

The MIGHTY BOX GAME

Structure

Mastering Strategy and Engagement

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The Mighty Box Game

Supporting Resource: Deep dive into Spatial Awareness

Introduction

In the world of quick and novel games, sometimes we miss the opportunity to play simple games that we can continuously change, adapt, modify and build upon to move from students playing the game, to students thinking about the game. This is a short resource that has evolved over 20 years to become a “Swiss army knife” of teaching. As I have progressed in my career, I find I have found the greatest joy in teaching new games (or revisiting command games), when students finally make the connection between how and where they move to the goal of the game. A student who anticipates a cross-court shot in badminton by watching their opponents shoulder, a team that, after 8 years of PE, finally sets up a give-and-go play, a student who calls an audible “handle” in ultimate to move the disc to the other side of the field... To me, these are the moments when physical activity becomes EDUCATION. Critical thought and turned into action.

This is a short resource that will contain no new ideas, but it applies to almost all of our units. It is filled with opportunities to innovate and build on a solid foundation of REAL LIFE athletics and pick up games from around the world. Most students will not play in fully organized games, so why is that often our focus, to play the “Real Game.” Of course, it is part of the process, but the lead-up games become the “Real Game” for most of us.

This process all started when I was playing competitive Ultimate Frisbee back in the day. Our captain picked up a warm-up game from a man they called Gandalf (he was 80 years old with a long white beard and only threw forehands in an international competition in Bowsman, Montana). The game is called BOXTIMATE.



Key Teaching Points

Three vs. Three Mentality

There will always be the structure of the King of Pick Up Games... 3 vs 3 Basketball:

- **Check:** Before starting play, the offence will check the object with their opponent
 - Clarification... check, meaning to pick up your checks. Defence should not pass the object back unless they have sorted out their defensive strategy. This alone is a win.
- **Clear:** Once an attempt to score has been made OR a turnover has occurred, the team must clear the ball to the appointed spot
 - Clarification: In a full-court game, after a possession change, the new offensive team must cross the center of the court/field. This is what the clearing accomplishes on a smaller court.
- **Keeps:** Personal call, but in Physical Education, I never play keeps. If a team scores, the other team gets the ball at the top (Clearing point or line)

Four Keys to Game Modification

1. **Change Space:** By making spaces smaller, there are more decisions to make. You will see soon that teams can equalize abilities with the system quickly
2. **Change Teams:** Smaller teams mean increased participation and contacts with objects and moving through space
3. **Change Rules:** Adjust rules as you need to emphasize certain skills - improvise, change on the spot, introduce challenge and productive struggle
4. **Change Equipment:** Playing ultimate? Play with a rubber chicken or tennis ball

Student Choice

Once the structure is established, give students the ability to modify the games as they will. Students have so little say in their lives these days; this is a great way to give up some of your control.



Student Officiated

Once set up, students manage their fields and work through challenges independently of the teacher.

Start Simple, Add Complexity

Begin with basic games or movements, then progressively layer in challenges.

Tactics

- Introduce offensive and defensive strategies as early as grade 3.
- Emphasize teamwork and decision-making in dynamic situations.
- Progress from individual awareness to complex, game-based tactics

Equipment

- **Disc Cones:** Please sort the colours of your disc cones on the stack. Small things lead to big changes in lessons. I pull off the two or three colours on a stack and have students use 4 of the same colour for the box. For the advanced version, they stack one colour on top of the other (eg, 4 white for the first box, and 4 blue for the secondary box if needed)
- **Pylon Cones:** Old school big cones for the clearing area are great for fields and gyms to clearly see the location (you can use a disc for this as well, but something bigger is helpful)
- **Pinnies/Belts:** Great if you're going to move into bigger games to combine teams. I rarely use team identification for small games.

