

History

The games included in this technical package have been traditions for Indigenous peoples of Labrador, Newfoundland and what is now Northern Canada for centuries. They are often referred to as “Northern Games”. During the long, dark winters of Northern Canada, the Indigenous people traditionally kept fit and active by competing in games with each other. Many of these games were considered extremely entertaining for members of the community to watch. These games were also important in developing essential skills for the well-being and survival of the Indigenous people: the strength, agility, flexibility, and endurance to survive off the land.

The social values of traditional games were and still are highly important:

- ❖ *Honouring the person who gave you the most challenge*
- ❖ *Respecting the rules of the competition*
- ❖ *Respecting your competitors*
- ❖ *Honouring the wager you made before the event*
- ❖ *Having courage, intuition and skill*
- ❖ *Being humble even when winning*

SEAL CRAWL

Background and Description

Inuit hunters used to mimic seals in movement and sound while hunting for seal. If they weren't convincing enough, the seal would escape through their air hole before the hunter could get close enough to spear them. This is a race in which participants must move like a seal. Participants can use only their hands to move across the floor from the starting line to the finishing line. Male and female competitors compete in separate events.

Directions

- 1) Participants begin by lying down with their belly facing the floor.
- 2) Ensure their noses are on the starting line.
- 3) Participants cross their legs at the ankle while keeping their legs straight.
- 4) On the officials signal participants must push their bodies up, keep their knees and bodies raised above the floor and race to the finish line using only their hands while keeping their hands under their shoulders.
- 5) Participants are placed in heats by random draw. Participants from the same schools should be placed in different heats.
- 6) The winners of each heat will compete in a final race to determine placement and points.
- 7) Participants may wear shoes or socks for the race.
- 8) 60' length course for boys.
- 9) 40' length course for girls.
- 10)

Warnings/Disqualifications

No warnings for this game. Any infraction results in disqualification. Knees touch the floor.

- 1) Knees become bent or come up towards the waist.
- 2) Feet or legs come uncrossed.
- 3) Foot loses contact with the floor.
- 4) Interference with another competitor.
- 5) Participants are not awarded points if disqualified.

Competition Format

This event is run in heats for male and heats for female.

MONKEY DANCE

Background and Description

This game was a way of practicing and showing agility and endurance skills. The original Inuit name for this game is Siturtaq. This is a dance competition that starts when music is turned on and continues until there is only one competitor left dancing who is then declared the winner.

Directions

- 1) Gather competitors into a group. If space and numbers permit you could have them form a circle.
- 2) Participants assume the monkey dance position of squatting with one foot fully extended out in front of them with their heel to the floor while the other leg remains beneath them.
- 3) Music is played to signal the start of the competition.
- 4) Competitors then alternate their legs from the front extended position to the squat position beneath them and continuously alternate their legs as many times as they can without slowing down or stopping.
- 5) This continues until there is one participant left or is the last to hit the floor.
- 6) Competitors keep a continuous motion when switching from one leg to the other without hesitating or stopping.

Warnings/Disqualifications

- 1) Leg goes out to the side instead of the front when transitioning legs.
- 2) Leg does not fully extend when completing the transition of leg positions.
- 3) Only one warning is given to each participant.
- 4) Participants are not awarded points if disqualified.

Competition Format

Mass competition with all participants. Male and female events run separately.

OWL HOP

Background and Description

The Owl Hop is connected to traditional way of life, imitating another of the animals of the homelands. It is a competition testing the strength and power of the leg muscles. This is a competition in which participants hop on one foot continuously for as long as they can or until they are the last participant standing.

Directions

- 1) Participants stand on one foot and raise the other, bringing the instep of that foot against the back of the knee of the standing leg.
- 2) Music is played to signal the start of the competition.
- 3) Participants must continuously hop on their chosen hopping foot as long as they can.
- 4) When there is one person left hopping, they are declared the winner.
- 5) Only one leg may be used for the full duration of the competition.

Warnings/Disqualifications

- 1) The hopping foot must come completely off the floor for each hop.
- 2) The tucked foot must remain against the back of the knee and may not move down the leg past the belly of the calf muscle.

Competition Format

Mass competition with all participants. Can be split into male and female events if numbers warrant.

THONG PULL (STICK PULL)

Background and Description

Years ago, all nations admired persons that showed superior skills in strength, stamina, or dexterity in games because competition helped keep all people healthy and strong. This is a competition of strength and stamina between two participants who are gripping the same stick, trying to either take it from their opponent or pull them off the floor.

