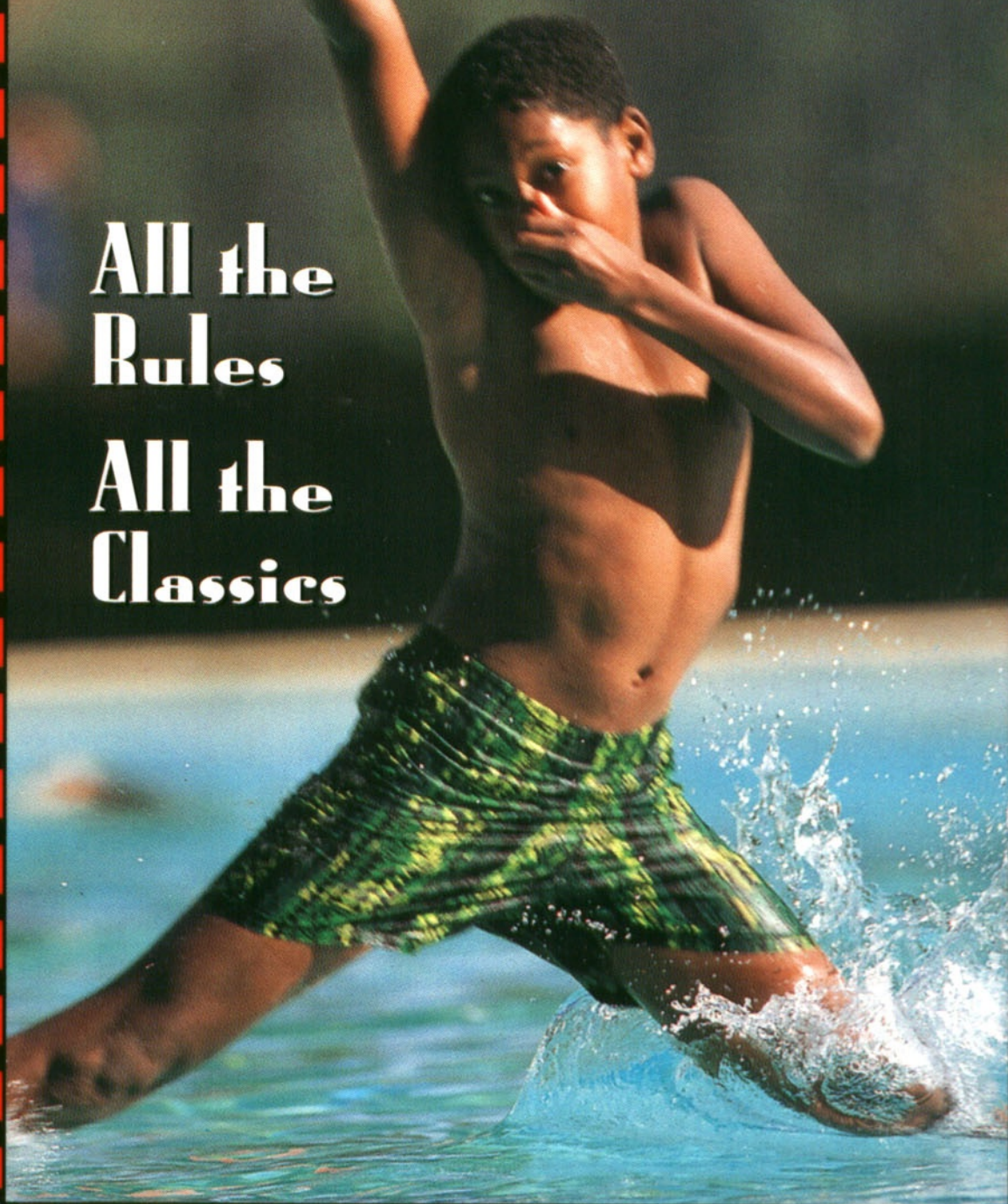# A KLUTZ® Guide

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SWIMMING POOL GAMES

All the Rules
All the Classics

Games, Games
and a Little Basic Stuff, Too

SAFETY AND GROUP SIZE: We're grown-ups, so we have to say this: No running, and no horseplay. And no non-swimmers in the pool either. If a game works with a small group, we put a symbol like this beside it: **2 to 4** If it needs a bigger group, here's how we show that: **4 or more**

Bucket Ball

4 or more

Set up your buckets on either side of the pool. Teammates toss a tennis ball around trying to advance it to the goal area. **Big Rule:** No hanging around the buckets blocking shots or waiting for a pass.