Uneven teams

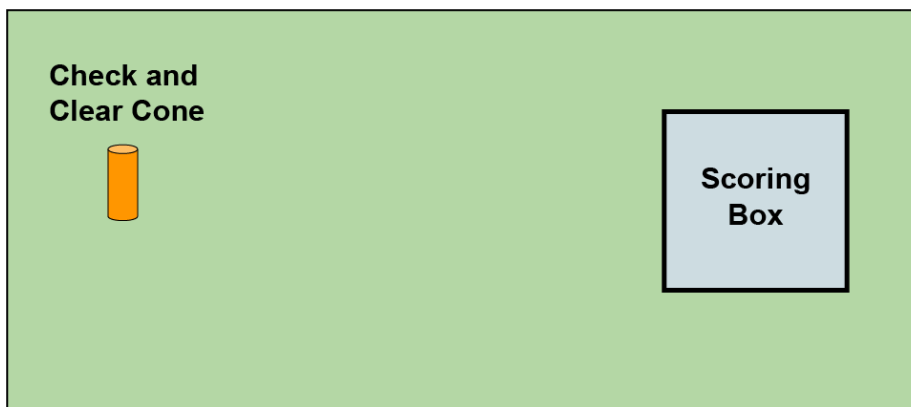
In the event of unbalanced teams, I generally have one team play short-handed. However, many teachers do not like this method, so in the Might Box Game, the scoring player switches to the other team for the next round and cannot score three times in a row (or any other parameter you want to add).

Game Terms and Vocabulary

A great way to introduce concepts and vocabulary and auditory language into the class. Expect students to use the terms for the activity.

Structure and Set-Up

1. Mighty Box Game Set up (Basic)



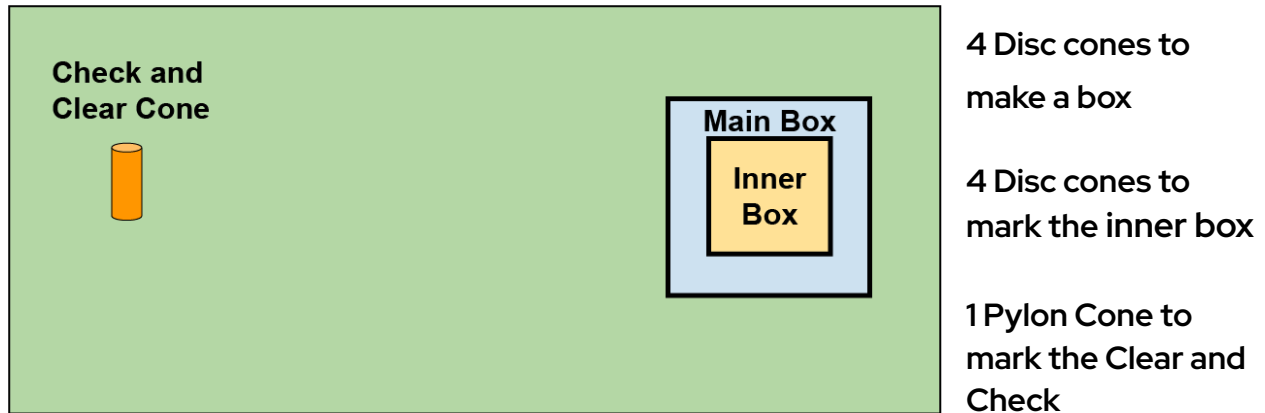
4 Disc cones to make a box

1 Pylon cone to mark the Clear and Check

- Players determine distances and spaces between the check cone and box, but the teacher can provide parameters
- After the initial few points, players can negotiate changes before the check
- Depending on the game minimum of 5m... usually, but more like 10m



2. Mighty Box Game Set up (Advanced)



- Players determine distances and spaces between the check cone and box, but the teacher can provide parameters
- After the initial few points, players can negotiate changes before the check
- Once the game has started, if one team scores x amount of points (2 or 3) in a row, the opposing team can move the top 4 disc cones to form an inner box that will become the other team's new scoring zone. They can make it whatever size they want (within reason).
- You can also stack another cone for the check and clear cone to have an additional Check cone for teams that are dominating a game.