Directions

- 1) Participants sit on the floor with the soles of their feet touching and their knees bent.
- 2) Both participants hold the stick with both hands, knuckles always facing up. One participant has the “outside grip” on the ends of the stick and their opponent has their hands in between with the “inside grip”. (A coin toss can determine who gets which grip if both want the same grip)
- 3) On the official’s signal the participants compete to get the stick from their opponent, using only their arms and their legs.
- 4) On the second round, participants switch grips. (From outside to inside or vice versa)
- 5) If there is a tie then a coin toss is done and the winner picks their grip of choice for the deciding 3rd round.
- 6) The winner is the participant who wins two of three rounds.
- 7) If both participants go down on their sides at the same time there will be a rematch.

Warnings/Disqualifications

No warnings or disqualifications for this game.

Equipment

One stick - per match. (1.5” in diameter & 2’ long)

Competition Format

One on one competition for male and female

BACK – TO – BACK

Background and Description

“The Back Push” is one of the basic variants of pushing games, one of the traditional games testing the athlete's maximum strength and strength endurance. The objective is to use your strength to attempt to push the opponent out of position or across a target line, using only their arm, leg and core strength.

Directions

1. Competitors begin by sitting back-to-back in the middle of the designated boundary area.
2. Each competitor places their right hand in between their legs palm down on the floor and their left hand palm down off to the side of themselves.
3. On the official's signal competitors attempt to push their opponent out of the boundary using their back, feet, and arms. After pushing, their hand must immediately return to the floor.
4. The winner is the who wins two of three rounds.
5. The first round is done with left hand out to the side of the participants and the second round with the right hand out to the side.
6. If there is a tie then both hands go out to either side of each opponent for the third round.

Disqualifications

- 1) If hands do not always remain on the floor, the match is awarded to the other competitor.

Competition Format

One on one competition for male and female

ONE FOOT HIGH KICK

Background and Description

It is believed that this game originated among the people of Alaska. The One-Foot-High Kick is considered by athletes to be the most demanding of the Arctic Sports. Keeping proper balance while airborne is difficult. In this competition participants kick a hanging target by jumping, connecting with the target, and landing on two feet that are kept together.

Directions

- 1) Competitors may start by a standing position in front of the target or taking a running start at any distance to approach the target. (For beginners it is advised to start from a standing position)
- 2) If the attempt is successful then the competitor moves on to the next round.
- 3) Each competitor has three attempts at each height. (90 seconds are given for each attempt). If the competitor misses three attempts, then they do not proceed to the next round.
- 4) The target is moved up in height after each round is complete. The starting height and incremental rises are determined by the official based on skill levels of competitors.
- 5) When six competitors are remaining, the attempt time given is three minutes for each attempt.
- 6) The competition continues at each height until only one or no competitor can reach the current height
- 7) If there is a tie then all failed attempts made by the remaining participants will be tallied up and the competitor with the least number of failed attempts wins.

Warnings/Disqualifications

An attempt is considered a failed attempt when:

- 1) Competitor does not clearly kick the target.
- 2) Competitor does not keep proper form throughout the attempt. I.e: Jumping, connecting with the target, and landing on both feet
- 3) A competitor does not have a clean landing. (competitor may hop to maintain the landing but must remain balanced.
- 4) Attempt time limit has been exceeded.

Equipment

Self-supporting stand (Basketball net could be used)

Target (Seal target or beanbag)

String or Rope

Measuring tape

Competition Format

Individual competition for male and female

BACK BEND

Background

Inuit games played by children built the physical and mental skills needed for hunting and survival in the Arctic. The games required little or no equipment and often stressed physical strength, endurance, agility, and tolerance of pain. In this competition participants bend backwards as far as they can and touch a meter stick to the floor to determine who can bend backwards the farthest. Competitors must maintain good form and return to the standing position without moving their feet or falling over.

Directions

- 1) Competitors begin by standing with their back to the gym mat and their heels right up against the edge of the mat.
- 2) Competitors hold the meter stick up against their nose with their thumbs on the 100cm mark. (This is the starting measurement for the first round)
- 3) Competitors then bend backwards and attempt to touch the meter stick to the floor. Each competitor gets three attempts each round.
- 4) If contact is made then they return to the standing position.
- 5) Competitors then wait for all competitors to attempt the starting measurement.
- 6) The measurement continues to decrease in distance each round as competitors are successful in their attempts. (100, 95, 85, 82, 80, 78, 76, 74, 72, 70, 68 (Continue in two-centimetre increments if rounds continue.
- 7) The winner is the person who completes an attempt at the shortest distance to the mat.

