

## **SPARKIES' FUN DAY**

Sparks-A-Rama is similar to an AwanaGames meet, but yet it's different. It's a day of fun for young children, a day of exciting participation with new friends, not a day of high-pressured competition. Sparks-aged children are not ready for the keen rivalry of an AwanaGames meet. Don't expect or encourage them to compete as fervently as older boys and girls. Sparkies play games for the fun of playing them. Winning can be one gratifying result of their team effort.

Sparks-A-Rama should also be a ministry to parents. It is an opportunity to present clearly the gospel of Jesus Christ.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This manual is designed for team coaches, circle directors, and judges who will participate in an authorized Awana Sparks-A-Rama meet.

### **Authorization of Sparks-A-Rama meets**

All Awana Sparks-A-Rama meets must be authorized by an event coordinator or Awana missionary (contact events coordinator). If several registered churches with Sparks clubs are interested in conducting a Sparks-A-Rama meet in an area where none is scheduled, they should contact the area Awana missionary.

### **Composition of Sparks-A-Rama teams**

Div 1 teams consist of a minimum of 15 players and a maximum of 17 players. There may not be more than 9 boys & may not exceed 8 second graders! Every player must participate in at least 3 games

Div 2 teams consist of a minimum of 10 players and a maximum of 12 players. There may not be more than 6 boys & may not exceed 6 second graders! Every player must participate in at least 3 games.

**There is no such thing as alternates ...** every team member on the floor must participate! The number of circles in a meet depends on the number of teams competing.

## **REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

### **Requirements**

1. Only currently registered churches are authorized to compete in Sparks-A-Rama.
2. A Sparks-A-Rama registration form accompanied by a registration fee is required.

The fee covers part of the operating costs of the meet. All game equipment is provided. Until the registration fee is paid, a team cannot be officially registered. Teams are accepted on a "first-come, first-paid" basis. No refunds will be issued to teams withdrawing their registrations.

### **Processing Registrations**

Completed registrations will be accepted according to the order in which they are received. When all team lines on all circles available for the meet have been filled, additional team registrations will be accepted only on a standby basis. Such teams will be notified accordingly.

All teams accepting a "standby" position are expected to practice as if they were an accepted team. They must also be ready to participate if notified at least 24 hours before the meet. If a standby team is unable to participate when notified of acceptance, it loses its registration fee. Standby teams which are not asked to replace another team will be refunded the full registration fee following the meet.

### **Team Assignments**

The procedure for team assignments to a particular team line/color or a particular circle (where there is more than one circle) will be specified prior to the meet.

### **Qualifications of Team Members**

- All Sparkie clubbers in 2nd grade or lower who did not reach their 9th birthday by September 1 prior to the meet, may participate.
- Every team member must have passed 10 sections this club year not including the Gate.
- Teams may register for only one Sparks-A-Rama meet or league.

## **GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP**

An important aspect of the Awana youth program is teaching good sportsmanship. Whether we win or lose is not as important as putting forth our best effort. Maintaining a friendly attitude at all times demonstrates that Christ can give peace and victory in every circumstance. No coach should destroy a Christian testimony by even one moment's display of poor sportsmanship.

Being a winner for the Lord is more important than winning a Sparks-A-Rama meet. We encourage all team coaches to enthusiastically motivate their team. However, one should not mistake enthusiasm for unsportsmanlike outbursts. Officials in all sports make "wrong calls," but our officials are trained, devoted, impartial, born-again people who do their best to officiate according to Sparks-A-Rama rules.

Sparks-A-Rama affords Awana leaders an opportunity to display a charitable spirit under the pressure of competition. Hundreds of unsaved people may be observing. Therefore, we need to watch our actions and testimony, and all coaches should remind themselves and their teams that our testimony for Christ before others is of utmost importance.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### **ROSTER SHEET & EVENT PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT & TEAM ASSIGNMENT SHEET**

The team roster sheet, showing name, age, grade in school, and date of birth of each player, must be prepared by the team coach and submitted to the area event coordinator 7 days prior to the meet. The Event Participation Sheet must be signed & faxed 7 days prior to the meet. Team Assignment Sheets must be given to the Line Judge at the Meet. Fax sheets to 810.631.9826 or complete forms on the web page [awana-mi.com](http://awana-mi.com)

### **Team Outfits**

Coaches are responsible to be sure that uniforms are respectable and in keeping with Christian standards of dress. Gym shoes must be worn by everyone on the playing floor. This includes coaches, judges, circle directors, and team members.

