

KPOKORO, AN OUTDOOR NIGERIAN GAME

AGES

6-12 years old

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This is a game usually played by girls, ages 6 – 12, in different parts of Nigeria and usually outdoors. There are a number of variations to the game depending on the location but the emphasis is on rhythmic clapping, coordination of leg movements, quick thinking and the ability to predict your playmate’s moves. The following directions are for the horseshoe variation of the game.

DIRECTIONS

- Number of players needed: At least two girls, and usually up to a maximum of ten.
- The objective is to accurately predict and mirror your playmate’s leg movement two consecutive times while clapping and skip jumping rhythmically.
- Players stand in a horseshoe formation and the first player, selected randomly or by lots, takes turns with each player in the horseshoe.
- Player 1 (the leader) starts by standing face-to-face with Player 2 (the mirror). Player 1 leads them both in clapping and skip jumping to the same rhythm: “Clap pause clap pause clap-clap-clap pause”. At the 3rd pause the leader randomly puts forward one of her legs.
- To win, the Player 2 must simultaneously mirror the leader’s leg choices two consecutive times. If Player 2 is successful in mirroring Player 1 on two consecutive attempts, they exchange places (switch), and the “mirror” becomes the “leader” and plays the next round with Player 3. If Player 2 is unable to mirror Player 1’s movement, the latter immediately moves on to Player 3. She maintains the rhythm without pause and leads them both in clapping and skip jumping. Although the switch can happen at any point along the horseshoe, the new leader must begin at one end of the circle and work towards the end.

- The winning player is the one who successfully moves from one end of the horseshoe to the other without being “mirrored” by any of her playmates.
- For instance, I face you and begin to clap my hands, skip jumping to the rhythm. You clap exactly as I do. I then quickly put out my right leg on the 3rd pause. If you mirror my movement (putting out your left leg) you get one point. On the second round if you again successfully predict and mirror my movement, you get a second point, exchange places with me and take the lead.

RULES

- The mirror’s leg choice must be done simultaneously to the leader’s. There must be no hesitation from the player standing in the horseshoe.
- If the player in the horseshoe is unable to mirror the leading player’s leg choice simultaneously on the first try, the “leader” moves on the next person in line.

ACCOMPANYING MYTH

There is a story of a clever goddess, who comes to a group of young women offering each one a crown, an opportunity in life. Each girl has to correctly interpret the signs and seize her chance at the exact moment it is offered.