circle director to determine the winner, he may call for a rerun.

GAME EVENTS

EVENT 1—SPARKY CRAWL

10 to 12 players; two heats

1st place - four points

2nd place - two points

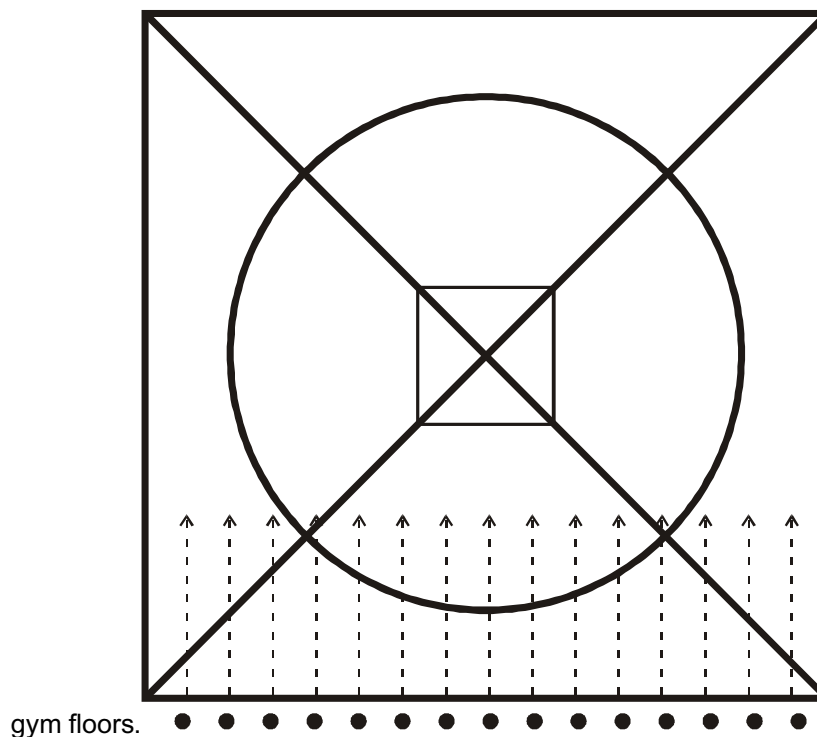
Equipment: center pin and beanbag, four wristbands for pre-determined players

Players spread out along the entire line on their hands and knees behind team color lines. One coach from each team crosses to the opposite color line. At signal, all teams crawl on hands and knees across to opposite team line. When center of circle is clear of players, circle director places center pin on top of beanbag. As soon as entire team has completely crossed the team line opposite its starting line, the team coach sends a pre-determined player into the center for pin or beanbag.

Game will be played a second time with players crawling back to their original team line.

It is recommended that churches provide kneepads or coverings for the Sparky Crawl. Rolled-up tube socks provide a good cushion. Rigid plastic knee protectors will not be permitted as they may damage