Team coaches should wear either the Awana uniform or the special uniform chosen for their team. Awana T-shirts, which may be purchased from Awana headquarters, give a team a good appearance on the floor.

It is recommended that churches provide knee pads or coverings for the Sparky Crawl. Rolled-up tube socks provide a good cushion. Rigid plastic knee protectors will not be permitted as they may damage gym floors.

### **Insurance**

Awana does not carry insurance covering team members. All churches should obtain insurance information for church-sponsored activities so they can supply their own protection. The coach must have in his/her possession on the gym floor a permission slip signed by a parent of each player stating "emergency treatment may be given if necessary."

Extra players brought by a team on a "standby basis," as well as those recruited from the stands, to fill in short teams must have permission slips before they can participate.

### **Sparks-A-Rama Awards**

Team plaque — To winning team on each circle plus Participation patch for team members and coaches

### **PROMOTING INTEREST IN SPARKS-A-RAMA MEETS**

The Sparks-A-Rama meet provides an enthusiastic introduction to Awana for people who have not had any previous contact with Awana clubs. Here are some ways to encourage spectators to attend:

1. The Sparks-A-Rama meet should be promoted at Sparks club meetings for several weeks preceding the meet. Clubbers who are not selected for the team can encourage the team to victory by attending the meet and cheering for their friends on the team. Clubbers who are not on the team should be made to feel as much a part of the Sparks-A-Rama as the team members.
2. Sparks-A-Rama should be promoted at Sunday School. Boys and girls who don't attend Sparks club, as well as adults who are unfamiliar with Awana, would attend a Sparks-A-Rama meet if invited. Use stunts, skits, or other interesting methods to give announcements.
3. Sparks-A-Rama should be promoted at church. The Pastor can do much to encourage the support of the Sparks club teams in the weekly church bulletin and his announcements.
4. Sparks-A-Rama should be promoted to parents. People who have never seen a meet may need an extra push to get them there for the first time. A visit or a letter may be all they need.

### **SPARKS-A-RAMA DAY SCHEDULE**

#### **Arrival Time**

Teams must arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the starting time of the meet.

#### **Circle and Team Line Locations**

Teams should find their assigned circle team line as soon as possible on arrival. No running or practicing on the circle is permitted before the meet begins. Teams will help reduce congestion if they go to their assigned location and stay there.

#### **Meeting Sparks-A-Rama Officials**

The line judges and the circle director will give last-minute instructions to team coaches. Team coaches will be given opportunity to ask last-minute questions of officials before the meet begins.

### **Flag Ceremony**

All team members should be instructed before the meet to face the flag during the ceremony and to place their hands on their heart at the given signal.

### **SPARKLE TIME**

All team members on all circles recite/sing in unison:

Sparks Yell

Leader - Who are we?

Sparks - Sparks!

Leader - Who for?

Sparks - Jesus!

Leader - What to do?

Sparks - Light the world!

Sparks Theme Song                    “Sparks for Jesus”

Sparks Key Verse                    John 3:16

Sparks Motto                         “My Friend for Christ”

Bible Verse

I Corinthians 15:3-4     ... Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

Gospel Presentation

While Sparks-A-Rama is meant to be exciting and fun, the purpose of all Sparks special events is to reach unsaved families and friends for Jesus Christ. A brief gospel message is given which is skillfully designed to appeal to adults, yet to be age-appropriate for Sparkies.

Recognition may also be given to Sparkies for their outstanding achievements.

Coaches should instruct their team members to sit quietly without talking or whispering during the message and recognition time. Players are not permitted to leave their team line.

