

An Introduction to Gym Ringette

What Is Gym Ringette?

Gym Ringette is a refinement of gym floor sports that have been played since at least the 1950s. Based on Ringette, which was originally created as an alternative ice sport for girls and women, the game introduced new rules and team-play concepts that transfer effectively to the gymnasium floor. Gym Ringette is an excellent co-ed activity that requires both finesse and strategy. Since players must rely on agility, speed, and endurance, Gym Ringette is a great way to get students fit. Players develop core physical literacy skills such as strength, balance, flexibility, and muscular coordination. Players will also learn how to cooperate with teammates, socialization skills, and how to compete with each other in a healthy, safe, and fun way.

Benefits of Including Gym Ringette in Your Curriculum

- Provides the school with a highly active, participatory, low-cost, and structured physical education activity.
- Co-ed activity can be enjoyed by anyone, regardless of age, size, or strength.
- Challenging and fun for every age and grade level.
- Does not require a lot of setup and takedown time.
- Students can get the most possible activity from every gym class, lunch hour, or after school session.
- Offers the less physically skilled participant the opportunity to participate and contribute.
- Builds both fitness and physical literacy skills.
- Teaches skills that translate directly into a number of other sports.
- Lots and lots of FUN.

Suggested Protective Equipment

It is suggested that participants wear the following equipment, depending on the level of play:

- Eye protection (goggles used in science or CTE courses, ski goggles, squash goggles, or any protective eyewear available)
- Protective gloves

Recommended additional equipment for goalkeepers:

- Full facial protection
- Chest protector
- Goalkeeper pads
- Goalkeeper stick
- Neck protection

Setup

1. Below are two playing surface diagrams. Figure 1 is of a traditional playing surface with 3 zones that is great for more advanced players, while Figure 2 is a smaller layout with 2 zones that is better for smaller gyms and for beginners. The blue line is adjustable based on the size of the playing surface. (ARTIST: Insert playing surface diagrams here.)
2. Boundaries within the gymnasium should be structured so that play is continual, with as few whistles as possible. In smaller gymnasiums, the facilitator may use the walls of the gym as perimeter boundaries, so that there are no “out of bounds.” In a larger gym, markings used for other sports may be used as Gym Ringette boundaries.
3. In front of each goal, a crease line is marked in the shape of a semicircle. The radius of the goal crease is 8 ft. (2.44 m), which is larger than a standard hockey crease. The goal crease (area) is also bounded by the goal line extending from the goal crease to the goal posts.
4. Zone lines must be marked dividing the playing surface into 2 equal zones or 3 equal zones depending on space available or the abilities of the participants.

How to Play

1. Divide students into teams. Depending on the class size and space, game can be played using the full gym with students divided up into teams of 6 (5 players and 1 goalie per team), or the gym can be split up into 2 smaller cross-court games and played 4 on 4 with goalies.
2. Play begins with a free pass from the circle in the center of the playing area. On the referee's whistle, the player taking the free pass has 5 seconds to pass the ring out of the circle to a teammate.
3. A player can never be “offside,” as they can't carry the ring over a blue zone line in either direction. The ring must be passed over the zone line to another teammate. The player passing the ring across the zone line may not touch the ring again until it has been touched by another player. The player receiving the pass may run ahead of the ring carrier and already be across the zone line before the ring crosses it. This prevents any one player from carrying the ring across the full length of the playing surface and becoming a “ring hog,” as well as ensuring more players are involved in the game.
4. Players on the other team try to steal possession of the ring by either blocking the pass or by checking the ring off of their opponent's stick.
5. There are no face-offs or offsides in Gym Ringette. Any stoppage in play results in a free pass to restart the game.
6. The goalie is the only person permitted in the goal crease. No other player's foot or stick may enter the crease. Only the goalie may touch the ring when it is in the crease. If a player crosses the crease, play stops and the team that did not cross the crease gets a free pass with the ring. Depending on the size of your gym and the markings on the floor, you can do the free pass from either the center of the gym, or if there is a good “spot” marked on the floor, from the equivalent of the “face-off” circle in floor hockey.
7. No bodily contact between players is allowed.
8. Play continues until the end of the class period. The team who has scored the most goals wins the game.