Sparky Crawl Diagram



EVENT 2—SPARKY SAFARI

Six players; two heats

1st heat - three girls - one lap each

2nd heat - three boys - one lap each

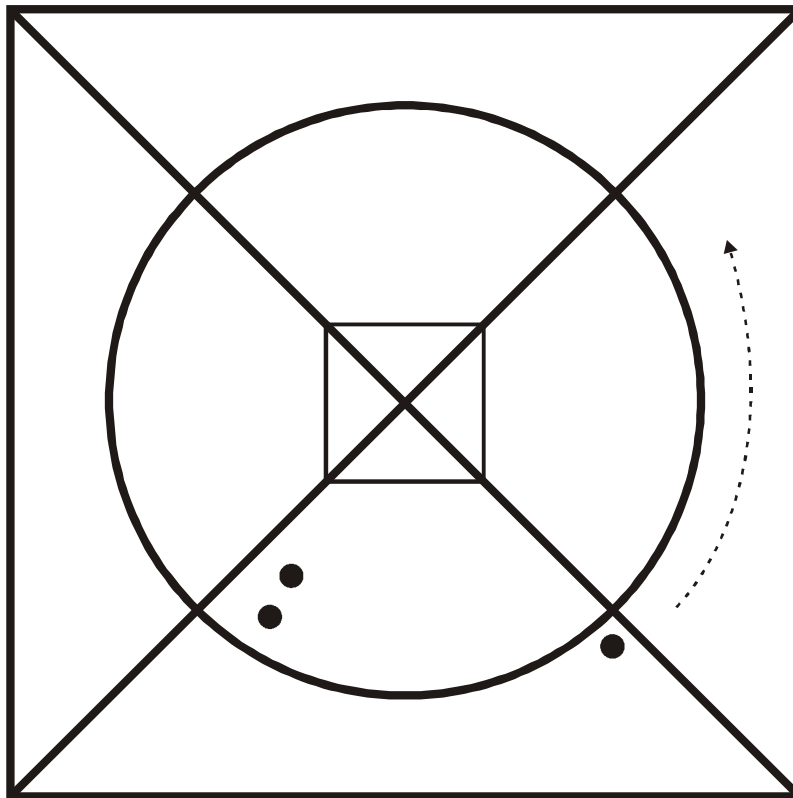
1st place - four points

2nd place - two points

Equipment: Four circle pins, four beanbags, center pin and beanbag, *four batons*

First player is positioned at starting pin. The other two runners wait inside the circle within their team zone. Beanbag is placed on first player's head. At signal, player #1 runs around circle and passes beanbag to player #2, who places beanbag on his/her head and runs around circle. Player #2 passes beanbag to #3 who runs around circle, around player's starting pin, and into center for pin or beanbag. Player #3 must have beanbag on head until he/she crosses the circle line for the approach to the center pin. If bag falls off while player is running around circle, player may not touch bag with hands until it hits the floor. Player must then **stop** and place bag back on the head **before** continuing. While moving, player may not touch bag with his/her hands. Beanbag must be passed (handed off, not thrown) and placed on the next player's head within passing zone. After passing beanbag, player returns to team line. Hairstyles and accessories should not be used to enhance winning.

Sparky Safari Diagram



EVENT 3—BALLOON BATTLE

10 players; two heats

Five players (girls and/or boys) per heat

1st place (lowest number of units) - six points

2nd place (2nd lowest number of units) - four points

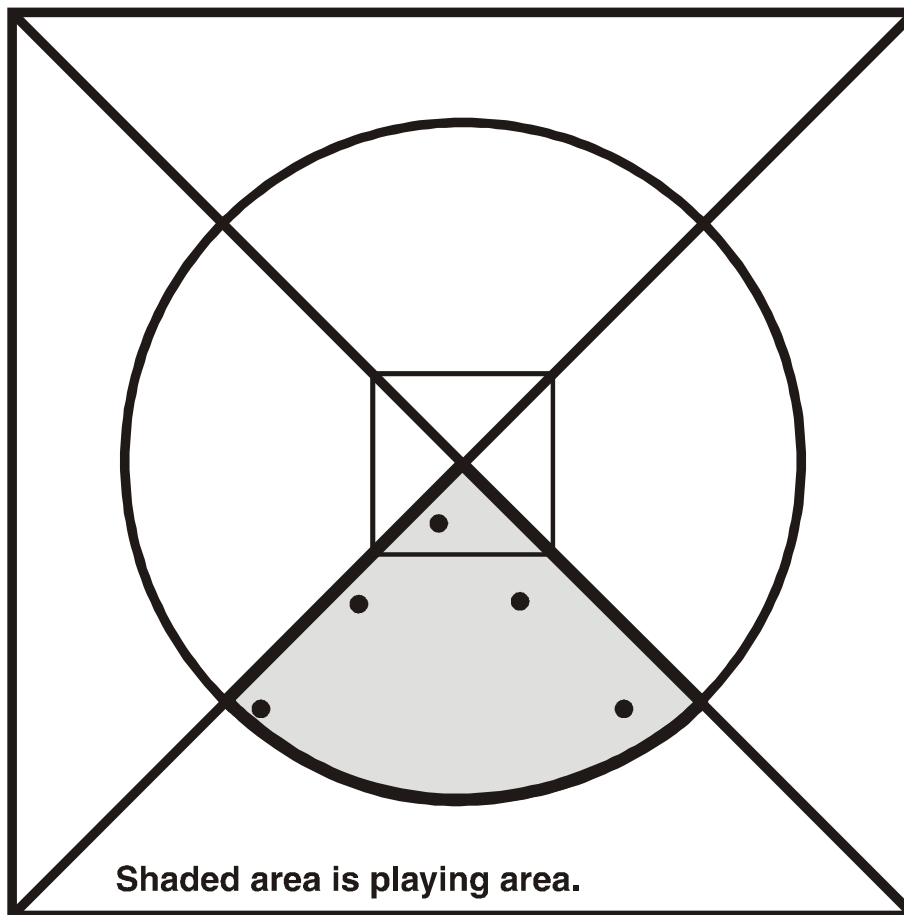
3rd place (3rd lowest number of units) - two points

