

Introduction

The SPARK Handball Unit provides activities for students to practice, develop, and apply skills such as the overhand, sidearm, and underhand strokes, the serve, and advanced shots like the kill, the tap, the fist, and the fly, as well as strategies used in singles and doubles play. Handball also provides opportunities for cognitive development.

Almost all modern racquet sports evolved from a form of handball that originated in France, known as “jeu de paume” which means “game of palm.” Though modern-day handball can be traced to this ancient French version, the game as we know it today was played for centuries in Ireland and brought to North America by Irish immigrants.

Handball’s tactical and strategic elements require thinking and creativity. Additionally, the use of both hands during the game helps develop both sides of the body and brain. Activities are written to utilize small groups, reduce the number of rules, and equalize play in an effort to maximize student participation and enjoyment. Students eventually combine skills and progress to modified and small-sided handball games. These are followed by a unit-culminating special Event designed to generate enthusiasm and extend learning opportunities. Additional handball activities may be found at SPARKfamily.org.

What You Have

SPARK Manual

- **ASAPs**
 - Two Handball ASAPs used for warm-ups prior to activities in this unit.
- **Activities**
 - 11 Handball Activities sequenced by level of difficulty.
- **SPARK Event Experience**
 - The SPARK Handball Event is a multi-day experience designed to extend student learning opportunities through enjoyable and meaningful context.
- **Inclusive Strategies**
 - Instructional tips and equipment suggestions to help meet the needs of all students.
- **Supplemental Lesson Content**
 - **Reflection Questions:** discussion questions are provided to reflect on what students have learned.
 - **Teaching Suggestions:** instructional hints from SPARK PE specialists who have instructed the activity before. Read prior to teaching for the “inside scoop.”
 - **SPARK It Up!:** variations provide extensions to address the developmental needs of students.
 - **Integrations:** ideas to connect PE to academic content, wellness concepts and promotion of physical activity outside of school. Can be read to students during warm-up, transitions, or cool-down.
 - **Standards:** indicates which national PE standards and grade level outcomes are addressed.
 - **SEL Competencies:** Shows the lesson’s alignment with CASEL’s SEL competencies and related skills.
 - **Vocabulary:** a list of words used to highlight academic content during the lesson.
 - **Teacher Reflection:** space to share how the lesson went & what modifications could be made next time.

SPARK Instructional Media

- **Sample Unit Plan**
 - A grade level specific 15-day sample Unit Plan is provided for 6th, 7th, and 8th grades and can be used as written or modified to suit our needs.
- **Skill Cards**
 - Half-sheets with depictions of skills to create stations, use as visuals for learning, etc.
- **Task Cards**
 - These include instructions for the Adventure Race activity.
- **Leveled Assessment Choices**
 - Assessment options include both cognitive and skill-based assessments along with suggestions for individual student portfolio development.
- **Limited Equipment/Large Class Ideas**
 - Ideas for how to use the activities when faced with limited equipment or large classes.