

THE CALLY KIDS PLAY WORLD GAMES



by the team at islington play association 2010
with thanks to all the children and
families involved

SKULLY (NEW YORK, UNITED STATES)

Type of Game

Pavement or playground game

Number of Players

2 or 3 children

Best location

Outside

Resources

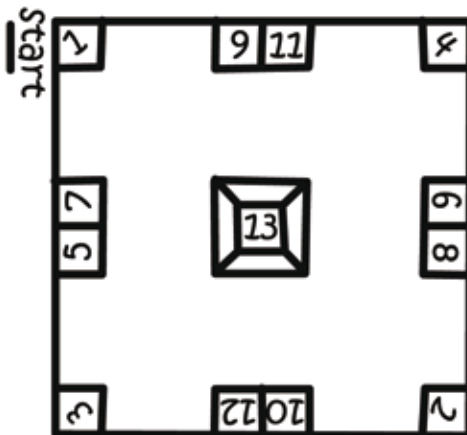
Chalks and bottle caps

Setting up

Marking the board

This game was a traditional part of children's street play in New York City for the last century, but is dwindling now due to the presence of so many cars. Rules vary, so must be decided upon before starting the game.

The board looks something like this:



The skully field of play, or board, is a large square approximately 2m on each side, and is drawn on a flat surface, such as pavement or playground.

At each corner and along the edges of the board are drawn 12 smaller squares, called *boxes*, of about 15 cm on each side. These boxes are numbered 1 through 12, and to go through the numbers requires players to pass through the centre. Boxes 1 and 2 are opposite one another, as are 3 and 4. The box at the centre is always 13 and is surrounded by a penalty area where game pieces, called 'caps', are not meant to land.

You start a short distance from box 1, on a line.

Pieces were traditionally plastic bottle caps with melted wax or tarmac inside, though plastic checkers or similar could also be used. You begin play by crouching at the start line and flicking the cap into box 1. The cap must land in the box, not touching any of the lines. If successful, the player can keep going and flick for the next number – but if they miss, the next player takes a turn. If a player hits another player's cap, he or she is allowed to pick up their cap and walk it over to the next number, taking a turn from there.

The complication is in number 13. If, when aiming for 13, the player's cap accidentally lands in the area surrounding it (known as the Skull) then the player is stuck there until freed by another player's shot.

After the player completes the circuit from 1 to 12 and successfully lands their cap in 13, a circuit of the four trapezoids surrounding 13 must be made. These four landings must be made consecutively in a single turn, with the player saying "I" in the first square, "am" in the second, "a" in the third and "killer" in the second. If they can't manage this in one turn they start again by flicking for 13 at their next go.

If they manage it, the player is considered a 'killer' and uses their successive turns to try and knock other player's caps out of the playing field.

The last player on the field wins.

VARIATIONS:

The board can be larger or smaller depending on available size and player's choice. Some versions have only 9 boxes, and some in other cities (such as Philadelphia where it is called deadbox) have 15 or more.

Additional complications can be decided upon, such as having to go backwards through all the numbers before becoming a 'killer', having to strike another player's cap three times before 'killing' them, deciding whether the 'killer' can strike from a specific point or anywhere around the periphery, and so on. It is good to develop your own variations as you become better players.

“Children played in the street then, we all did. Then the war came and nine tenths of us were evacuated. There was no one in the streets then, not until the end. Some (children) came back early but even so. We was bombed out three times, just kept moving house.”
(Nolly)