Equipment: two nine-inch balloons, two sixty-foot lengths of lightweight rope

One coach from each team holds rope stretched from corner to corner, making visible boundaries to help players stay within their triangles. (Balloons do not have to go over the rope.)

Players stand anywhere within their own playing area. Circle director holds balloons and stands in center of circle. At signal, balloons are tossed into air. Players bat balloons with their hands to keep them from touching the floor in their area. Players may not hold balloons or step out of their area. When a balloon touches floor within a team's playing area, that team receives one unit. There is a **60-second** time limit for each heat. Circle director starts new heat in center of circle. If a balloon lands outside of playing areas, circle director or line judge restarts play from center of circle until time runs out. Players may participate in only one heat.

Balloon Battle Diagram



EVENT 4—RABBIT HUNT

10 players; four heats

1st place - six points

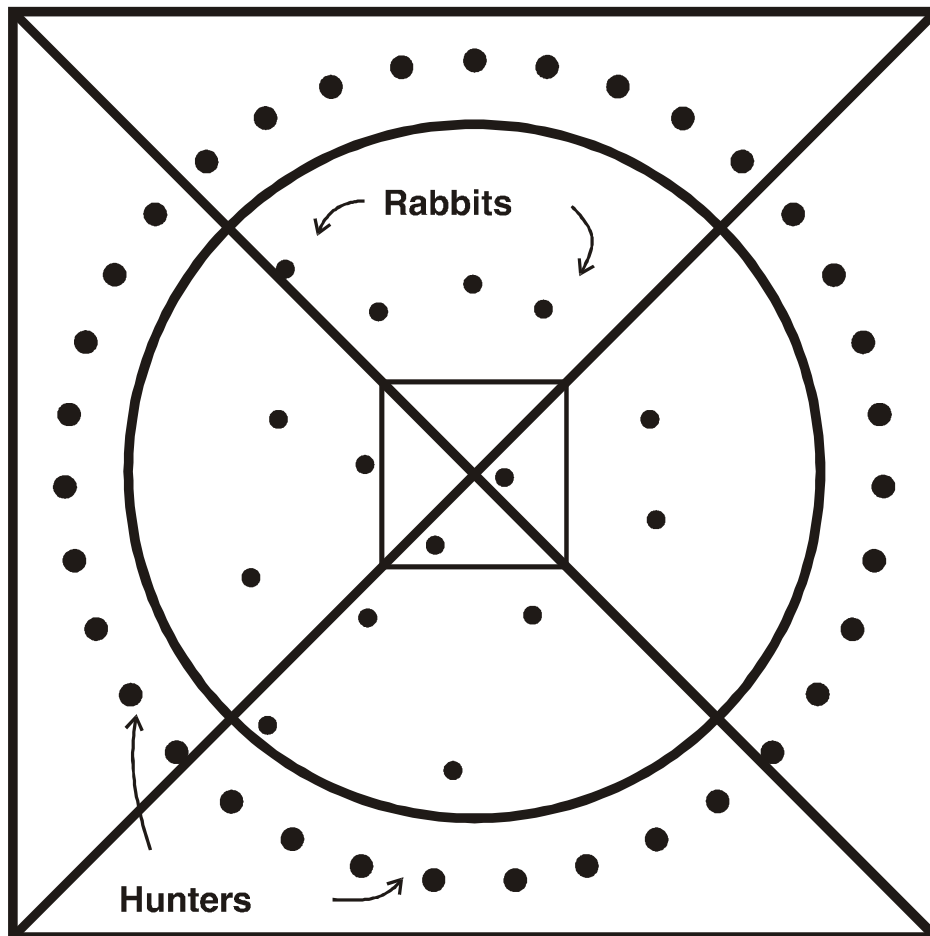
2nd place - four points

3rd place - two points

Equipment: two sport balls

