Traditional Games Model Lesson Plan
Doubleball – Lead-up Games (Chippewa, Cree) – Grade Seven

Stage 1 Desired Results

Established Goals

The health education content standards for sixth through eighth grade are that each student will:
3. analyze behaviors that promote health enhancing strategies for issues such as substance abuse prevention, nutrition, sexual activity, exercise, injury and disease prevention, and stress management, including traditional and contemporary strategies from American Indian cultures.
5. identify characteristics of physical, mental, emotional, family, and social health, including traditional and contemporary strategies from American Indian cultures.

The physical education content standards for sixth through eighth grade are that each student will:
3. research the history and origin of various games, sports, and dance, including those of traditional and contemporary American Indian cultures.
18. cooperate with classmates on problem-solving initiatives during adventure activities, large group initiatives, and game play.

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.

Understandings

- All life should be respected. The willow sticks used in the games of doubleball gave their life for the playing of the game. The sticks were gathered with prayers and offerings of tobacco for the life of the willow and for the safety of the people playing the game. No one should be hurt during play.

Essential Questions

- How life is respected in games of doubleball.

Students will be able to…

- demonstrate respect for “life” during doubleball play.

Students will know…

- two ways the games of doubleball were played the same by Cree and Chippewa.
- how life is respected in games of doubleball.

Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

Performance Tasks

1. Participating as a team member in each of the two games, rotating to stations.
2. Exhibiting cooperation, concern for safety, and generosity to opposing players and the game equipment.

Stage 3 Learning Plan

Teaching Area

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

Equipment Needed

Station 1: Chippewa (Little Shell and Turtle Mountain.) The doubleball was two oblong balls stuffed with buffalo hair and sand about 20” in length. A separate thong about 3/4” wide connected the two balls. The ball could be elaborately beaded with a cross of the four directions in green beads on both sides of each ball. The stick was 26 1/2” long without a curve at the end. It could be covered with cloth and circled by one band of red beads and three bands of white beads. The ball could also have decorative beads. The goal post was single, 22’ poles at each end of the field (about 160’).

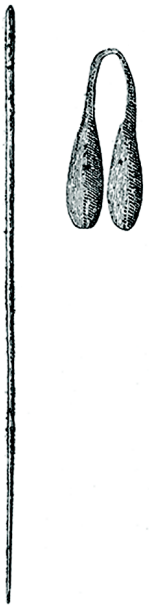


Fig. 853.

FIG. 853. Double ball and stick; length of ball, 18½ inches; length of stick, 44 inches: Chippewa Indians, Fort William, Ontario; cat. no. $\frac{50}{4727}$, $\frac{50}{4731}$, American Museum of Natural History.

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: (Cree). A buckskin bag of 12" in length, with the ends filled with sand was made as a single piece on top and another on the bottom with stitching on the end of each ball to hold the sand in place. Today, the sand is held in small balloons and buffalo hair or deer hair is stuffed around the sand balloon. It helps keep the sand in place and not get hard if the ball gets wet during play. The stick is 37" long of peeled, undecorated willow. With permission, decorations of Cree origin may be added to the sticks.

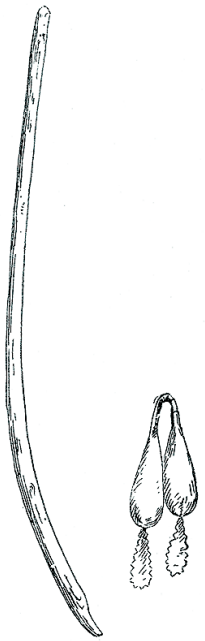


Fig. 858.

FIG. 858. Double ball and stick; length of ball, 12 inches; length of stick, 37 inches; Cree Indians, Alberta; cat. no. 15060, 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.

Game Rules

Station 1: Papaskawanag (Chippewa). There are varying reports on the type of play for Chippewa. J.G. Kohl says: (Culin 650) "The ball play, which means literally, 'the throwing game' played by two large bands, who collect around two opposite single poles, then as the game starts, they try to throw the ball over their opponents' pole."

Today, the Chippewa game is played with tripod goals and the scoring is three points for a wrap of the ball on the cross bar, two points for placing the ball into the goal, and one point for over the top of the goal.

