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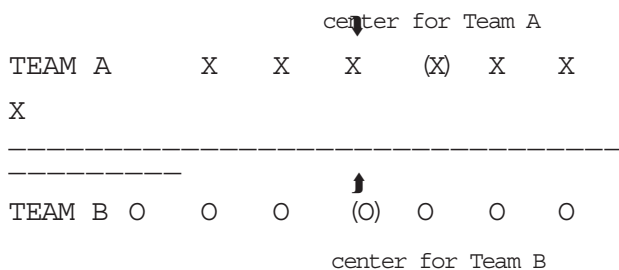
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# BALLOON GAMES

Twice the fun of a church board meeting  
with only half the hot air,  
balloon games are an inexpensive good time.  
Whether the object is to keep the balloons  
afloat or pop them like pimples on prom  
night, most of these games work with any  
size group. For even more  
balloon games, simply adapt some of the  
ball games in this book by substituting a  
balloon for the ball. (For water balloon

## BAIL-O-WACK

This game is like volleyball, but it's played with a balloon and without a net. To set up use masking tape to make a straight line across the middle of the playing area. The length of the line in feet should be twice the total number of players on both teams (for example, for 10 players use a 20-foot line).



Divide into two teams, and have each team stand facing the other across the line (as if it were the net) in a single row on each side. Players should stand four feet apart from teammates, and two feet back from the line. Players cannot move from this position during play, though one foot may leave the floor to kick the balloon if the other stays in place.

The object is to volley a balloon back and forth

across the line without allowing it to touch the floor on your team's side. The balloon can be batted with hands or kicked. As with the ball in volleyball, contact with the balloon may alternate between players on the same team, but the balloon cannot be touched by the same player twice in a row. Unlike volleyball, however, teams are not limited to three contacts in order to get the balloon back over the line to the other team.

The middle player in each team's line is the "center." Each round begins with one of the centers serving by tapping the balloon across the line to the other team. The team that won the point in the previous round gets to serve. A team scores a point when the balloon touches the floor on the opposite team's side of the line. There is no out-of-bounds play, so if the balloon is batted over the heads of players and out of their reach, the opposite team scores a point. A team also scores a point when a player on the opposite team makes contact with the balloon twice in a row or moves out of position.

You'll need extra balloons in case one bursts and a referee to make sure players stay in position. *Phil*

*Blackwell*

## BALLOON BALANCE RELAY

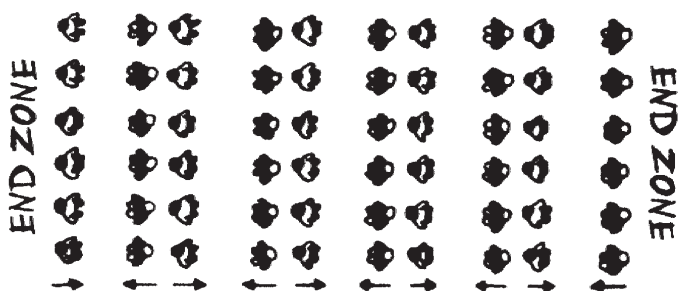
Form teams and give each team one baseball cap or painter's cap. The first player from each team dons the cap and balances an inflated balloon on the bill (bouncing on the bill is permitted). The players then walk to a point 10 feet away and back again while balancing the balloon on their hats. Then, using their hands, they pass the balloon and hat to the next players in line, who do the same thing.

A player whose balloon falls to the floor or is held up by any part of the body has to start over. (No fair blowing on the balloon to keep it in place.) The first team whose players all complete the circuit are declared the uncontested balloon balance relay champions of the world. *Michael Frisbie*

## BALLOON BASKETBALL

Divide into two teams with an equal number of players. Arrange chairs as shown in the diagram, back to back in rows except for the two outer rows that face inward. One team faces in one direction, the second team faces the other direction.

After all the players are seated, toss a balloon into the center of the chairs. Players aren't allowed



to stand as they try to bat the balloon with their hands into the end zone that the teams face. As soon as the balloon drops into an end zone over the heads of the last row of people, the appropriate team scores two points. If the balloon goes out of bounds, just throw it back into the center. Play ends at 20 points or after 15 minutes, whichever comes first.

## BALLOON BAT RELAY

Teams line up, single file, with kids as close together

as possible. There should be a space between the legs to bat a balloon down the line, through the legs, with the hands. This is not easy if all the kids are standing close together. The person at the front of the line starts the balloon back and when it reaches the last person, he takes it to the front and continues until the team is once again in starting order.

*David Parke*

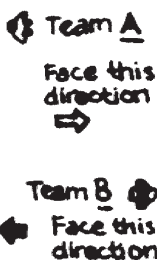
## BALLOON SMASH

Tie an inflated balloon around your waist and let it hang from behind. Try to break everyone else's balloon with a rolled up newspaper without allowing someone to bust your own balloon. You win if you are the last person wearing an inflated balloon. (Newspapers are the only weapons allowed.)

## BALLOON STOMP

Blow up a balloon and tie it to your ankle with a piece of string. Try to stomp and pop everyone else's balloon while keeping yours intact. You win if you are the last person wearing an inflated balloon.

Or try **Balloon Stomp Flickers**—same game but played under a strobe light. (By the way, a strobe light is a great variation for air hockey, Ping-Pong, and pillow fights.)



Or make it a team game with **Technicolor Stomp**, for which you'll need lots of colored balloons. Divide into teams and assign each team a color—red, blue, orange, yellow, etc. Then give each team an equal number of balloons of its color. For example, the red team is given, say, 20 red

balloons. They begin by blowing up all the balloons and tying them off. When the actual game begins, the balloons from all the teams are released onto the floor, and the object is to stomp on and pop all the balloons that are not your team color while attempting to protect your own team's balloons. After the time limit is up (two or three minutes should do it), the popping of balloons stops and each team gathers up its remaining balloons. The team with the most balloons intact is the winner. *David*

*Coppengde and Christine R. Rollins*

## BALLOON BUST

Here is a creative way to pair up people for competition. Half of the group members write their names on small pieces of paper, which are then put inside balloons (one name per balloon).

Blow up the balloons and tie them off. The rest of the kids randomly grab a balloon, pop it, and pair up with the person whose name is found inside the balloon. The last two people to pair up lose.

## BALLOON BUMP

Here's an indoor game for moderately sized groups (20 or more kids). Divide players into groups of four to six or so; place about as many chairs as there are groups randomly around the room; place lots of deflated balloons on each chair; then instruct each group to form a huddle of people, arms around shoulders, in the middle of the room.

On "Go!" each huddle shuffles to a chair. One person from each huddle grabs a balloon, blows it up, ties it off, and drops it into the middle of the huddle. Players in the huddle must keep the balloon from touching the floor by pressing against the balloon with their stomachs. As they do so, they must move toward another chair to repeat the process. At the second chair they visit, they must blow up two balloons; at the third chair, three balloons, etc.—all the while maintaining their huddle and keeping their balloons from falling to the floor.

If a balloon falls, the huddle must stop and put it back in the middle again (which takes time). A huddle cannot visit a chair where there is already another huddle working. Call time at three minutes, count how many balloons each huddle has in its middle, announce a winner—and play again! *Michael Capps*