Submarine Squeeze **4 or more**

If you have a grown-up, stick them in the shallow end and make them spread their legs apart and close their eyes. All the kids line up in front and try to swim underwater through their legs. If they make it through without touching, they go back in line. If they don't, they have to line up behind the grown-up and spread their legs too, making a longer tunnel. Repeat with every round. Eventually, the tunnel is long and the swimmer line is short. When everyone has touched going through, time to start over.

ELBOW TAG 4 or more

Start with one person who is "it" and one person who is being chased. Everyone else pairs up and links elbows. Linked pairs are safe from being tagged. The player being chased may avoid being tagged by linking elbows with one end of a safe pair. **When the new player links on, the player on the other end must leave and be chased.** Anyone who gets tagged becomes the next "it."

Alligator Tag

Another game that benefits from a grown-up willing to get wet. We'll assume you've got one. Put them in the pool, make them float on their back with their eyes closed. Now the kids should try to sneak up and tag the sleeping gator without being heard. The gator can awake at any moment and try to tag any unlucky taggers who happen to be too close.

Marco Polo

2 to 4   4 or more

The classic pool game can be played with groups up to eight or down to two. If you're fuzzy on the rules, it goes like this: One swimmer, with eyes closed, is "it." Everyone else hangs around them and tries to avoid getting tagged. When the "it" swimmer hollers "Marco," everyone else has to holler "Polo," a kind of sonar for Marco. The first person tagged is the next "it."

**One-on-One Version:** Limit the game to two Marco Polos. If the chaser hasn't caught the chased by then, switch.

Beach Ball Circle Splash

Get everyone into a big circle with a beach ball floating in the middle and let the splashing begin! No moving from the original positions around the circle and no touching the ball. If the ball floats out of the circle between two players, those players are each given a point. Then the positions in the circle are shuffled, the ball is replaced and another splash session begins. If anyone really cares by the end, the player with the fewest points wins.

Beach Ball Keep Away

The kids already know the "rules" but they're pretty basic. One team has something and passes it while the other team tries to get it back. Here's how to make it fairer: Use a beachball and don't let anyone hold it. Pass it around by hitting it. This is endlessly entertaining if you make sure the teams are well-matched.
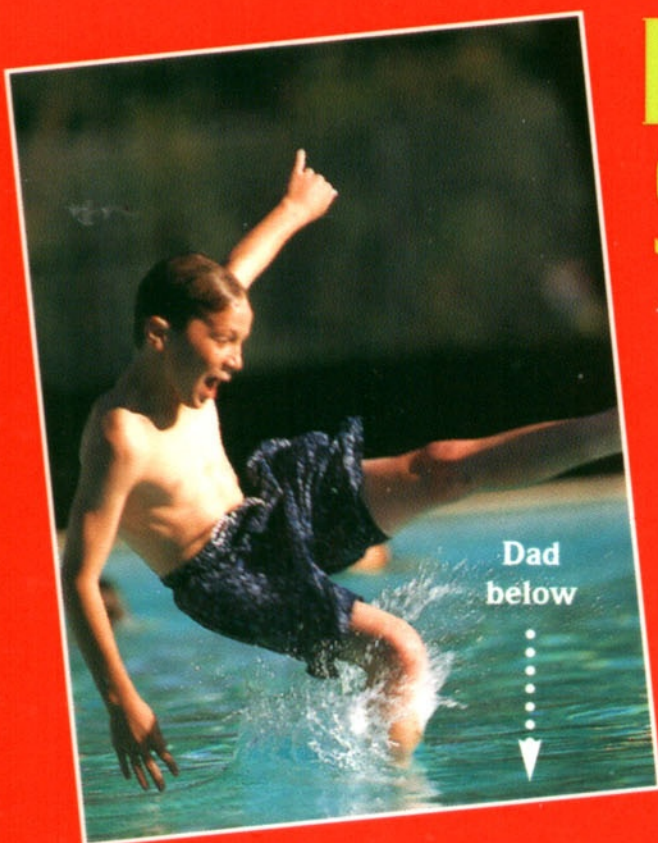
Daddy Surfing

As most kids know, Dads are good for a lot of abuse. Try this for a new version: Dad holds breath, crawls along bottom of shallow end while the rider stands up on his back and tries to stay on. Yeehaah!

Dad below

Circle Tug 4 or more

Make a circle with five to ten people holding hands on the surface of the water with a ball floating in the middle. On the call of "Go" the tugging begins. The challenge is pull and push to move the circle around so that the ball touches someone else in the circle — not you. No fair ducking under.

Sharks & Minnows 4 or more

Put your "shark" in the middle of the pool and all the "minnows" on one side. At a signal, the "minnows" take off swimming for the other side. If they get tagged while they're on the surface, they have to join the "shark team" for the next go round. When all the minnows are caught, it's time to start over.

Beach Ball Bonk 4 or more

This one takes a little refereeing since the goal is to bonk people on the head with a beach ball. Rules? Put a bunch of kids in the water with a beach ball. Whoever has the ball tries to bonk other kids as they surface from their submarine evasion tactics. Primitive, yes, but that's what makes it popular.

Tennis Ball Trick Catch

The lifeguards at OUR pool let us do this (yours may not be so understanding). **Player A** stands on side of pool with tennis ball in hand. **Player B** stands on end of diving board and leaps off as **Player A** tosses ball to him or her. The goal? A fabulous mid-air catch.

Musical Breathing Stations

Scatter a bunch of floating things into the pool and make all the swimmers claim one. On a signal, everyone has to dive down and swim underwater to another station. No doubling up. Everyone has to find an unoccupied station before surfacing and no fair moving stations.

Duck, Duck, Goose in the Pool   4 or more

The shallow end version of the oldest playground game on the planet. You'll need a group. Everyone forms a circle facing inward. One player wades around the outside touching each player and saying "Duck." Eventually he touches one player and says, "Goose." The goose then chases the tagger around the circle. If the tagger gets back to the goose's spot before getting tagged by the goose, he stays in that place in the circle and the goose becomes the new tagger. If, on the other wing, the goose catches the tagger, the tagger must continue, and the goose returns to the circle.

Chicken Fights   2 to 4

Probably the oldest pool game in the world. Two-person teams with any number of pairs playing at the same time. Hundreds would be fun. The knight (usually the lighter partner) sits on the shoulders of his "steed" and engages the other knights in hand-to-hand combat (pushing and pulling only — no hitting). Steeds may not fight but may only hold onto their knights. When a knight is pulled out of the saddle, he must retire to the side of the pool. Last knight left riding is triumphant.

Toothpick Scramble

Equipment needed? A box of toothpicks. To start, the pickmeister scatters five toothpicks for each player throughout the pool while the players are not watching. On a signal, each player jumps in and tries to find his or her five. First to get them is the winner.

Dolphin Races

Racers go the length of the pool by diving to the bottom, pushing up, diving to the bottom, pushing up, diving to the bottom, pushing up...

Kickboard Tennis

Equipment? Two kickboards and one tennis ball. Goal? Stand 10 feet apart in the shallow end and bat the tennis ball back and forth with the kickboards. Our record? 133 consecutive hits.

The Noodle Shove 2 to 4 4 or more

This is a Little John vs. Robin Hood kind of game. Two players are each equipped with foam noodles which they should be holding with hands spread apart (like a balancing staff, NOT like a baseball bat). They should be on their knees in the shallow end, facing each other with noodles crossed. At a signal, let the pushing begin. NO BATTING. Only pushing. The goal? Push your opponent back 10 feet or so (put a pair of goggles on each side of the pool to mark the endlines).
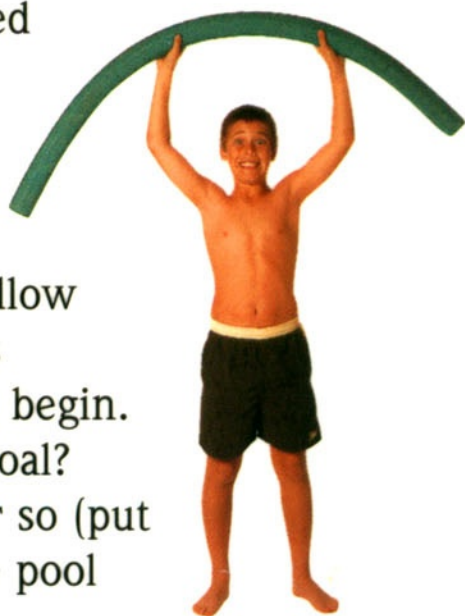
Red Light, Green Light and Simon Says

