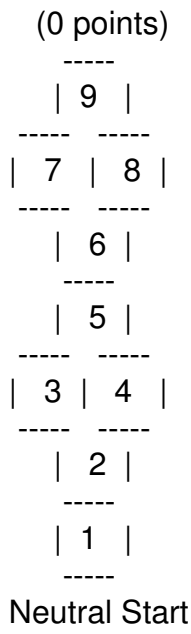
Final Version - Musical Hopscotch

Requires
- 2 players
- 1 ref/scorekeeper
- 2 hopscotch courses side by side (diagram below)
- 2 markers to throw. Bean bag animals work just fine
- 2 sets of point value cards (four 1s, two 2s, one 3), or just use post-it notes with these values written on them.
- Lisa's handy dandy musical chairs automated random music stopper script, and a computer with Flash Player to play it on (hopscotchplayer.swf)

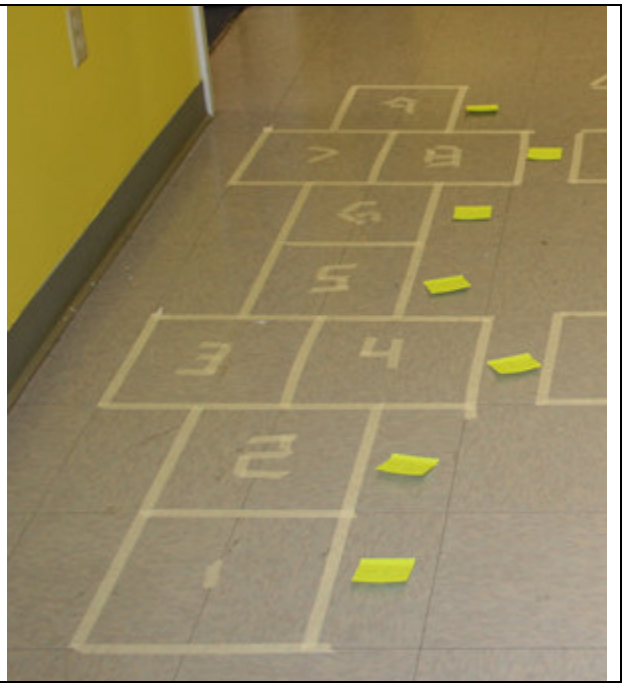
Summary:
In Musical Hopscotch, 2 players score points by completing circuits, hopping up and down their court as quickly (but as accurately) as they can. They can potentially score bonus points by stopping in certain squares when the music stops.

Game play:
Each player stands at a court. The courts are laid out with 9 squares, a neutral start zone, and a neutral end zone. Like this:



1) Each person takes a set of point value cards and lays them out next to his court, 1 card per row. This will determine the bonus points a player gets if they land in that row when the music stops. Players can not put point cards in the neutral zones. Each player can lay down four 1s, two 2s, and one 3. Explain

the rest of the rules before doing this, so they'll know the overall goal of the game.
Here's an example of how to lay out points...



```
     -----
    | 9   | 1
 -----  -----
|  7  |  8  | 2
 -----  -----
    |  6  | 1
     -----
    |  5  | 1
 -----  -----
|  3  |  4  | 3
 -----  -----
    |  2  | 2
     -----
    |  1  | 1
     -----
```

2) The ref starts the music in the swf, and each player begins hopscotch on their respective court according to the typical rules (see below).

a) Player tosses his marker onto the first square, must hop over it on one foot up to the neutral zone at the end of the court (neutral zones mean the player can stand there normally on both feet), where he turns around and hops back, stopping to pick up his marker along the way.

b) Next, he tosses his marker in the second square, continuing as before, hopping over the square with the marker and picking it up on the way back.

c) This is repeated for all 9 squares, **and then starts over again at the first square**

d) on the double squares the player may land with one foot in each square and continue.

e) If the player misses the square he is aiming for with the marker, he must fetch his marker and try again (he may walk normally to do this)

f) If the player lands on a line instead of the interior of the square, or falls over, or lands out of a square altogether, he must start the turn over.

3) Each time a player completes a circuit, he gets 1 point. The ref should keep track of how many circuits each player completes.

4) At some point, the music will randomly play a bell and stop. Everyone freezes on the space he is currently on. If he falls over, he gets no bonus points

a) If he's standing in a square, he gets the point value of that row (the value on the card he laid next to that row)

b) If he is standing on the double squares, with one foot in each, he just gets the point value of the card next to that row

c) If he is standing in a neutral zone at the start or end of the court, he gets 0 points

5) The ref tallies up the points and players return to the beginning of the court for the new round. They players should start where they left off (i.e. if they froze on the circuit where their marker was on the fifth square, when they start over they should throw the marker on the fifth square again and continue).

6) Rinse and repeat for 5 rounds

7) Whoever has the highest total score at the end wins!

Some other general rules:

- players have to keep pace, they can't dawdle or just stand in a square, they must keep going ("dawdling" is defined by the ref's discretion, just don't be a griefer)
- if a player gets through 9 circuits, they should just begin again from 1
- if, for some reason, you have a ton of people, form teams and do this as a relay!

Final Analysis

The Good:

This design still addresses the original problems I was trying to solve. There is no waiting for turns, and the pace of the game is much swifter than original hopscotch, so there's little time to stand around being bored. By giving points for completing circuits and breaking the activity down into rounds, I found that people did not despair at falling behind early on (as, it is quite easy to catch up). Plus, with the random bonus point element, there's always the chance of a reversal, but it isn't drastic enough to be discouraging to the other player. I think

part of this comes from letting the players choose which squares to assign what points to; it seems to give them a sense of control.

Another problem I solved along the way was people having a terrible time stopping themselves from moving when the music stops. It is just difficult to register when the music cuts off, especially if you are in a hopping race and focused on your movement. I was amazed at how effective adding a bell signal addressed this problem. Beyond my first iteration, when I put in the element of increasing one's score by completing circuits, I didn't have any more griefing issues (people intentionally messing up or hopping sluggishly to try and be in a certain place when the music stopped), players were motivated to keep going.

With this iteration, people seem to have fun and enjoy themselves, and create playfully exaggerated competition without getting discouraged or bored. People really seemed to enjoy the music and thought it added an element of fun to the game.

The Bad:

Though I reduced the role of the ref/scorekeeper, he still has a pretty significant job to do as far as keeping track of circuits and making sure no one is cheating. Adding a ref actually solved a personal project for me: that physical games are usually too painful for me to keep up with, but a scorekeeper spot is a way to still be involved in the game. I realize, though, that many people may consider this role somewhat of a chore.

Another problem is that in the current version, one requires my flash script and a computer to play it on for the music. The game could certainly be played with any form of music that could be stopped and restarted, but I like my script because it keeps things random (as I discovered in my first iteration, if your role is to stop the music at random, it is very difficult to do so without bias towards one player or another). However, seeing as two hopscotch courts lends itself to a large space (such as outdoors) and computers are typically found indoors, this could cause some problems.