### **SPARKS-A-RAMA PERSONNEL**

#### **Chain of command on each circle**

Team members who have questions should ask only their coach.

If the coach has a question or comment, he/she speaks only to the judge on his/her team line. If the judge cannot answer the question satisfactorily, he consults with the circle director.

The circle director's decision is final. Unless requested by the circle director, no team coach is allowed on the game floor to consult him at any time.

#### **Circle Director**

Is responsible for: Coaches' meeting at start of meet; Circle operation after official start; Declaring returns; Indicating event winners; Coordination and ultimate responsibilities of judges; Scorekeepers' activities; Final word on all matters not covered in written rules

#### **Judges**

In each circle, four trained officials who are familiar with all Sparks-A-Rama games, rules governing each, and how to resolve tie events, tie heats, or tie score assist the circle director in watching for false starts, fouls, broken rules, fallen pins, interference, etc.

#### **Official Scorekeepers**

Two individuals in each circle record the scores for each event as reported by the circle director. Additional helpers post these scores where they are visible to the spectators.

#### **Official Starter**

Gives the starting signal for all circles at beginning of most events or heats.

#### **Team Coaches**

Two coaches are required for each team. A team must have either 2 ladies or one lady & 1 man to act as coaches. A team may not have 2 male coaches! Team coaches are not permitted in

the playing area any time during the Sparks-A-Rama meet, except to position players for the next event. They must give directions from the sidelines only, out of the way of players and judges.

- Coaches may ask their team judge to review a decision with their circle director.
- A coach may be asked to leave the floor if the circle director considers it necessary.
- All coaches are required to attend the Sparks-A-Rama coaches' training session.
- All coaches must remain behind their team line at all times while Sparks-A-Rama events are in progress (except during Sparky Crawl).

## **GENERAL RULES/DEFINITIONS**

Arranged alphabetically for quick reference

### **Adherents**

No adherents are permitted on gym shoes, including everything from professional adherents to wet cloths. Violators may be disqualified. The best safety measure is a good pair of gym shoes with a clean tread. No cloths will be allowed on the gym floor.

### **ATTIRE**

Coaches Attire ... Modest loose fitting slacks, skirts, culottes. Skirts & culottes must come to at least the bottom of the knee. No shorts, sweat/wind pants jeans, stirrup/stretch pants etc.

Team Member Attire ... Modest loose fitting clothing - no shorts!

Skirts & culottes must come to at least the bottom of the knee. No shorts!

### **Balloons**

Nine-inch balloons are inflated to about eight inches in diameter.

### **Center Beanbag**

In game events that finish in the middle of the circle, and which have second place, a beanbag is placed on the intersection of the two diagonal lines with the center pin on top of it. At the conclusion of the event or heat, second-place points are awarded the team of the player who has possession of the center beanbag (see General Rules "Possession").

### **Center Pin**

In events that finish in the middle of the circle, a game pin is set at the intersection of the two diagonal lines. (It is placed on top of the center beanbag when first- and second-place points are to be awarded.) First-place points are awarded the team whose player has possession of center pin at end of the event or heat (see General Rules "Possession").

### **Circle Pins**

(See Game Circle Diagram) All circle pins must be passed with both feet outside the circle in all running events. No jumping of pins is allowed. If a pin has fallen, that point on the circle normally marked by the pin must be passed with both feet outside the circle as if the pin were in its proper place. (Runners may cut inside the circle between circle pins, but they must be outside the circle at each pin.) Anyone knocking over a circle pin during a game disqualifies his/her team for that event or heat.

### **Disqualification**

A team may be disqualified by the circle director and/or judges at any time during an event for one or more of the following reasons:

1. Unnecessary roughness or poor conduct
2. Knocking over a circle pin
3. Causing interference to other participants
4. Breaking other game rules not listed here, but described elsewhere in this book
5. Play which is not according to the spirit of the game (see "Spirit of the Game")

Coaches should instruct team members to go all the way into the center for each event — no matter how hopeless it may seem — because the apparent winners may have been disqualified.