Variations and Games

Box-Timate (Chicken-Timate) / Pole-Timate

- The three-on-three of Ultimate Frisbee - used to be our warm-up game
- Great to see how your students will do in game speed.
- The goal is to catch the disc in the box
 - Offence can only spend 3 sec in the box at a time
 - Defence is not permitted in the box ever
 - No Steps
- **Modified rules Progression**
 - Progressive Infractions: No contact, no steps, dropped disc = turnover. Then add as you decide: Fast count, double team, disc space, straddle, wrapping, and vision blocking are marking violations (contact, air violations).
 - No pull yet - Just a Check
 - 5 to 10 Stalls to turn over
 - Incomplete pass - turnover and a clear
 - Can throw in any direction
- **Progressions:**
 - One to one defence to zone, adding a disc handler for calling audibles, swinging the disc, plays, positions, fakes and deception...
- **Variation (Pole-timate)**
 - Instead of using a box, you can have a team pass the ball around a cone (or a pole such as a soccer pole) and back to the check for a point.

Box Rugby

- The three-on-three of Touch Rugby - used to be our warm-up game
 - Larger fields make it easier to get space
 - A wider box may help initially to get into the box.
 - Passing parameters can be placed on teams
- The goal is to run or pass the ball into the Box (altered rule from forward pass into the box)



- Initially, any pass is allowed. Advance to the backwards pass
- When a touch is made, a roll back is made, and the game continues
- Teams can block players from moving into the box, but cannot make physical contact (like a screen in basketball)
- Teams are encouraged to swing the ball backwards to find a path to the box

Box Tchoukball

- The three-on-three of Tchoukball used to be our warm-up game and to build positioning.
- Could run 6 rebounders in a gym at a time
- Maximum 3 passes (I use a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 3)
- **ALTERED CLEAR:** After a shot is made or a team scores, the clear point is next to the rebounder and called a Breakdown (from the game). A breakdown pass is considered pass zero.
- Teams must clear the ball to the center or the cone before attempting to shoot or after a turnover.
- No Interceptions or interference allowed
- Lots of opportunity to talk about Wall Audibles and how to anticipate a shot to catch
- Also, progression to add the jump shot into the games on a small level
- With 3 players, there is a 50% chance of getting the ball each pass so active movement is essential.

Box Handball

- Very similar to Ultimate, but with a ball and steps
- Can increase the distance to the box to account for steps and handling.
- Encourage speed of passing and no judgment passes to increase participation.



Box Volleyball

- The three-on-three of Volleyball used to be our warm-up game and to build accuracy
- Ideally, start with a bigger box and a shorter length to the box.
- **Two ways to play:**
 - Three hits to get the ball into the box and pass the ball back to the other team. Starts with a throw. It is possible to keep the rally going from team to team with some practice
 - Put the box in the middle and have two teams around. Think of it like a game of spike ball with a volleyball, and the players are the rebounders.
 - One team hits the ball to the other team, and they get three hits to get the ball into the square. On that hit, they send the ball out of the circle to the other team, who tries to get it back into the square. Play continues until there is an error.
 - Very different game, but it came from the same principles.

Bonus Game:

- Put the ball in the Hoop

From spatial awareness Assessment and Tracking

Observe and assess:

- Spatial awareness: the ability to navigate and adjust to open spaces.
- Tactical understanding: applying strategies to achieve objectives.
- Creativity: using diverse movements to explore space.

How students:

- Move to open spaces.
- Execute manipulative skills (catching, throwing, passing).



- Show creativity in movement.
- Apply tactics like offence and defence.

Use **baseline activities** (e.g., walking, jogging, and directional changes) to gauge progress and identify skill gaps.

Use **warm-ups** and **relays** as informal assessments to identify skill gaps.

Summary of Key Points

1. Begin with simple activities and progressively increase complexity.
2. Build foundational spatial awareness skills through safe and structured activities.
3. Gradually introduce tactical elements, fostering teamwork and strategic thinking.
4. Incorporate tactical thinking through structured games and activities.
5. Use creative movement to engage students and encourage exploration.
6. Assess students' abilities with baseline activities and adjust complexity as needed.
7. Promote safety by progressing from slow to faster-paced activities.