Station 2: Puseekowwahnuk (Cree). Past era report by Mr. J. A. Mitchell, who describes the game under the name of 'puseekowwwahnuk': (Culin 652) "The game is played by women only, any number, but not by the oldest women, as great powers of endurance are required. It is in many respects similar to lacrosse. The players are given various stations in the field and carry sticks. The goals are usually 1 mile apart. Players gather in a circle at the beginning and the doubleball is thrown aloft from the stick

of one of the leaders, when the scrimmage commences and is kept up until one side passes the ball through its opponent's goal. The game is a very interesting one and develops much skill. It is, from a hygienic point of view, highly beneficial, as it develops a fine, robust class of women. As with all other Indian games, this game is invariably played for stakes of some kind." Nowadays, the Cree game is played by passing the ball through the opponent's goal for three points. (Culin 652) The goal posts are 16' tripods with a pole across the top (10' – 12' off ground) stretched between the top of the ties on each tripod.

Vocabulary

Generosity - The willingness to give or share; unselfish.

Cooperation - To act or operate jointly with another or others, for the same goal; mutual effort.

Power - The great ability to do or act; vigor, force, strength; by self or with spirit.

Métis - The Métis are people living in Montana and Canada who are descendants of French, Chippewa, and/or Cree ancestors. They are recognized in Canada as a separate cultural group of three types: European, Indigenous (Indian), and Métis.

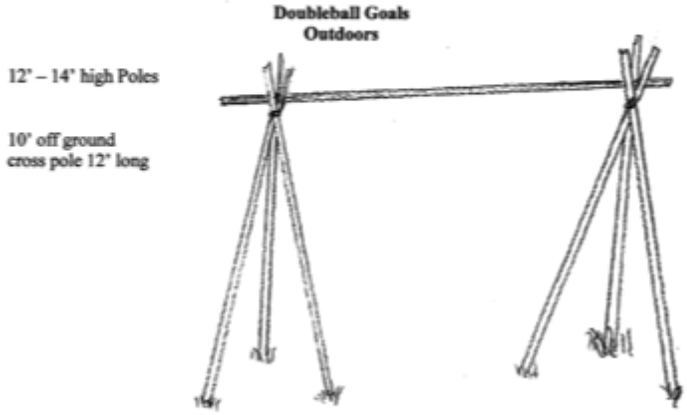
> *When we judge others, it is from our own cultural context.*
> "***There is no "right or wrong" way to play doubleball, just different ways.***"
> *International Traditional Games Society*

Concepts

Doubleball, in the past, among east coast and plains Indians was played almost exclusively by women and was commonly known as the woman's game. In northern California however, it was played by men. In the past 20 years this game has had a resurgence, it has been played by youth eight years old to older adults; always with great enthusiasm. The implements for the game consist of two balls or similar objects attached to each other by a thong, and a curved stick with which the objects are thrown.

Among the Cheyenne, two small, slightly flattened buckskin balls are used. Among other Algonquian tribes the balls are oblong, weighted with sand, cut from one continuous piece for one side and the same for the other. Some southern and west coast tribes used two billets tied together by a cord about the same length as the thong between the two buckskin balls of the Chippewa and Northern Cheyenne. Algonquin (Blackfeet) tended to use the two-ball pattern with variations in length and size of the Chippewa. The doubleball sticks are made from green saplings that are slightly flexible and usually 23" to 6' long, with the most accepted length for Chippewa, Cree, and Blackfeet as "armpit to tip of fingers on one arm." (Richard Horn, Blackfeet, year 2000 summer camp). The goals or bases were about 300 yards (Chippewa) to a mile (Cree). Nowadays, a football field can serve as an excellent playing field for the game. The goals could be a lower cottonwood limb that stretches out over one end of a clearing and one cottonwood at the other end of the field. In open fields, the goals used are two small tipi pole goals of seven poles each. One goal has two tripods about 10' apart with a cross pole between each that is tied to the top of each tripod. The crossbar, as played today, is about 10' off the ground. There are stories about doubleball that pertain to the twin war gods; however, these stories have not surfaced in oral traditions of doubleball games of the Chippewa, Cree, or Blackfeet.

According to Plains Indian stories, often a doubleball game would be called by a woman whose husband was not treating her well. The women in camp would come together for a tough game to show the men their power and strength. The men would watch and tease the man whose wife called the game together. It was said the man usually treated his wife better after that.



Resources

Books

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

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.

Pettitt, George A. *Primitive Education in North America.* Burkley, CA: University of California Press, 1946.

Traditional Games Video – see the games being played!

George Catlin - Ball-Play of the Women (Sioux) at Prairie du Chien, in 1834

(Image Credit: Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington)