

Pressure cracker New game workshop plays up cooperation

By **STEPHEN CRAKER**
Of the Emerald

Some University students found the weekend a good time to alleviate the pressure that accompanies the buildup to "Dead Week" and finals.

Some students just played for the sake of playing, while others played and gained upper division credit at the same time.

The University department of physical education and recreation was responsible for some of the "crack" in finals' pressure over the weekend. They offered a three-day workshop on "New Games" as an alternative to traditional recreational pastimes.

"People are put in funny situations and the outcome is hilarious," says Bill Johnson, student coordinator for 'New Games' on campus.

These situations include sitting in a big circle and trying to pull everyone else's socks off. The last one with a sock on wins.

If some gamers shied away from playing footsies, they could sit crab-like on the floor and try to kick a mammoth rubber ball past their opponent's goal.

Many participants gave this game, "Earthball," high reviews.

FOR THE MORE AGGRESSIVE, "Boffing," offers the opportunity to beat an opponent silly with a sponge bat.

The "Lap Sit," which occurred at Autzen stadium two weeks ago, was an offshoot of the "New Games" concept. Johnson says the games started

during the '60s anti-establishment storm in San Francisco.

The program presupposes that everyone - including the disabled - can take part.

"Everyone can play because there is no competition," Johnson says. "Everyone plays together. Even in games where there is a winner everyone has so much fun the winner isn't obvious."

"The originators wanted to create a war-like situation with non-warlike methods. People found they were enjoying themselves in non-competitive games. The activities emphasize cooperation," says Johnson.

Eventually, the movement went national and has found homes in such unlikely places as executive luncheons of the Lions and Kiwanis clubs.

"I've seen it done," Johnson says. "Those meetings are stuffy, and it breaks the ice."

ABOUT 100 PEOPLE and 30 staff members took part in the weekend activities, which occurred in Mac Court and the Gerlinger Annex. University students dominated the crowds, but members of the public participated too.

Recent University graduate Steve Hollenurst, also a seminar staff member, says students enjoy the active games.

"Our energy level is high, and people are picking up on that and getting involved. You have to put effort into it to make it work."

However, students had other motives for participation. The bait that caught many students

was the upper division credit offered to players.

"The credit incentive is the whole factor," says Matt Cutter, a business student. "It (the program) is kind of juvenile really. They treat you like little kids. They made it sound different."

However Recreation senior Don Taylor says the games do have some positive value.

"I work with youth a lot, and it gives me ideas."

And that's part of the program's purpose, Johnson said.

"We instruct and have them play," Johnson said. "We show them how to use new games."

Despite their educational value, says sophomore Becky Stephens, the games presented a fun alternative to study.

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