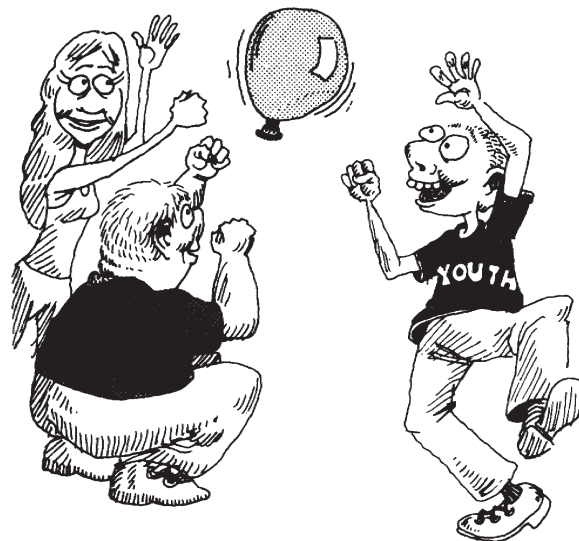
## BALLOON POP RELAY

Teams line up single file at a starting line. Place a chair about 30 feet away. Give each team member a deflated balloon. One at a time, kids run to the chair, blow up a balloon, tie it, pop it by sitting on it, and go to the end of the team line. First team to pop all of its balloons wins.

## BALLOON BOMB

Remember the leftover party balloon that you'd bounce around in the air when you were a child, trying to keep it from hitting the ground? What was rainy day entertainment then still works with youth groups today.

Formalize the game a bit—form two teams that try to hit the balloon away from the opposition, require that teams alternate hits (only one hit per team), and forbid hitting the balloon directly at the floor. Scoring can run like this: Intentional ground-



ing scores a point for the opposition, as does two consecutive hits by members of the same team. If the balloon touches the ground, the point goes to the opposition of the team that hit it last.

Variation: Instead of the two teams intermingling in the playing area, put them on opposite sides of a six-foot-wide dead zone, and permit—volleyball fashion—two hits per team (by different players) before returning the balloon across the dead zone. More than two hits per team or more than one hit per person scores a point for the opposition. If the balloon lands in the dead zone, the point is scored against the team that last hit it. A team serves until it loses a point.

- **Balloon Bomb Dress-up Relay.** For this variation of Balloon Bomb, each team needs a dress-up box with the same number and kinds of objects—old coat, gloves, hat, scarf, boots, etc. As teammates take their turns racing to the box and

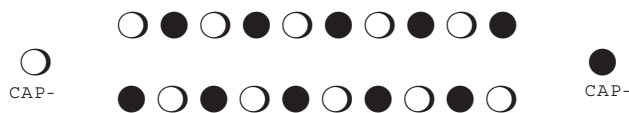
then dressing and undressing with the old clothes, they must keep a balloon in the air. If the balloon



touches the ground, they must start their dressing over again. *Julie D. Anderson, Karen Friday, and Len and Sheryl DiCicco*

## BALLOON BURST

Divide your group into two teams and pick a captain for each. Arrange teams as shown in the diagram. Each team tries to hit the balloon in the direction of



its captain, who then tries to burst the balloon with a pin. One point is scored for each popped balloon. Players must stay seated and use only one hand. *Kathie Taylor*

## BALLOON PIN THROW

Here's a crazy little game for as few as four people, or it can be used for larger groups in a relay style.

Each team has one of its members sit down in a chair, wearing a baseball cap with a stick pin taped to the bill, protruding just a little bit. If this is done as a relay, each person on the team has a balloon with a piece of string tied to it and stands a short distance from the person who is seated in the chair wearing the hat. Players then try to toss their bal-

loons toward the hats, so that the pins will pop the balloons. They hold on to the piece of string so that they can retrieve the balloon if they miss the pin. As soon as a balloon pops, the next person on the team does it, and so on until everyone on the team has popped a balloon.

You might test this a few times before you play it so that you can determine the proper distance from the foul line to the chair. It should be a challenge to accomplish but not impossible. *Ira Pacheco*

## BALLOON SUCKING RELAY

Before the meeting cut off a small (about one-quarter of an inch) portion of the tip of cone-shaped drinking cups, and blow up several six-inch balloons. Divide your youth group into two equal teams arranged in parallel lines. Hand out one cup to each student. Place one balloon at the feet of the first person in each line. Place tape or some other marker about 30 feet away from the two lines.

