

ANTY OVER



Of all the various games that are played at the Rock School, none are more popular than “Anty Over the Shanty”. Modern playgrounds and athletic fields have standardized the games school children play, but in the era of the one room school, a completely different set of diversions were in place.

In a survey conducted in rural northwestern Georgia, in the heart of the Southern Appalachians, more old timers remembered playing Anty Over than any other game. This was not considered surprising, since it can be played anywhere there is a low building and some yard on both sides. The surprising element was the general agreement on the rules of the game. A few variations will be listed at the end of this paper.

How to Play:

Anty Over is played in an open yard surrounding a low building. There are no boundaries except fences, roads or woods. The only equipment is a large, soft ball, like a volleyball.

It can be played by large or small groups.

Divide up into two equal sides. The object is to capture the players on the other side and avoid capture yourself.

The two teams gather on opposite sides of the building so they are out of sight of each other. The team with the ball, Team A, shouts "Anty Over!" and one member throws the ball over the building toward the other side. Skilful players try to bounce the ball off the roof to make it difficult to catch. If a member of Team B does catch the ball, the whole team rushes around the building (running around each side) toward Team A, throwing the ball at members of Team A. Anyone hit is captured and then belongs to Team B.

Meanwhile, Team A members try to go past Team B to B's side of the building. Members of Team A who get to the other side of the building are safe – they cannot be captured.

If no one on Team B catches the ball, they shout "Anty Over!" and one member throws the ball over the building toward Team A.

After Team B has its turn, whether anyone on that team catches the ball or not, then it is their turn to "Anty Over" and avoid capture. The two sides alternate until one side captures everyone on the other side or until the game is stopped by dinner time, darkness, or the school bell. The side with the most captures wins.

Obviously there is a lot of running, confusion and trickery. One old timer remembered: "You see, you couldn't tell whether the other side caught the ball or not, because you couldn't see on the other side of the house. So everybody was peekin' around the corner to see who was coming. But you still didn't know who had the ball because everybody had their hand behind them, pretending to have the ball."

Variations

The player who catches the ball holds on to it and tags players on the opposite team, rather than throwing it at them, and the team with the ball could hand it off to one another while they were trying to capture players on the other side.

What everybody remembered was there were no umpires or referees, yet no one could remember any cheating. If they didn't catch a ball, they just didn't catch it. Everybody was trusted. It never crossed anyone's mind of somebody cheating and saying, "Yeah, I caught it" when he didn't.