One team (rabbits) stands anywhere within the circle. The three other teams (hunters) position themselves evenly anywhere around the circle. At signal, hunters toss balls, trying to hit rabbits. When hit, rabbits leave circle, returning to their team line. Rabbits are disqualified if they step outside circle before being hit. Hunters may not step inside circle while tossing ball. Action stops after **30 seconds**; rabbits still in circle are counted. Play is repeated until all teams have had a turn to be rabbits. Team with the most rabbits left in the circle wins.

Diagram 5



EVENT 5—SPARKY TRAIN

10 players; two heats

1st heat - five players (one lap each)

2nd heat - five different players (one lap each)

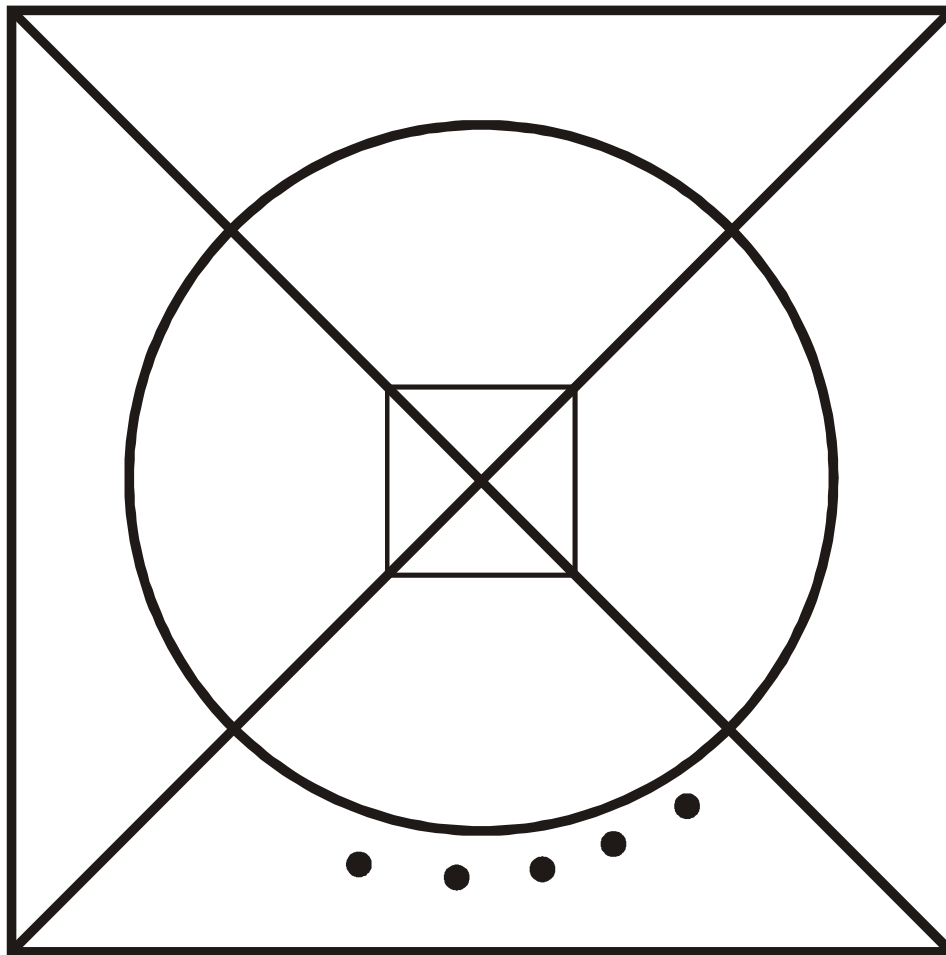
1st place - four points

2nd place - two points

Equipment: Four circle pins, center pin and beanbag & wristband to identity last player.

Players line up behind one another outside their circle line, as pictured on diagram. Using both hands, each player grasps the waist of player in front of him/her to form a train. At signal, train runs around circle. If train becomes disconnected (player loses hold of another player), train must stop, rejoin its players, and then continue. When all five players cross the starting line, the last player separates from the train and runs into the center for center pin or beanbag.