At the sound of the whistle, the first person in each line must bend over, inhale through the small end of the cup to suck up the balloon, and stand up straight. Students may not tip their heads back. The players must then race to the goal line and back, passing the balloon to the next person in line. No hands are allowed during the transfer. If the balloon is dropped, the runner may only pick it up by inhaling through the paper cup. The team that finishes first wins. *Tony Avila*

## BALLOON SWEEP

In this relay players maneuver a balloon around a goal and back using a broom, sweeping the balloon along the floor. It's much harder than you think. Run small groups of players in each relay.

## BLIND BALLOON HUNT

Begin by placing a number of balloons in random locations on a large floor or field (if on a field, they may need to be anchored). A person is selected from each team to be a hunter. Two additional people from each team are selected to be the guides. Blindfold the hunters. At a signal the hunters proceed to locate as many balloons as possible (all

teams going at the same time). The guides may not touch the hunter or the balloons. They only give verbal commands to lead the hunters to the balloons. Allow as much time as you feel necessary. The object is for the hunters to locate as many balloons as possible and bring them back to a starting point (unbroken). They must bring them back to the starting point to count. Keeping them informed of time is important in this event. *Doug Dennee*

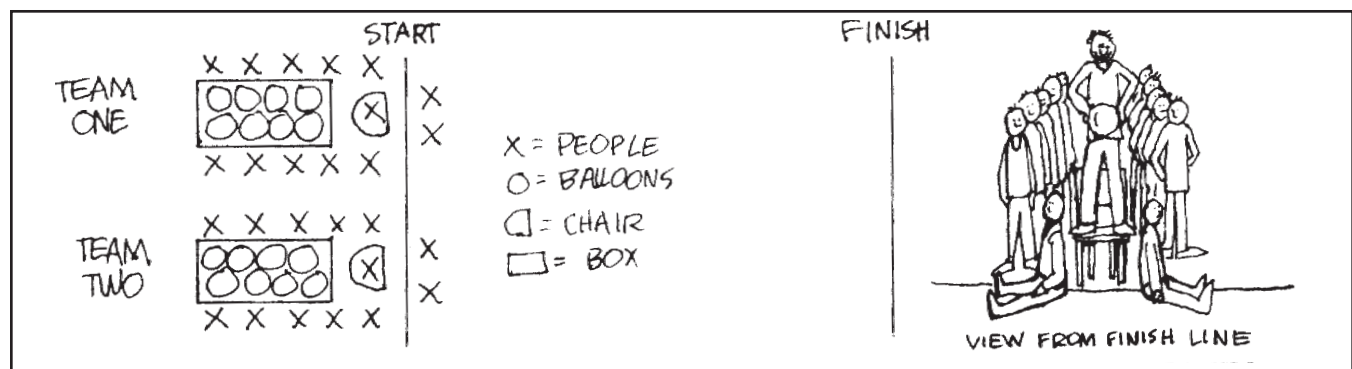
## BALLOON DROP RELAY

All you need are 40 or more inflated balloons (round ones) and two or more teams; each with a “dropper” (person who drops balloons) standing on a folding chair. Place the balloons in a box, line up the teams, and you’re ready to go.

The idea is to get the balloon to the other end in the fastest time. Before you start, the dropper positions herself up on the chair with the balloon ready to drop to the floor. Two teammates sit on the floor in front of the dropper, back to back, leaving enough room for the balloon to slip down between their backs. The pair then carefully stands, keeping the balloon between their backs and shuffles their way to the other end.