These are two land games (that you already know the rules to) which work just fine in the water. Both need grown-ups to occupy their top spots since the power corrupts and kids will never step down.

submarine tag 2 to 4 4 or more

Just like regular tag with one big difference: if you're underwater, you're safe. Ah*OOOO*gaa Ah*OOOO*ga.

Dorsal Fin Crawl 2 to 4 4 or more

Swimmers race to the finish using the freestyle crawl. With one difference. One foot must be held vertically, bent at the knee, at all times.

Foot stays up always

Backwards Racing

Like the name says, this is just like regular swimming, only you have to go backwards. You'll be amazed at the difference in speed.

Australian Relay (2 to 4) (4 or more)

Move a tennis ball from player to player down a line or around a circle as quickly as possible. The catch? You may only touch the ball with your feet and the Australian part is that you must keep the ball completely down under the water. If it pops up, it goes back to the beginning.

Corkscrew Race (2 to 4) (4 or more)

Another new stroke that the Olympic folks have yet to discover. Start out like the crawl with an overhand stroke but turn completely over into a backstroke, which turns you over again to the crawl. We call it the Corkscrew Crawl.

SIDE RACING

2 to 4 **4 or more**

Start with the two racers hanging on to the side of the pool at the same corner. At the call of "Go" they both begin racing in opposite directions. They move along hand-over-hand with their feet walking on the side of the pool. No touching the bottom or swimming allowed. When they meet and cross each other, they must keep at least one hand and one foot on the side at all times. First one back to the starting corner is the Side Racing Champ.
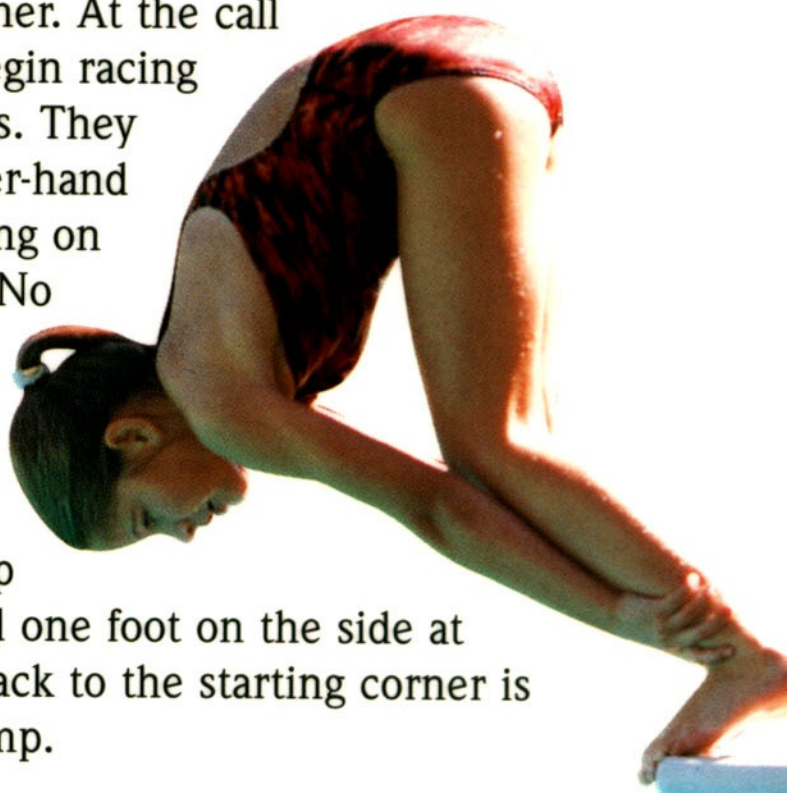
POGO RACE

2 to 4 **4 or more**

In order to pogo correctly, you must keep your feet together and your hands at your sides. You race by pushing off of the bottom and jumping forward. It works best at the short end of the pool. You can race for times or for the fewest number of pogos to cover the distance.