### **False Start**

The circle director and judges will call a "false start" when action is started in an event before the starting signal. The event in that circle is brought to a halt as rapidly as possible, and then restarted by the circle director. Two false starts in one event or heat by a single team disqualifies that team for that event or heat. The remaining teams will be restarted.

### **Floor Markings**

Lines are marked on the floor with tape. The width of the tape provides a margin for error in games which use tape boundaries. If any player's foot protrudes beyond the tape in these games, his/her team will be disqualified for that event or heat.

### **Interference**

The circle director and judges may declare “interference” if, in the opinion of these officials, a team’s fair chance of winning is impaired by something other than normal breaks and hazards of the game. This includes hampering of teams’ or players’ progress by someone other than players participating in a particular event or heat, such as officials, spectators, coaches, and nonparticipating players of opposing teams. When a team member or coach causes interference, his/her team will be disqualified from that event. Interference may also be called when players’ progress is hindered by foreign matter or water on the floor. When interference is called, the circle director will declare a rerun.

#### **Passing Zone**

In the Relay event (Sparky Safari), the beanbag must be passed within that section of the circle contained within the team zone assigned to each team (see Diagram). Passing the beanbag in any other zone — including passing it over a starting diagonal — disqualifies that team for that event.

#### **Possession**

In events using the center pin and center beanbag to determine the winners, the player must have possession of the center pin or center beanbag to be awarded points. Touching the pin or beanbag is not enough. However, if the player who has possession of the center pin or center beanbag has been disqualified, the next player into the center will be awarded points (see “Winner of an Event”).

#### **Rerun**

A rerun of an event or heat will be held for interference calls. A rerun is also in order when, in the opinion of the circle director and judges, the awarding of points cannot be determined fairly.

A team will not be allowed to participate in the rerun if:

- Any of its members were the cause of an interference call, or
- The team had already been disqualified for a violation previous to an interference call or other situation requiring a rerun (see General Rules “Interference”).

#### **Scoring**

The scoring for each event is stated in the game rules. The circle director determines who the winners are and reports to the scorekeepers. Players should not leave the circle or set down the center pin or beanbag until the circle director has determined their team standings.

#### **Spirit of the Game**

When a team deliberately stretches existing rules to play a game differently from that planned by the national event team, the spirit of the game has been violated. The circle director and judges will declare the team disqualified for that event or heat, even though the team may have followed the letter of the rules as written.

#### **SPORTSMANSHIP POINTS**

Each team receives 3 sportsmanship points at the conclusion of each event. If a team member, coach or spectators displays un-sportsmanlike conduct as determined by the judges & circle director, that team will lose the points for the one event.

Teams will also receive 3 bonus points for coaches attending the annual Coaches Meeting.

#### **Starting Diagonal**

(See Game Circle Diagram) Events which are run around the circle will be started with the player outside the circle and behind the starting diagonal for his/her team color. All running events are run in a counterclockwise direction.

#### **Starting Signal**

When each team is ready, the judge on that line signals the circle director. When all judges in a circle have indicated their teams are ready, the circle director signals the Official Starter who starts the game.

#### **Team Lines**

(See Game Circle Diagram) Red, blue, green, and yellow lines forming a square outside the circle give team boundaries. Team members not participating in an event must stay seated behind these lines.

#### **Team Zone**

The triangle within the square bounded by the team line and the two diagonal lines forms the team zone.

#### **Tie Game (Event)**

When two teams, in the opinion of the circle director, gain possession of the center pin or center beanbag at the same instant, a tie is declared. Available points are divided equally between the tied teams. If it is a tie for first place in a game having second place, first- and second-place points are added together and split, eliminating second place. If it is a tie for second place, second-place points are split. Should this result in a half-point, the half-point is set aside until the end of all events and is used to break a final tie.

### **Tie Score**

When two or more teams are tied at the end of the last event, the tie may be resolved by playing one heat of the Sparky Balloon Pop – coaches choose who plays .