Sparky Train Diagram



EVENT 6—SPARKY BALLOON POP

10 players; two heats

1st heat - last player is a girl

2nd heat - last player is a boy

You must use all players on your team in this event.

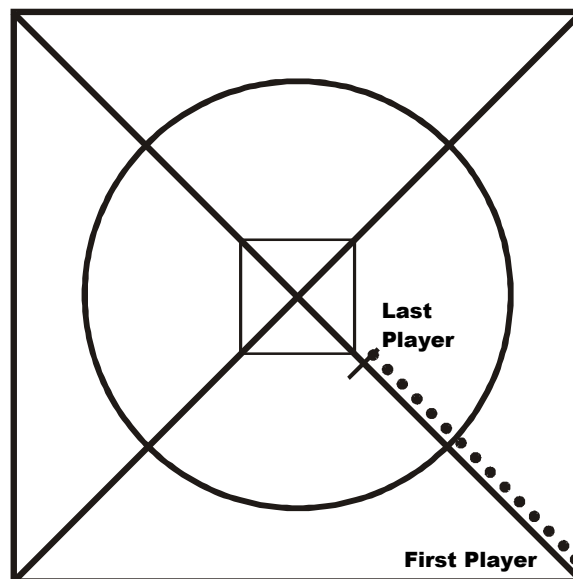
1st place - four points

2nd place - two points

Equipment: Four nine-inch balloons per heat

All team players straddle their team diagonal line with their backs toward center of circle, as close together as they wish. Last player stands on the eight-foot hash mark. First player holds balloon on back of his/her head. At signal, the balloon is passed through the legs of the players to the last player. It is not necessary that each player touch the balloon. When last player in line has possession of balloon, he/she runs into his/her team's inner triangle, places balloon on the floor, and sits on balloon until it breaks. First player to break balloon within his/her triangle wins. If balloon breaks before it gets to last player, a line judge may insert another balloon.

Sparky Balloon Pop Diagram



EVENT 7—SPARKY BEANBAG – IN AND OUT

10 players - two heats

1st place - four points

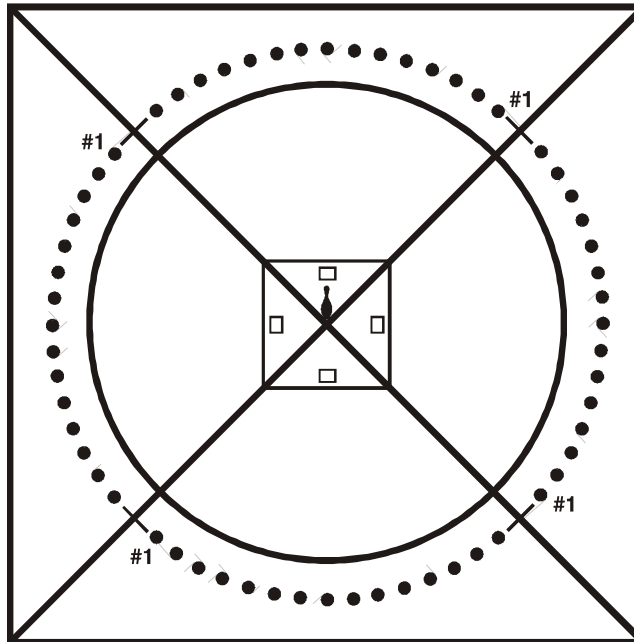
2nd place - two points

You must use all members of your team in this event.

Equipment: Four small containers with four beanbags already in containers, four circle pins, center pin and beanbag

Players line up on their team's circle line. Container is set in team's small triangle, and the beanbag is already in the container. At signal, player #1 (farthest from his/her team's starting diagonal) runs to container, retrieves beanbag and brings it back to player #2. Player #2 runs to container and places beanbag into container, returns to team line and tags player #3. Players may not proceed into the circle before being tagged or given the beanbag. Action continues until all players have participated. The last player with beanbag in hand runs into the center for pin or center beanbag. The winners must retain possession of their beanbag when they grab the center pin or center beanbag.

