

"I don't know. If I was 10, I probably wouldn't want to play this game. But, these kids seem to like it."

Ron Cronan
Gags and Games

Pogs

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Some of the more popular discs include Polson (variations of skulls and crossbones), any that depict sports teams or players, sawblades (discs with jagged edges), and slugs, which are holograms that change pictures when you turn them. For girl Poggers — Pogs is equally popular among boys and girls — the flowery designs and Looney Tunes seem most sought after.

As for slammers, the heavier, the better — although parents with smaller kids would do well to stay away from the thick brass ones or those with rough edges.

Slam bam: These are three of the more popular slammers with area Pog-men. Slammers are made of metal, aluminum, brass or heavy plastic. In the game of Pogs, slammers are slapped onto a stack of Pogs (cardboard discs) with the object of flipping them over. You get to keep the Pogs you flip.

One of the better-selling Kinkis is a bootlegged one depicting O.J. Simpson behind bars — the O.J. (in the) Slammer.

Parenting advice

Parents, don't spend a lot of time fretting about the seemingly pointlessness of the Pogs. Enjoy the fact that something relatively inexpensive and non-violent has

budged your kids away from the video screen.

Take them to the local card or collectible store. Let them browse the bins, let them go Pog-wild if they want to, but whatever you do, don't play Pogs with them. You will only humiliate yourself.

"Adults aren't any good at it," Theriot said. "It's a skill only kids can master. We have a 9-

and-up category in our tournaments and adults do enter, but they never make it into the Final Four."

And don't fret too much about the lonely Sega games. There are reports that the fad, though just now blossoming here, is waning on the west coast.

"This could be the Pet Rock of the 90's," said Lagasse.

Playing for keeps becoming a worry for Pog parents

BY CHRIS MCCOSKY
STAFF WRITER

If there has been any negative parental rumbling about Pogs, it's that playing the game for keeps is a mild precursor to gambling.

"Yeah, you know, playing Pogs at 10, taking lines on Lions games at 20," said Chris Lagasse, owner of Diamonds and Ice Sports Cards in Livonia, one of many card and collectible shops caught up in the new Pogmania craze sweeping through the area.

He was joking, of course. But the concern is there. In fact, Jackson County schools, South Lyon and several other districts across the state have banned Pogs.

Kids are, in effect, gambling their discs when they play Pogs for keeps. And, in some cases, the battle for Pogs has triggered some playground fighting. Even the World Pog Federation, which owns the name and rights to the game, is concerned.

"One of the wings of our corporation is education," said Brian Theriot, WPF vice president for marketing and promotion. "We encourage kids to come up with other ways to play the game. Instead of playing for keeps, we

have structured games based on point systems. Certain Pogs are worth certain point values. It's a subtraction skills that they are learning in school."

The WPF is also marketing Pog Baseball, Pog Hockey, Pog Football and Pog Basketball as variations to playing for keeps.

Here's how Pog Baseball is played:

You use four Pogs. Stack them face down in the middle of the board. Each player takes turns slamming or batting. You get three outs per inning. You make an out by missing or failing to flip any of the four. If you flip one, it's a single. Flip two, double; three, triple; four, home run. You keep track to the base runners and runs.

For hockey, or soccer if you prefer, each player puts up four or five Pogs. Each player designates one disc as a goal Pog. Mix and stack, then take turns slamming. If you flip your opponent's goal Pog, you score.

"Mostly, the kids will make up their own games," Theriot said. "That's one of the great things about Pogs. It allows them to be creative. There is no wrong way to play."

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