### **Winner of an Event**

The circle director declares the winner(s) of each event. (He may consult with the judges to determine the winner.) Players should hold the center pin or center beanbag until the circle director indicates which teams have won. If the player holding the center pin has been disqualified, the player with possession of the center beanbag will receive first-place points. If the circle director can determine the third-place player, that player will be awarded second-place points. If the player with the center beanbag is disqualified, the circle director will award second place to the third-place player. Where it is not possible for the circle director to determine the winner, he may call for a rerun.

### **EVENT 1—Sparky Crawl**

Div 1 = 15 players - 2 heats 1st place - four points  
Div 2 = 10 players - 2heats 2nd place - two points

Equipment: center pin and beanbag

Players spread out along the entire line on their hands and knees behind team color lines. One coach from each team crosses to the opposite color line. At signal, all teams crawl on hands & knees across to opposite team line. When center of circle is clear of players, circle director places center pin and beanbag in position side-by-side in center of circle. As soon as entire team has **completely crossed the team line** opposite its starting line, the team coach sends a player into the center for pin or bag.

Game will be played a second time with players crawling back to their original team line.

### **EVENT 2—Sparky Safari**

Six players (one lap each) - two heats  
1st heat - three girls 1st place - four points  
2nd heat - 3 players 2nd place - two points

Equipment: Four circle pins, four beanbags, center pin and beanbag

First player is positioned at starting pin. The other two runners wait inside the circle within their team zone. Beanbag is placed on first player's head. At signal, player #1 runs around circle and passes beanbag to player #2, who places beanbag on his/her head and runs around circle. Player #2 passes beanbag to #3 who runs around circle, around player's starting pin, and into center for pin or beanbag. Player #3 must have beanbag on head until he/she crosses the circle line for the approach to the center pin. If bag falls off while player is running around circle, player may not touch bag with hands until it hits the floor. Player must then stop and place bag back on the head before continuing. While moving, player may not touch bag with his/her hands. Beanbag must be passed (handed off, not thrown) and placed on the next player's head within passing zone. After passing beanbag, player returns to team line. Hairstyles and accessories should not be used to enhance winning.

### **EVENT 3—Balloon Battle**

Div 1 = 15 players - 3 heats of 5 1st place (lowest # of units) - six points  
Div 2 = 10 players - 2 heats of 5 2nd place (2nd lowest # of units) - four points  
3rd place (3rd lowest # of units) - two points

Equipment: two nine-inch balloons, two sixty-foot lengths of lightweight rope

One coach from each team holds rope stretched from corner to corner, making visible boundaries to help players stay within their triangles. (Balloons do not have to go over the rope.)

Players stand anywhere within their own playing area. Circle director holds balloons and stands in center of circle. At signal, balloons are tossed into air. Players bat balloons with their hands to keep them from touching the floor in their area. Players may not hold balloons or step out of their area. When a balloon touches floor within a team's playing area, that team receives one unit. There is a 60-second time limit for each heat. Circle director starts new heat in center of circle. If a balloon lands outside of playing areas, circle director or line judge restarts play from center of circle until time runs out. Players may participate in only one heat.

## **EVENT 4—Sparky Bowl**

Six players - six heats  
Heats 1-3: girls only  
Heats 4-6 any player      One point - each heat

Equipment: Four beanbags, center pin

The player stands outside the circle with the beanbag, just behind the starting diagonal. At the starting signal, players run 1 lap around the circle, past their own pin & while standing outside the circle toss (over or under hand) the beanbag at their color pin on the corners of the 7' square. First pin to fall wins. If players miss, they must retrieve their own beanbag, go back outside the circle and continue until a player knocks down their own color pin. Both feet must be outside the circle while throwing.

## **EVENT 5—Rabbit Hunt**

Div 1 = 15 players - 4 heats      1st place - six points  
Div 2 = 10 players - 4 heats      2nd place - four points  
Equipment: two sport balls      3rd place - two points

One team (rabbits) stands anywhere within the circle. The three other teams (hunters) position themselves evenly anywhere around the circle. At signal, hunters toss balls, trying to hit rabbits. When hit, rabbits leave circle, returning to their team line. Rabbits are disqualified if they step outside circle before being hit. Hunters may not step inside circle while tossing ball. Action stops after 30 seconds; rabbits still in circle are counted. Play is repeated until all teams have had a turn to be rabbits. Team with the most rabbits left in the circle wins.