Upon arrival the next balloon is dropped to the next pair and so on until the entire team reaches the other side. If the balloon should burst or fall to the floor before reaching the finish line, the pair must return and start over. The dropper may drop as many balloons as needed in order to get one positioned just where the pair wants it. The dropper is the only one allowed to touch balloons with her hands. This relay game is just as much fun to watch as it is to play! *Tom Bougher*

Balloon Drop Relay



## BUBBLEHEAD

For this simple game, have two people stand facing each other about four feet apart. Blow up a round balloon and have one player bump the balloon off his head to the other player. The second player bounces the balloon off her head back to the first player and so on, back and forth. See how many times they can bounce it without dropping it.

The balloon must be hit with the head only. The distance can be varied for greater or lesser difficulty. Each player can move only the left foot while reaching to hit the balloon. The right foot must remain planted. Each player may pivot on the ball of the right foot, but no jumping is allowed.

A variation of this game is to have teams line up, with players about four feet apart. Each team must bounce a balloon all the way down the team line, from one head to the other. Again, right feet must remain planted. If a balloon is dropped, the team must start over again. The first team to succeed is the winner. *Scott Rokely*

## CARNIVAL CONCENTRATION

For this variation of the old TV game show “Concentration,” ask one of the kids with artistic flair to create a Concentration-style puzzle to put on a bulletin board. The puzzle could be a common expression, a line from a popular song, the title from a TV show or movie, or a verse of Scripture. Then tape inflated balloons over the entire puzzle using clear tape.

When it’s time to play, break the group into two or three teams. Teams take turns throwing darts at

the balloons. When a player pops a balloon, that player's team gets 15 seconds to try to solve the puzzle. A team can only guess the puzzle when one of its members has popped a balloon. The winning team is the first to solve the puzzle successfully. *Jim Bell*

## LET IT BLOW

Divide your group into teams and give each person a deflated balloon. Line the teams up for a relay, with a goal line about 15 feet away. On a signal, the first person on each team blows up his or her balloon and lets it go. The balloon will sail through the air. That person must then go to where it lands, stop, blow it up again, and let it go. The object is to get the balloon across the goal line and then run back and tag the next player on the team, who does the same thing until the relay is finished. This game is really wild, since it is almost impossible to predict where the balloons will land each time. It is especially fun and interesting when played outside, because the slightest breeze blows the balloon in a different direction. *Judy Groen*

## FAN THE BALLOON

Each team gets an inflated balloon and a fan (a piece of cardboard). At the signal, one player from each team must fan the balloon, without touching it, around a goal and back. The balloon cannot touch the floor. Teammates hand off the cardboard during the relay until one team is declared the winner for finishing first.

## GARBAGE BAG BALL

For this game, take a large plastic garbage bag and fill it full of balloons (blown up). Tie it with a twist-tie. You now have a "garbage bag ball." Here's an exciting game that makes good use of it:

1. Have all but 10 of the kids form a large circle on their knees. The remaining 10 kids then form a "pinwheel" formation in the center of the circle, lying on their backs, heads toward the center.
2. Everyone should have their shoes off for best results.
3. The garbage bag ball is then tossed into the circle. The object is for the kids on their backs to kick

or hit the ball out of the circle, over the heads of the kids in the outer circle. The outer circle tries to keep it in play. If the ball is kicked over a player's head in the outer circle, then he or she must take the place of the person in the inner circle who kicked it. Play for as long as you wish. *David Washburn*

## HEAD HACKY SACK

Give each team (seven to 10 people per team) a punch-ball-type balloon. The teams form circles and try to keep the punch ball in the air using only their heads. Play by the same rules as hacky sack, except that the head is the only part of the body with which players can legally hit the ball. If the punch ball falls to the floor, pick it up and start over. The team with the most consecutive hits is the winner.

*Michael Frisbie*

## POPPING PAIRS

This crazy relay is as much fun to watch as it is to participate in and works well with large groups. All you need is a large box of penny balloons and several clean inner tubes.

Divide your group into several equal teams of 20 or more. Line the teams up behind a start/finish line, having team members pair up. Place piles of balloons 50 feet or more from that line, one pile for each team. Make sure you have enough balloons in each pile (one for each team member).

