

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

world

JULY 1995

SPACE ROCKS
Coming in for a Landing

NEW Ball Game
BANKSHOT
Play It!

Rome: BRAVO!

SWAT!
The Stings of Summer



It's a Whole New Ball Game

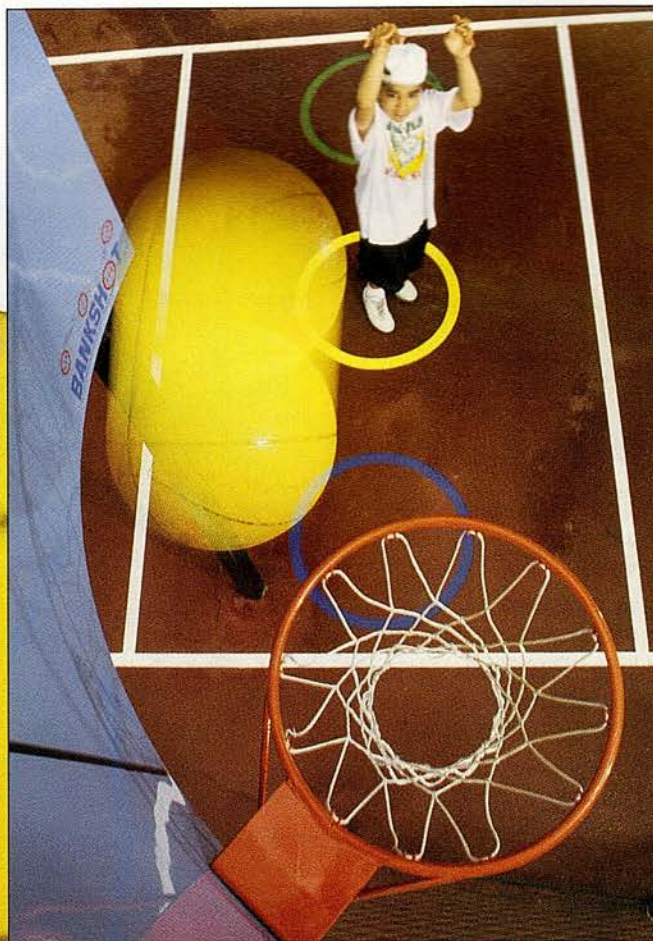
BANKSHOT!

Growing in popularity, this sport puts a new spin on basketball basics. Played on a colorful court (above, in Glenville, New York), it can turn any kid into a b'ball star.

◀ **SHARP EYES** help Louie Gomez, 13, of Schenectady, New York, figure out his next shot.



▶ **A SOFT TOUCH**
by Louie puts
the ball on a path
to score in the
“wrap-around
right” basket.



Whoosh—through the air. *Plunk*—off the backboard. *Swish*—through the net. It sounds like basketball, but it's not. It's Bankshot, a new game that rolls the fun of basketball, miniature golf, and pool into one big challenge. Today kids and adults in 120 cities on three continents are playing this hot new sport.

A Bankshot player must bounce the ball—or bank it—off backboards of various shapes at a sequence of stations. “It takes a sharp eye and a soft touch,” says Angelo Raga, 11, of Sevierville, Tennessee, the Bankshot national junior division champ.

All the boards are bent into wacky shapes. Each station has a backboard and a name like “ricochet,” “double glance,” “roll back,” or “bank down.” The names tell the kind of shot you have to make. The toughest shot—a tiebreaker—



◀ **DOUBLE TROUBLE.** A skillful shot nets two hoops for Vanessa Van Allen, 13, of Scotia, New York. The arrows show the path.

▲ **TWIN HOOPS,** one below the other, call for a perfect bank shot from Tiffany Mastroianni, 12, of Glenville, New York. The ball hits the backboard, angles right, and drops through both nets (above, right).

boomerangs off two boards and falls into a low net, the "black hole."

Rabbi Reeve Brenner, of Rockville, Maryland, invented Bankshot in 1978 after an accident left his cousin in a wheelchair. "I wanted an active sport that people with disabilities could play along with anyone else," Rabbi Brenner says. "Bankshot takes the running and jumping out of basketball. Most wheelchair athletes can shoot hoops competitively with able-bodied players."

Part of the fun of Bankshot is competition. "When you compete, you gain self-respect," says Angelo. Play against other shooters, or simply try to better your own score.

Want to try it? Step into a shooting spot (see box at right). Eye the backboard. Step up, take aim, let the ball fly: off the "moon," off "Mount Everest," through the black hole. *Swish*—nothing but net!

BY RICHARD M. CRUM

Bankshot Sports Organization
785 F Rockville Pike, Suite 504
Rockville, MD. 20852
800-933-0140
info@bankshot.com
www.bankshot.com

YOU ASKED FOR IT!

Brandon Vernoy, 13, of Rogue River, Oregon, suggested a basketball-related story. He'll receive a *World/Junior Member T-shirt* for his suggestion.

How To Play

Station to Station

A Bankshot player starts at station 1 and moves along in numerical order. Station 19, the "black hole," is a tiebreaker. To win points, you must bank the shots off the backboards and through the nets, shown below.



Scoring

Colored circles mark the shooting spots (right). You make two shots from each circle, and you must complete all three circles for each station before moving on to the next station.

- 1 point
- 2 points
- 3 points

12 points: Maximum score for each station from 1 through 16

Double points: Stations 17 and 18

Total possible points: 240



ART BY TERRY SIRRELL