During my time in the IXs (1997-1998, Behind the Door Store), we had two popular variants of dodgeball. The first we called Doctor Dodgeball, though I don't believe our version is the primary version known by that name. If I recall, when you got out, you would head over to the bench and you could come back in the game when the person who got you out got out. In the second variant, known as Jail Ball, when you got out, you went to the other side of the yard into the "jail" area. In order to get back in, your team had to throw a ball across the whole yard and into the jail for someone to catch. Whoever caught the ball would have a chance to get someone out from behind enemy lines and if successful, could cross back over the field to their team's side and rejoin the game.

While Doctor D. was great in the VIs and VIsIs, as IXs it often lasted the entire yard period, ending in a stalemate. People would come in and out of the game too quickly and no team was able to win. Jail Ball was much more challenging. You had to throw the ball all the way across the yard over the jail guards, which, as 9 year-olds, only a few people could do with any accuracy. Once your team's best throwers got out, you were basically doomed as each person in jail needed their own ball to get back in. It made the late game not fun, and once more than 50% of a team was out, the game was pretty much over.

As a class, we held a meeting looking for suggestions on how to augment the rules to make the game more fair/fun. Our teach, Dorian, called for comments on what was causing people to not have fun and then solicited suggestions for game variants. The funnest part of Jail Ball was that you had to throw the ball across the yard into the jail, over the jail guards who would jump and try to catch the ball before it entered the jail, so we knew we wanted to keep that aspect. The worst part was that only one person got to try and free themselves if you successfully got a ball into the jail.

We tried both. Within a week, JBMK proved to be the more fun evolution. Every single time we were in yard we voted for JBMK. Morning yard, yard, After School yard; we couldn't wait to play JBMK! It proved to be so popular that we had to periodically ban the game for a day or a week in order to play something else like Elimination, soccer or basketball.

The genius of JBMK was that only one person had to get someone out from the jail and everybody in jail got freed. The game was still winnable if you could dodge balls from both sides of the field or control the flow of balls; yet it was also possible to make a miraculous comeback win if you could just get one ball over to the jail. You could take the shot if you caught
the ball or offer it to someone who you felt had a better chance of getting someone out.

Towards the XIs and XIIIs we tried to mix regular Jail Ball back in, but the pace of the game for the size of our class (18) just didn't scale properly. It took too long to win and wasn't any fun when you got out. So we continued with JBMK, leaving it with the XIs and XIIIs as we matriculated to 9th grade.

It's really amazing to me that JBMK has lasted this long. Being passed down from class to class for 16 years, it's probably one of my greatest contributions to the world at this point in my life.