Traditional Games Model Lesson Plan
Shinny – Lead-up Games (Gros Ventre and Northern Cheyenne) – Grade Five

Stage 1 Desired Results

Established Goals

The health education content standards for fifth grade are that each student will:

2. describe personal health enhancing strategies that encompass substance abuse prevention, nutrition, exercise, injury and disease prevention, and stress management, including traditional and contemporary strategies from American Indian cultures.

The physical education content standards for fifth grade are that each student will:

3. *recognize that many different countries and cultures have been the origin of games, sports, and dance, including those of traditional and contemporary American Indian cultures.*

Essential Understanding 1: There is great diversity among the twelve sovereign tribes of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories, and governments. Each tribe has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

***Essential Understanding 3*:** The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. Additionally, each tribe has its own oral histories, which are as valid as written histories. These histories predate the "discovery" of North America.

Understandings

- Native peoples competed for hours, sometimes for days in their shinny game competitions. The games were rough and good endurance (lasting the full game) was honored as much as winning; however, the rules were distinct and unique to the tribal heritage.

Essential Questions

- Why were some of the Indian team games of long ago played in different seasons or by slightly different rules?

Students will be able to…

- move through two stations of lead-up games to Shinny with the Gros Ventre (White Clay) and Northern Cheyenne rules.

Students will know…

- how the White Clay and Northern Cheyenne shinny games were different and how they were (and are today) the same.

Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks

1. Playing the White Clay and Northern Cheyenne rules for shinny and demonstrating the differences.

Stage 3 Learning Plan

Teaching Area

(Indoors or outdoors) 100’ x 50’ for 26 students in four teams with two teams on one field (half court) and two on the other half.

Equipment Needed

Station 1: Northern Cheyenne Shinny (Ohonistuts) Sticks about 31’ in length and a buckskin ball, flattened with median seam, 4’ diameter and painted red with sign of four directions painted on other side.

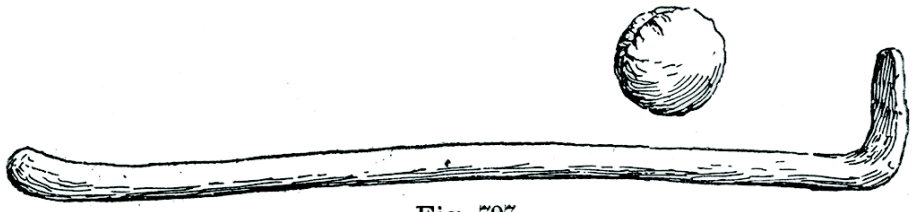


Fig. 797.

FIG. 797. Shinny ball and stick; diameter of ball, 3¾ inches; length of stick, 31 inches; Cheyenne Indians, Montana; cat. no. 69979, Field Columbian Museum.

US. 305.8 SI 11 BAE, Vol. 24 (1902-1903). Holmes, W.H., *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1902-1903,* Washington Government Printing Office, 1907. Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives

Station 2: Gros Ventre (White Clay) Shinny (Kakawaasethi). Sticks curved at end 28’ long and flattened slightly on each side. Ball is buckskin with median seam (two circles sewn at seam) leaving a small opening that would be stuffed with buffalo hair and sewn.

Fig. 799.

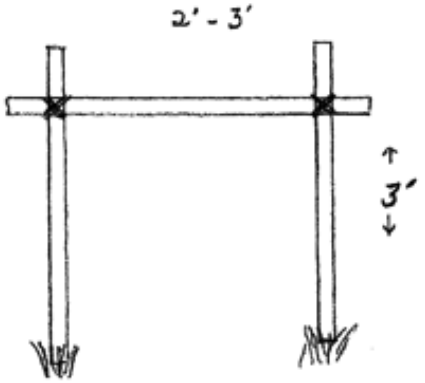
FIG. 799. Shinny ball and stick; diameter of ball, 3¼ inches; length of stick, 31 inches; Gros-ventre Indians, Montana; cat. no. 60356, Field Columbian Museum.

US. 305.8 SI 11 BAE, Vol. 24 (1902-1903). Holmes, W.H., *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1902-1903,* Washington Government Printing Office, 1907. Montana Historical Society Research Center, Archives

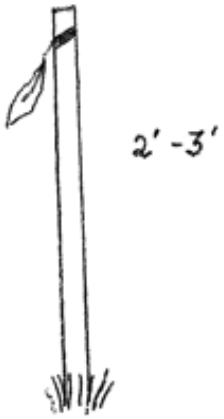
Shinney Goals

Outdoors

Northern Cheyenne
Stakes and cross bar



Chippewa
Single pole



Indoors may use floor cones for goals

Game Rules

Station 1: Ohonistuts (Northern Cheyenne) Two stakes are set up at each end of the field. The object of each party is to drive the ball through the goals of the other. Each goal is a "game." The object is to win the most "games" until the time is up. In the old days it was played until very dark. (Holmes p. 617)

Station 2: Kakawaasethi (White Clay). As nearly as can be determined, the White Clay played with a single pole at the end of the Shinny field. The idea was to strike the opponent's goal pole (which they guarded) for a score. The game lasted until an agreed upon time or score. (Holmes p. 621)

Vocabulary

Teamwork - A joint action by a group of people, in which each person subordinates his/her individual interests and opinions to the unity and efficiency of the group; coordinated effort.

Patience - a. The will or ability to wait or endure without complaint; b. Steadiness, endurance in task.

Perseverance - To persist in any task undertaken once it has begun. To keep going or doing.

Shin - The lower front bone in the human leg. Most tribes called this game of "Shinney" by the word in their own language that meant shinbone.

Concepts

When the Europeans arrived in the Americas, they witnessed all tribes and their people of all ages (youth through adults) participating in hundreds of physical activities that kept them in excellent health (physically, mentally, socially, and spiritually). Often in written reports by European observers of these wild, fun, yet serious competitions, the observers made comments like "They are like children, they play all day." Even today very few people realize how important physical health is to survival and long life. All indigenous peoples of the Americas honored strength, courage, and endurance because it meant that young and old could survive rough times. Therefore, when food storage was set, when enemies were far away, and the weather permitted, *games were enjoyed!* In fact, the International Traditional Games Society members have not found a general word for "play" because most Montana tribal languages use words that describe the *action* or the *object* used. As Henry Anderson, Little Shell elder, has said, "Everything had, and still has, a purpose."

Teamwork takes patience (to watch and wait for the opportunity to play the ball), perseverance (to keep going even if others give up), and self-control.

Native peoples competed for hours, sometimes for days in their shinny game competitions. The games were rough and good endurance (lasting the full game) was honored as much as winning.

Resources

Books

Culin, Stewart*, Games of the North American Indians*. New York, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1975.

Holmes, W.H., *Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1902-1903.* Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1907.

Cajete, Gregory. *Spirit of the Game: An Indigenous Wellspring*. Skyand, NC: Kivaki Press, 2005, p. 23.

Deloria, Ella Cara. *Waterlily*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1988, p. 61.

Flannery, Ragina. *The Gros Ventres of Montana Part I Social Life.* Washington DC: University of Nebraska Press, The Catholic University of America Anthropological Series No. 15. p. 151.

Traditional Games Video – see the games being played!