Sparky Beanbag — In and Out Diagram



OFFICIAL AWANA SPARKS-A-RAMA CIRCLE

The Sparks-A-Rama Circle is 30 feet in diameter surrounded by a 37-40 foot square. Each team is designated by a color and occupies a quarter-circle or one side of that square.

Key to diagram:

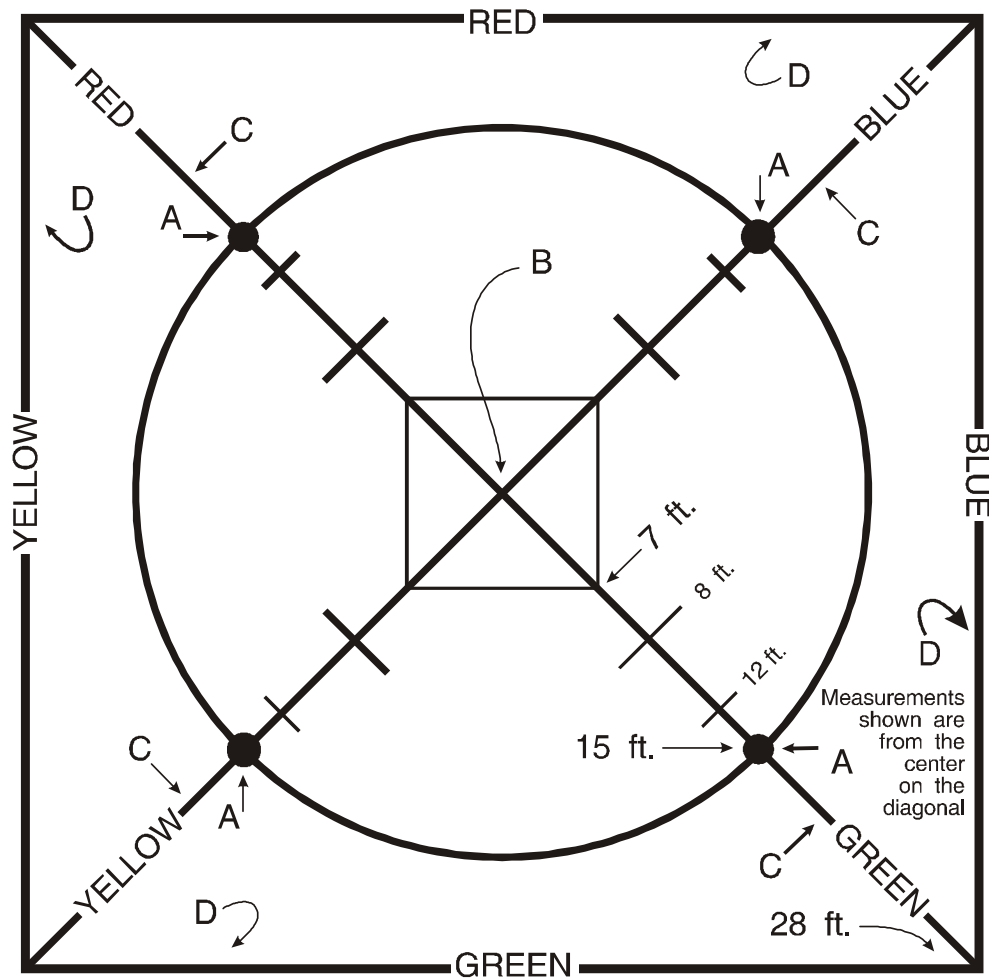
A—Circle Pins

B—Center Pin; Center Beanbag

C—Diagonal or Starting Line

D—Team Lines or AwanaGames Square

Starting position of player(s) is indicated with the rules for each event. Make sure your team is familiar with the Awana Circle.



Sparks-a-Rama



AwanaGames meets are exciting, but they couldn't even be scheduled without your Awana missionary. He's/She's doing a big job and needs help. You invest time and effort in your club...are you investing in your missionary, too?

Your Awana missionary travels throughout his/her territory starting new clubs/programs and counseling established ones. But he's/she's often hindered by lack of support.

Today, more than ever, your Awana missionary needs people to share in his/her ministry. Can he/she count on your faithful support ?

...the laborer is worthy of his hire.

Luke 10:7

