Students play 'deadly' game

By Martha Carson
5/29/79

One hundred North Campus residents have turned into assassins and are trying to "kill" each other.

"Assassin" is a game sponsored by the North Campus Student Association (NCSA). "We stole the idea from Cleveland State University," said Mike Paquet, a sophomore from Warren and one of the coordinators of the game.

When Paquet found out about the game, NCSA took the idea and changed a few rules, he said.

"Participants pay a $2 entry fee and receive a toy dart gun. Each person is assigned to "kill" someone and is also someone's "victim," Paquet said.

A victim is identified only by name. The "assassin" must find out where the victim lives and what he or she looks like. There is also a time by which the victim must be killed. The victim is killed when a rubber-tipped dart touches any part of the body.

When a victim is killed, he and two witnesses must sign a "death certificate." After the first round, each person must kill their victim to advance to the next round, Paquet said.

Victims can be killed anywhere. Some were killed in the commons, in their rooms and a few were even killed in class, Paquet said.

The game started May 6 and will probably end the last week of classes, Paquet said. The last survivor gets a $50 prize. As of Thursday, 17 students were left in the game.

All profit will be donated to the Office for the Physically Impaired.

The number of students involved had to be limited since only 100 guns could be acquired, Paquet said. The registration was on a first-come basis.

The game was held during Spring Quarter so students would get to know about NCSA when they signed up and hopefully that would get them to vote in the NCSA elections held last week, Paquet said.
Many On Campus Aren't Smiling

Assassination Game Popular At Colleges

By Gary Kiefer
Of the Daily Bruin

If the mood of college students can be seen in the games they play, then campuses are witnessing a somewhat sinister turn of events from the days of goldfish swallowing and phone booth stuffing.

That's because the "in" game of the 1980s has students hunting down one another in order to carry out make-believe assassinations. And the challenge to participants is finding creative ways to "kill" their opponents.

As far as anyone can determine, the curious contest originated a few years ago on a small scale at the University of Michigan, where students called the game "Killer."

IT HAS SINCE spread to campuses from coast to coast, with some variation in name and rules.

At Ohio State University this year, 180 students took part in a game of "Assassin" which was sponsored by an organization of dormitory students.

At other schools, from the University of Florida to UCLA, the craze goes by the code name KASG, which stands for "Killer As an Organized Sport."

But by any name, the game has at least two constants. The weapon must be a plastic pistol that shoots rubber-tipped darts. And the goal is always to "kill" other players before they "kill" you.

NOT UNEXPECTEDLY, the terminology and basic concept of the game have generated complaints from officials and some students at several of the colleges, including Ohio State.

"When people started to find out we were playing "Assassin," we started to get complaints," said Chuck Mathes, a junior from Wooster and president of the North Campus Student Association at OSU.

Mathes views the game as a "harmless" form of tag, but said he understands the complaints.

"Some students and a few university officials told us it was bad timing because of Iran and the international situation," he said.

"OTHER PEOPLE thought it was in kind of poor taste since this year was the 10th anniversary of (the shooting deaths of four students at) Kent State."

So the Ohio State students changed the name of their game to "Spy Versus Spy" and had participants "capture" rather than "kill" opponents. But they kept the dart guns.

"That's part of the fun of it," Mathes said.

At Ohio State, it was mostly dormitory residents who played the game, and the student sponsors said the game was designed to help students get to know each other.

AS IN MOST other forms of the game, the OSU students pitched in $2 each to take part and were given a dart gun and the name of another participant who was their intended "victim."

That meant that each player was both an "assassin" and a "victim" and had to track down an opponent and defend against attacks at the same time.

Mathes says the game can provide some moments of hilarity as the players go through elaborate maneuvers to either catch up with or avoid opponents.

For example, one professor watched dumbfounded as a student leaped to his feet in the middle of a class, fired a shot at another student, then fled the room.

A STUDENT CAFETERIA worker was busy dishing out soup when he saw a "customer" pull his dart gun and fire. The "victim" dodged the dart, which, of course, sank slowly into the soup.

Another player tracked his prey to his dormitory room, only to find out the "victim" had switched rooms with another student to avoid such a trap.

"We had some really innovative people involved and they kept coming up with different ways to get their victims," Mathes said.

WITH THE GAME being played on so many campuses, there are already stories making the rounds about "classic" maneuvers used by successful assassins.

Perhaps the best one, though unverfied, is the story of a young lady at a Florida campus who arranged a date with her unwitting victim, took him back to her apartment, and then -- during a romantic moment -- plugged him with a dart.

The game has also had its more frightening aspects.

At UCLA, the student newspaper, the Daily Bruin, reported that one coed was nabbed by campus police as she prowled around a parking lot late at night, toy pistol in hand.

OHIO STATE University police have had no similar incidents, but neither are they thrilled about the game.

"An officer who must deal with real criminal situations is not going to be amused by a student running around with a toy gun," said one OSU officer.

Mathes said some students may go a bit "overboard" in their enthusiasm for the game, but he said the student association disqualified any student who broke the rules or took the game too seriously.

The rules for the OSU game, for example, specifically outlined the possible physical dangers involved in shooting a "victim" in the head, which was unnecessary since a hit to any part of the body was considered a "kill."

MATTHES SAID his organization was unable to come up with a single winner, because when the game got down to three people they were all so careful to avoid getting shot that they were unable to eliminate one another.

While there has been some criticism nationwide that the game encourages violent behavior, the local players seemed to think that critics are taking the whole game too seriously.

Mathes said that students who grew up with James Bond movies and spy stories are naturally attracted to such a fantasy game.

IN FACT, THE game caught on at Ohio State after some dormitory students began regaling their fellow residents with stories about a similar game they saw played at Case Western Reserve in Cleveland.

"I don't see anything wrong with it. It's just good healthy fun," Mathes said. "We can't wait to get the next game started."
THE WEAPON — OSU's North Campus Student Association bought hundreds of red and blue plastic pistols to use in their "assassin" game, which was changed to "Spy Versus Spy" after some students and university officials objected to the lethal terminology.