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Keine Stimmen

Spy Game—A Classic



The Classic Spy Game Explained

This article is from a Forum magazine issue.

The Spy Game ...

is an absolute classic among exciting outdoor games.

But how exactly does it work? For anyone who's never played it before, here's a quick and concise explanation.

Background

The Spy Game is a tactical game. More so than in most other outdoor games, clever tactics are more valuable here than physical strength and stamina. This is what makes the game so appealing, but it also places demands on the children. Therefore, it's essential that older children also participate in the game. It's also very well suited for teenagers.

In the classic version, all teams receive a treasure. Each group is assigned a marked tree. Within a certain number of steps from the tree, they must hide their treasure so that at least one corner is still visible (the leaders decide what counts as a "corner").

The Rankings

What makes the spy game special is the confrontation between opposing players. Players are divided into ranks, just like in an army. These ranks look like this, for example:

- General (1)
- Colonel (2)
- Lieutenant (4)
- Soldier (4)
- Spy (1)

The numbers in parentheses represent the possible distribution for a group of 12 children. Of course, depending on the number of participants, you can reduce the ranks or add ranks such as sergeant,

major, etc.

When two opposing players come into contact, both reveal their cards. The higher-ranking player wins. The other must go to jail and serve a certain amount of time there. In the event of a tie, both continue unharmed.

Now we come to the only exception that spares the General from invulnerability and the Spy from inevitable doom: The Spy is the only one who can defeat the General. However, he can be defeated by everyone else. This is what gives this key role its special appeal—and that is why the game bears its name.

The Game

The goal of the game is to search for another group's treasure. For the groups, this means striking a balance between searching and defending. In addition to tactics, keen observation skills are also required: From which area are you being driven away most aggressively?

The prison is located in the middle of the playing field. A referee supervises the proper serving of the "prison sentence" there.

The team that finds a treasure first is the winner.

A Few Notes

Since the gameplay is more complicated than other versions of the game, it's very important to explain the rules clearly. Younger children, in particular, need to understand them as well.

Since very few children have ever been in the military or watch war movies all the time, they don't necessarily know the ranking order by heart. That's why it's worth making cards that differ in size. Except for the spy, the larger card always wins.

It's very important to clearly define whether and when ranks can be swapped among the players.

With younger children, you can offer a little guidance when deciding on tactics: Is it really a good idea to give the General to the weakest player? Should that player attack or defend? How can you best get the Spy to the enemy General? Which ranks should I use to make a better escape?

Variations

Of course, this game can be played in a wide variety of ways.

For example, you can define a goal that's completely different from the treasure. The "spy game" concept can be incorporated as a form of confrontation into most outdoor games.

Of course, the game can also be played by pacifists. The ranks can be adapted to almost any theme: pharaohs, chamberlains, etc., in Egypt; aircraft carriers to submarines; Gessler to Tell in Switzerland; and so on.

Instructions:

Spy Game

References



- **Content and image: Forum** Kind, Issue 3/06, page 28. Classic “Spy Game,” an outdoor game also suitable for teenagers and young adults. © Copyright www.forum-kind.ch
- **Author:** Adrian Hofmann, Henggart Youth Group

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