

Campus Kicks



The newest fad kicking around campus these days is a ball that doesn't even bounce!

By Nancy M. Jones

It's reassuring to know that in today's changing world, some things remain the same. Take, for instance college students.

Yes, yes, it's true that students of the '80's are career conscious, methodically plodding along toward that pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. . . What everyone seems to have forgotten is how dedicated those knowledge-hungry students are when it comes to the subject of entertainment.

Consider the latest craze on campus.

You've seen them, hanging out in a circle, kicking something from one foot to the next. No, they are not practicing what they are going to do when they go home to feed their pet.

They're playing footbag. That's right, footbag. The youth of the world is fascinated by a ball that doesn't even bounce!

Even more amazing is how seriously this play-time activity is taken. One enthusiast, Andy Linder, kicked a footbag 21,135 times in three and one-half hours to take the world record for continuous flight. A student at Trinity College in Deerfield, Illinois, this footbag king even has his own line of Andy Linder Autograph Footbags. (Hacky Sack, the popular name for footbagging, is Wham-O's trademark for their footbag line.)

So, now I've sparked a little interest in footbagging, have I? (Anything for a prize.) A sport you could jump into with both feet? One warning before you start: begin with at least one foot on the ground before soaring off to more spectacular tricks.

To jump in, you need to practice the three basic ways to kick the bag:

THE INSIDE KICK: This is the most basic. Just flex your knee and kick the bag straight up with the

inside of your foot. No, **straight** up. So far, so good.

THE OUTSIDE KICK: Use this when the bag is falling outside the line of your shoulders. Kick the bag straight up with the outside of your foot. Oops, that's a hard one.

THE BACK KICK: Of course, you can use this when the ball is falling behind you. This is a little tricky because you have to lean forward to make this kick, hitting the ball with the same part of your foot as the Outside Kick. Keep practicing. Yes, it's supposed to look silly.

Once you can do the basic kicks without falling flat on your face, you can try some Hacky Sack games. The Consecutive game is simple; just keep the footbag airborne, alone or with some friends, for as long as you can. (No, no, no, I don't mean kick your friends with the bag, I mean kick the bag to your friends.)

The Freestyle lets you use your own personality and keep it going any way you want. Needless to say, this is the most popular. I think they should rename it Collegestyle: Forget Learning The Rules.

Perhaps now you're ready for the game called Net, which footbag enthusiasts call "the ultimate challenge for your feet." Played with a five-foot net and the basic scoring rules of volleyball, this one will really keep you on your toes.

Finally, there is Footbag Golf. No, it's not just for

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the older set, but it entails the same quest as regular golf, namely, putting the darned little thing in the hole.

This weird sport was born in Portland, Oregon in 1972 to one John Stalberger. He began using a footbag in a program of physical therapy following a severe knee injury received in a football game. (Say, I've just given you a top-10 excuse for footbagging anytime you want, "It's therapeutic!")

Although Stalberger fathered this game in its modern American incarnation, its ancestor could be the Chinese Emperor Hwang Tu. He reputedly developed a footbag game which used a little leather sack filled with hair. Like its cousin, soccer, the game has been played in innumerable variations ever since.

If you are now sufficiently impressed to devote your life to footbagging, you are in luck. Greg Cortopassi and Bruce Guettich have formed the World Footbag Association (WFA). Organized in 1983, the WFA is dedicated to, as they put it, "promoting,

educating, and stimulating interest in all footbag games, footbags and most importantly, you the player."

You too can become one of the 3,000 members worldwide by calling the WFA headquarters in Golden, Colorado (303)278-9797. There is no truth to the rumor that your application will be accepted **only** if you can dial with your toes or kneecaps.

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