Instruct the teams that the object is for each pair to run to its pile of balloons, each pick up a balloon and blow it up, and then pop them with their feet before returning to tag the next pair on their team. There is, however, a catch! Each pair must face back-to-back and place its inner tube around both players at waist height. With one runner running forward and the other backward, the partners run to their pile of balloons. Each one must bend down, pick up a balloon, blow it up, and break it with his foot while his partner is doing likewise. The inner tube must stay at waist height at all times. After both balloons are popped the pair is allowed to run back to its team to tag the next pair of runners. The person who ran forward must now run backward and vice versa. The first team to get all its members back across the start/finish line is declared

the winning team. For added variety, use two inner tubes per pair instead of just one. *Mark W. Kaat*

## SHAVING CREAM PIÑATAS

At your next slopfest (or whatever you call messy-game night), fill several large balloons with shaving cream and let some burly hunks take turns bashing the balloons. The game doesn't have to have a point—it's just fun. You could also fill the balloons with whipped cream or anything that comes in a pressurized can. All you need is patience to fill the balloons. *Michael Frisbie*

## SWAT WAR MIXER

First gather up what you'll need for this crowd breaker:

- One balloon for each person (all same color)
- Newspapers
- One small slip of paper for each person
- One six-inch length of string for each person
- Pens

Ask players to write something about themselves that nobody else knows—a quality, a memory, a trip, a skill—on a slip of paper. Then they should roll it up, push it into a balloon, and blow the balloon up. Mix all the balloons. Teens can then choose any of the balloons to tie to their back belt loops with the string. Give everyone a section of newspaper to roll up—and let the swatting begin! Kids should try to pop the balloons on others' backsides.

By the time the last balloon is popped, everyone should have retrieved a slip of paper. Gather the group into a circle, and take turns reading the information and guessing who the information is about—the reader should make a few guesses before others in the group have a chance. Writers can explain more about their idiosyncrasies and uniquenesses.

*Russell Waddell*

## STICKY-BUNS BALLOON BURST RELAY

Ask the kids to line up in pairs behind a line on one side of the room. On the other side of the room spread inflated balloons across the floor. Give each

team of two a roll of masking tape, and tell the kids that on "Go!" they are to apply the tape around the midsection of the team member whose birthday is closest to today. The pair must use the whole roll of tape and it must be put on sticky-side out.

When the tape is used up, the taped players must crab-walk to the balloons and bring back to their partners waiting at the starting line as many balloons as they can carry without using their hands. The waiting partner must then burst the balloons and save the ring part of the balloon (where you blow it up) to verify the number of balloons retrieved. Balloons popped by the sticky-bunned teammate don't count. The pair with the most rings wins.

This is a game to videotape. The kids are so dizzy from spinning around to get the tape on that they have a hard time doing the rest of the relay. *Keith*

*Posehn*

## BLOW-HARD BOMBER

You remember the old tug-of-war across the mud pit? Here's the same idea (do the dirty work unto the others, before they do it unto you)—except that the penalty for losing isn't a mud pit, however, but a balloon filled with talcum powder that explodes in your lap.

Collect the following materials:

- 2 plastic hoses,  $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch diameter by 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ -foot length
- 2 large balloons per round (heavy-duty punching type work well)
- talcum powder
- duct tape
- 2 chairs
- 2 pairs safety glasses
- 2 volunteers

Pour talcum powder into deflated balloons until they are half filled. Fit the plastic tube into the balloon, and seal it with duct tape so the air can't get out and the balloon won't fly off. Sit the two kids in chairs, back to back. Give each contestant the end of their tubes to blow in—and tape the balloon ends of their tubes to their opponents' thighs. (Be sure to tape the tubes, not the balloons themselves, to the players' thighs.) The winner is—well, the one who isn't white. *Matt Klein*

