

# Stoopball

A crash course for the doorstep game

## About Stoopball

Stoopball can be played wherever a good set of steps can be found and where the owner of those steps will allow it. It is named after a stoop, a row of steps found in front of a typical New York City brownstone building. Stoop comes from the Dutch *stoep*; in the Netherlands it was used to raise the main floor of the house in areas subject to flooding. The stoop carried over to 19<sup>th</sup> century Dutch New York as a way to provide a livable, partially aboveground basement in an even-then cramped city. Whatever the reason, the stoop provides the focal point for the game.

To learn more about stoopball, visit  
<http://www.streetplay.com/thegames/stoopb01.htm>

## Game Essentials

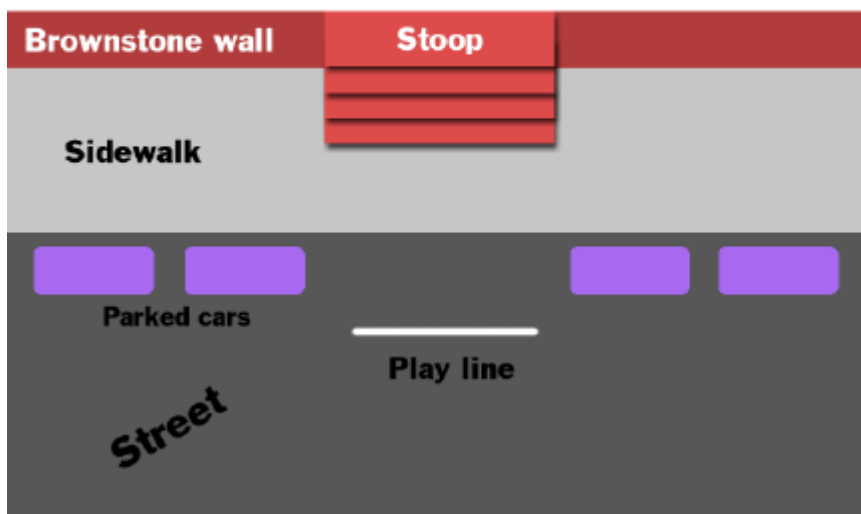
Players: Anywhere from 2 to 6. It is not usually played as a team game, but more as a competition between two people.

Materials needed:

- Bouncing rubber ball (spaldeen is ideal)
- A stoop

Time to play: About 20-30 minutes

## Typical stoopball field ("classic" version)



## The Stoopball field

Players determine a line from which to throw the ball against the stoop and catch the return. A good stoopball field has at least 4-step stoop, no parked car in front of the stoop, and a lightly trafficked street. Players determine a line from which to throw the ball against the stoop and catch the return, and an area behind the line that the player can easily back into should be ball go over his/her head.

## How to play

Before the game, the players agree on the amount of points that will win, usually 500 or 1000. Each player takes a turn throwing the ball against the stoop and catching it. If the ball bounces back and the player catches it on the fly, it's worth 10 points. If the player throws it and catches it on a bounce, it's worth 5 points. If the throw hits the point of a stair and the player catches it on the fly, it's worth 100 points. A player may not cross the "short line" in order to catch the ball.

The player keeps going, adding up the score until he/she throws a ball and doesn't catch it on the fly or one bounce. In other words, if it bounces more than once, you're out. You hold on to your score, let the other player go. When you return, you just add on to what you already had. All players get to go to finish the turn before the first player starts the next turn.

If a player reaches or exceeds the winning amount, he/she continues playing until out. Remaining players who have not finished their turn still get "last licks," a final attempt to better their opponent's score—in which case they can grasp victory from the clutches of defeat.

The game we've described here is thought by many to be "classic stoopball." As you can imagine, it's easy to create variations of this game, and a few have also become popular. You can visit [Streetplay.com](http://www.streetplay.com) to learn more about stoopball variations.

## The last word

Stoopball is one of the great games of the city, but it can be adapted anywhere there are steps leading to the front door of a house. Just watch out if those flies going over your head go out into the street!

This Streetplay Rule Sheet is available at: <http://www.streetplay.com/rulesheets/stoopball/>