## **EVENT 6—Sparky Train**

10 players (one lap each) - 2 heats  
1st heat - 5girls      1st place - four points  
2nd heat - either 5girls or 5 boys      2nd place - two points

Equipment: Four circle pins, center pin and beanbag

(\*Optional Equipment: Three-legged bands)

Players line up behind one another outside their circle line, as pictured on diagram. Players must grab a “pool noodle” to form a train. At signal, train runs around circle. If train becomes disconnected (player loses hold of another player), train must stop, rejoin itself, and then continue. When all five players cross the starting line, the **last player** separates from the train and runs into the center for center pin or beanbag.

\*If using optional equipment: Bands – A three-legged race band (available through Awana) may be secured tightly around first four Sparkies' waists, so that Sparks may have a means to hold on to one another securely (rather than holding on to waists).

## **EVENT 7—Sparky Balloon Pop**

Div 1 = 15 players - 2 heats  
Div 2 = 10 players - 2 heats  
1st heat - player #15 (last player in line) is a girl  
2nd heat - player #15 (last player in line) can be either a boy or girl

1st place - four points  
2nd place - two points

Equipment: Four nine-inch balloons per heat

All team players straddle their team diagonal line with their backs toward center of circle, as close together as they wish. Player #15 (last in line) stands between the eight-foot & nine-foot hash mark. Player #1 holds balloon on back of his/her head. At signal, the balloon is passed through the legs of the first 14 players to the 15th player. It is not necessary that each player touches the balloon. When last player in line has possession of balloon, he/she runs into his/her team's inner triangle, places balloon on the floor, and sits on balloon until it breaks. First player to break balloon within his/her triangle wins. If balloon breaks before it gets to player #15 line judge may insert another balloon.

## **EVENT 8—Sparky Beanbag – In and Out**

Div 1 = 15 players - two heats

1st place - four points

Div 2 = 10 players - two heats

2nd place - two points

Equipment: Four containers, four beanbags, four circle pins, center pin and beanbag

Players line up on their team's circle line. Container is set in team's small triangle, and the beanbag is given to player #1 (farthest from his/her team's starting diagonal). At signal, player #1 runs to container and places beanbag into container, returns to team line and tags player #2. Player #2 retrieves beanbag and brings it back to player #3. Players may not proceed into the circle before being tagged or given the beanbag. Action continues until all team members have participated. The last player with beanbag in hand runs into the center for pin or beanbag. The winners must retain possession of their beanbag when they grab the center pin or center beanbag.

## **Event 9 - Inner-Tube Relay**

Div 1 = 15 players; 2 heats

Div 2 = 10 players; 2 heats

Heat 1 a girl must go in for the pin

1st place - 2 points

2<sup>nd</sup> place - 1 point

Equipment: circle pins, scoring pin, bean bag, innertubes

All players line up around the team's quarter of the circle with the 1<sup>st</sup> player closest to the team color pin. Player #1 picks up inner tube, puts it over his head and body down to the floor, steps out. The tube is passed to the next player. The last player steps out of tube, runs around team circle pin into circle. Kids sit down behind their color line once they have completed their turn.

## **Event 10 - Roll & Bowl Relay**

Div 1 = 15 players; 3 heats

Div 2 = 10 players; 2 heats

Heat 1 is girls only

1st place - 2 points

Equipment: circle pins, scoring pins, nerf balls

First player is positioned at the starting pin. the other 4 players wait inside the circle within their team zone. Player #1 is given a nerf ball. At the signal, player #1 runs one lap around the circle, passes the ball (within passing zone) to player #2 who runs one lap around the circle. Play continues until player #5 receives the ball, runs one lap around the circle, past their starting pin, stops outside the circle, and rolls the ball toward the scoring pin (at the corners of the 7' square.) Player only gets 1 SHOT.

The first colored scoring pin knocked over receives 2 points. (Regardless of which team knocks over the scoring pin.)