

Ways of Picking Teams

1. Count Off = Give each student a number according to how many teams you need for the activity. (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2...)
2. Back to Back = Have students sit back to back with a partner. You choose one of two choices: (1) assign the partners to the same team or (2) assign one to one team and the other student to the opposing team. It's a good way to keep the kids guessing and playing against their friends, which are usually their best competition.
3. Back to Back, Side by Side = Have students sit back to back with a partner they want to play with. Then tell the students to sit side by side with the team they want to play against. You choose one of two choices: (1) assign the quad to the same court or (2) assign one pair to one team and the other pair to the opposing team. This works best with racket games and volleyball games and any activity that involves teams of 4.
4. Secret Draft Board = Depending on how many teams you need, pick the same amount of Team Owners. The Team Owners will draft students from their class privately in the hallway. Each team owner will pick in a specified order with the last team of each round picking twice in a row to start the next round of selections. After they have picked the teams, there remains an option to trade and mix and match players only if both parties agree. Lastly, the Team Owners are to select the match-ups for the game.
5. Lane Lines = The class should line up on the two side free thrown lane lines facing each other. The goal is to arrange themselves so that the teams are fair (ability) and even (amount). This produces two teams. A countdown from 10 seconds usually gets the teams picked quickly. The teacher has the power to switch around any team that seems to be unfair. I tell the students they are all "free agents" and can be traded at any time.

6. Clothespins = Have 2 - 5 different colored clothespins in a small box and have each student pick a clothespin and pass the box around the circle. Arrange teams according to the color of the clothespin.
7. Square Up = Same as lane lines except they arrange themselves in a square. This produces four teams.
8. The Deal = Go around the circle your class is sitting in and hold out a deck of cards spread out in between your two hands. Have each student "pick a card, any card" and hold it until the teams are specified. Arrange the teams by suit or card value.
9. Themes = Depending on the occasion or the holiday, print and cut out and laminate pictures that fit into that theme and hand them out. Have the students find their matches/team.
10. Famous Duos, Trios or Groups = Name the students one of the three members of a famous trio (Three Stooges, Marx Bros, Alvin, Simon and Theodore, etc...).
11. Pile of Shoes: Have each student take off one shoe and throw it in the middle of the class circle. Once all the shoes are in, then throw each shoe to the different corner/cone and then have the class find their shoe, put it back on and sit down with your team.
12. Magnetic Strips: Cut 1 inch magnetic strips and put the students names on labels. Have a magnetic board for the strips to be arranged on. Use this for tournaments or the secret draft.
13. Lane Line Variation: Tell the students what the most important skill of the game is. Everyone in the room is aware of each other's skill in a given area. Ask the class to stand on the lane lines. It does not matter how many are on each line. The object is to make two (or X) teams that will be equal in skill. The teams do not have to have the same number of people on them. Everyone begins standing up. The only thing you can do to change the teams is to go over to the other team. If you think the teams are fair, you sit down or turn your back away. If you sit

down and then someone moves, you may stand back up. You may move back and forth as many times as you need to. When everyone is sitting down, I ask one more time if everyone is happy with the teams. Yes, this does take a few minutes the first time you do it. The next time is much faster. The teams usually work out to be very fair. If they are not, we stop the game and start over. This method seems to give the students ownership of the team. It also makes them think about their skill level. You must be very strict on the talking and gesturing part.