Disqualifications

- 1) Feet move from original position.
- 2) Competitors does not successfully complete any of their three attempts in a round.

Equipment

Meter Stick

Gym mat

Competition Format

Individual competition for females

LEG WRESTLING

Background

Inuktitut words attausiq (One), marruuk (Two), pingasut (Three), and taima (Stop/Enough) can be taught to competitors and officials to use during this and other games. This competition is a wrestling match where the competitors are only allowed to use one leg to overpower their opponent forcing them off the floor to win the match.

Directions

- 1) Competitors begin by lying down side by side, both legs straight, with their hips touching and their heads on opposite ends of each other.
- 2) Competitors then link arms and place their hands on their chest. Hands are not permitted to grip the outside of the mat.
- 3) The official will count to three and then competitors bring their inside legs up and cross them with their opponent at the knee or ankle. If participants legs don't hook properly then they can reattempt.
- 4) They then use their legs only to attempt to flip their opponent over backwards or bring them up off the floor resulting in a win. No other body part may be used for leverage.
- 5) Competitors use their right leg for the first round and their left leg for the second round.
- 6) If there is a tie then the winner of a coin toss gets the choice of what leg will be used in the final round.
- 7) The winner is the participant who wins two of three rounds.

Warnings/Disqualifications

No warnings or disqualifications for this game.

Equipment

Gym mat

Competition Format

One on one competition for females

STICK JUMP

Background and Description

Many games test individual and collective perseverance in uncomfortable and even painful circumstances, which are essential to survival in the context of cold, hunger and fatigue that were part of everyday life. These games were also traditionally played at gatherings of different nomadic groups at certain times of year, and used to show off competence, talent and skills that might be attractive to find a partner from another community. In this competition participants jump over a stick and back again repetitively as many times as they can while holding the stick themselves.

Directions

- 1) Competitors begin by holding the stick with both hands about shoulder length apart with an overhand grip.
- 2) Competitors then jump forward over the stick and then back again. They may jump from a squatting or standing position.
- 3) The winner is the one who completes the most jumps.
- 4) One successful jump is counted by the completion of a jump forward and then a jump back over the stick.
- 5) Once a competitor has completed one jump, they must keep a continuous rhythm and not pause or rest.
- 6) Once the rhythm is broken or the competitor pauses that is the end of their attempt.

Warnings/Disqualifications

No warnings or disqualifications for this game.

Equipment

Broom stick or hockey stick (without blade)

Competition Format

Individual competition for male

BENCH REACH

Background

Newfoundland and Labrador is home to three distinct Indigenous groups: the Inuit, Innu, and the Mi'kmaq. Descendants of the Thule Inuit, the Inuit have made Labrador their home for centuries. Both descended from Algonkian-speaking hunter-gatherers, the Innu people are found in Labrador, and the Mi'kmaq people have lived and travelled throughout Newfoundland for generations. In this competition participants compete to see who can reach the farthest distance. Competitors use their core body strength to reach out parallel to the floor reaching a marker and returning to a kneeling position all while only being supported by their legs.

Directions

- 1) A badminton birdie is placed at the 1-meter mark out in front of the competitors.
- 2) Competitors begin by kneeling on the seat of a bench, while a person holds their legs in place.
- 3) Competitors keep one hand behind their back and stretch their body out to retrieve the birdie and return to the kneeling position while keeping proper form (cannot use their arm to help pull themselves back up)
- 4) Each competitor has three attempts at each distance. If they are successful then the birdie is placed at an increased distance - 80cm, 100, 120, 125, 130, 135, 140, 142, 144, 146, 148, 150 (Continue in two-centimetre increments if rounds continue)
- 5) The competitor who retrieves the birdie from the farthest distance wins.
- 6) Competitor cannot touch the floor or use their arms to aid in the process of returning to the kneeling position.

Disqualifications

- 1) Competitor do not successfully retrieve the birdie.
- 2) Competitor do not keep their non reaching hand behind their back.
- 3) Competitor use their non reaching hand to pull themselves up with their hamstring

Equipment

Badminton birdie

Bench - with the seat about 14" high (put padding on the seat for knees of participants)

Gym mat

Measuring tape

Masking tape (used to mark measurements on the gym mat)

Competition Format

Individual competition for males

