

GAGA BALL

Gaga Ball is a form of Dodge Ball that's played in an Octagon 'Pit'.

The game's roots originated in Israel. The word 'Ga' means Hit, so Ga-Ga means 'Hit-Hit'. There are several variations on exactly how the game is played, but we find these rules the most common, fair, and competitive:

1. Any number of people can play. To start, everyone in the pit must be touching the wall. Someone tosses the ball in the center of the pit, and it must bounce twice on the ground. As it bounces, everyone can say "Ga" for each bounce. After the second bounce ("Ga-Ga"), the ball is live.
2. Slap-hit the ball with your hand, aiming it at another player's leg at the knee or below. If the ball hits or touches anyone from the knee or below, that player is out and must exit the pit. At any time, if a player makes any type of contact with the ball at the knee or below, that player is out
3. Anytime the ball goes out of the pit, the last person that the ball touched is out.
4. You can only hit the ball one time until it either touches another player or the wall, then you are able to hit it again. You can dribble the ball against the wall to position it if necessary, and, you can move around anywhere inside the pit during the game.
5. The game ends when the last person is eliminated, or, to speed up the end of the game, the last few players can be given a count-down for a tie game. Once the game is over, everyone else re-enters the pit to start a new game.
6. You can add variations to the game such as playing with more than one ball, play in teams, expand the 'hit' area to be above the knee, catching the ball eliminates the person that hit it, and any other variation you can come up with! A good variation for school recess time is to play Rotation instead of Elimination. This is done by allowing a certain amount of players in the pit, and forming a line for the rest that want to play. Then, as one person gets out, the next person in line goes into the game. This way, everyone that wants to play should get a chance during a short period of time.

Safety Tips and Avoiding Risks of Injury

Gaga Ball is typically a safe game, but accidents can happen on occasion.

- To avoid the possibility of injury, just like in any other game or sport, simply use good judgment when playing.
- Be careful not to approach the ball too aggressively while another player is doing the same, or a collision with hands, bodies or heads could result.
- When hitting the ball, be careful not to scrape your hand or fingers on the ground, or you might find that you have slightly less skin than you started with...more on this risk is continued on the next paragraph..

- Always use a lightweight bouncy ball for Gaga Ball! About a 10” size works great. When using heavier types, such as rubber playground balls or volley balls, it is common to try to hit the ball too hard, resulting in a missed hit on the ball, and scraping your hand or knuckles on the ground (commonly referred to as ‘gaga knuckle’). Lightweight bouncy balls are easier to hit with an open hand/palm, and your shots will be much more accurate. This reduces, or many times eliminates, the Gaga Knuckle issue. The lightweight balls are safer to play with overall since they generally don’t hurt when you hit them, or get hit by them.
- Mind your position in relation to the Gaga Ball Pit walls if backing up during the game. Avoid reckless movement in the pit.
- Be sure your Gaga Ball Pit is securely built and remains in good condition. Remove any splinters that might be on the walls. Check the fasteners periodically to be sure they haven’t loosened up over time.
- Be sure that all players can easily enter and exit the Gaga Ball Pit safely. Have assistance in place if needed. Young children should be supervised at all times when entering, exiting and overall playing in the Gaga Ball Pit.

HAVE FUN!