

Коробки

Games are intended to have universal rules. They may travel from place to place, picking up different rules along the way. After time, a game evolves to better suit the situation, and bugs are worked out, so to speak. Some are changed to fit the culture, some are changed to fit the times. These universal rules are no longer universal, but rather have many variations.

Коробки is a game I learned about from my boss, Alex Kutchensen. The name is Russian, and it translates to directly “boxes” in English. I learned that this is a game played by children in the Ukraine that is somewhat similar to our “Four Square”. The only difference being, a soccer ball is used, as well as technique. Aside from these differences, a slight change in rules and point attainment do Коробки and Four Square really differ.

I was doing a little investigation and asked his mother a little more about this game. When her son Alex played this as a child in the 1980’s Ukraine, the game did have a point system. And a cap is set. Once that cap’s amount of points is met, only one person is the winner, and then game over. The cap wasn’t set to limit play time, but to rather make a winner for another activity. Meaning—this game is a decision making game. A dispute settler of sorts. It’s sort of like a more fun and involved version of our Rock-Paper-Scissors.

This can be played anywhere, according to my sources. But I’m going to believe it’s confined to yards, parks, and parking lots. Theoretically, it can be played any time of the day, but I’m going to go out on a limb and say it’s played within the sunlit, playtime hours. Emotions involved in play—competitive and headstrong. After all, you’re competing to see who’s right, or who gets to decide.

According to Alex and his mother, this game has been played for years, and continues to be played up to this date. His mother even remembers the game being played in Moscow when she was little.

Story:

You and three others are standing in a big square. That square is divided into four other little squares, one person to each. Your goal is to make the soccer ball being passed around touch the ground in the opponents’ boxes. Good luck!

Goal:

Get the most points that are set by making the ball land on the ground of your opponents’ squares and win. Reach the goal points.

What’s needed:

A soccer ball, and three other friends of whom you’re disagreeing with.

How to play:

A big square is drawn on the ground, and divided up into four smaller, but equal squares. Four players each assume a box as their own. The game begins after a number of points is selected as the goal or cap. One player, picked among the players themselves, first juggles a soccer ball with their legs, chest, or head, and kicks, or passes it to an opponent, trying to get them to mess up and the ball land in their square's ground. Thus, giving the passer a point.

The passing is random and can be done at any time to anyone. Player A can pass it to Player C with any technique just so long as it is a form of soccer ball juggling, and no hands are used.

It is cheap, but allowed to balance the ball on your foot, move your foot above it quickly, and the stomp it down on an opponent's square. Cheap, but allowed and effective for a quick win. Though the argument may be even more heated if this is done.

If one has a ball land in a player's spot, playing resumes when the loser pick it up and begin another "round".

When the goal or cap points are set, the games is then over, and the winner is declared.

Goal Rules:

It's alright for the ball to hit the ground in your quadrant, but only after you've gotten control of it, and put it there.

The ball can't be rolled into another's quadrant.

No hands are to be used on the ball—only what is recognized as soccer ball juggling is permitted.

Boundary Rules:

Players can distract others, but no touching is permitted.

If a ball falls out of your quadrant, and into the non-playing field (outside of all squares) then who hit it gets a point taken away. Negative points are possible.

A player can't reach into another's quadrant and knock the ball out of another player's juggle. This is still not allowed even if the person doesn't touch the other.

I got this game from my boss, Alex Kutchensen, and more information on it from his mother, Bea Kutchensen.