NAME THAT TUNA

2 to 4

It's not easy, but with some practice, you can actually hum a recognizable tune underwater. Set a limit on the number of times you may come up for air. Three times works fairly well. Start with simple ones like Mary Had a Little Lamb. You could drown trying to get Bolero.

LOST AND FOUND RELAYS

You'll need teams of at least two for this relay. Get a bunch of clothes from the lost and found, one outfit for each team. The first swimmer on the team has to jump into the clothes, swim a lap, swim back and give them to his teammate who has to repeat the whole quick change act.
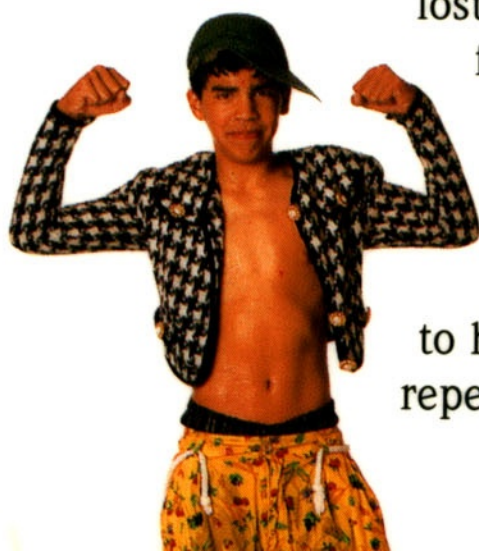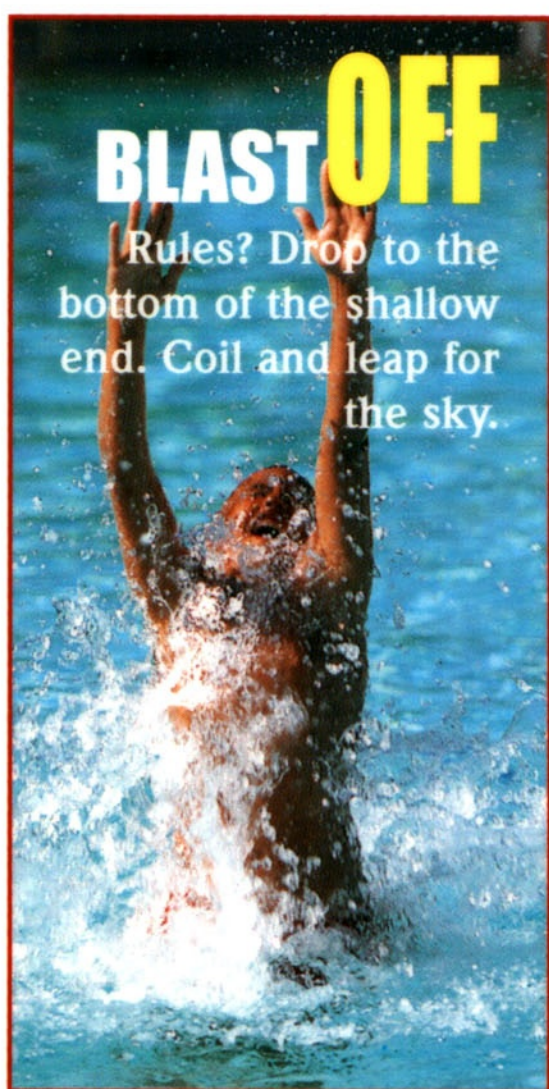
COMPETITIVE CANNONBALL

Try cannonballing for height, style, commanding splash, facial expression, joie de vivre, and insouciance. Award points accordingly.

BLAST OFF

Rules? Drop to the bottom of the shallow end. Coil and leap for the sky.

One Million Somersaults It's

Take a deep breath, tuck and spin underwater somersaults. Here at Klutz, we once did a million on a single breath. Drop us a note if you can break our record.

Hand Stands Racing

In water that comes up to about the lower part of your chest, try to do handstands. Goal? Race across the whole shallow end on your hands only.

All the Game Classics

Plus a few classics-to-be

Alligator Tag

Toothpick Scramble

Name That Tuna

Marco Polo

Cannonball

Keep Away

Elbow Tag

and more.

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