# Traditional Games Model Lesson Plan
# Lacrosse or Racquet Games (Gros Ventre, Chippewa) – Grade Nine

## Stage 1 Desired Results

### Established Goals

***The health education content standards for ninth through twelfth grade are that each student will:***

2. analyze the interrelationships of physical, mental, emotional, family, and social health on personal health, including those of American Indian cultures and practices.

***The physical education content standards for ninth through twelfth grade are that each student will:***

4. identify and discuss the historical and cultural roles of games, sports, and dance, including those of traditional and contemporary American Indian cultures.
6. use spatial concepts of locomotor and non-locomotor movements in outdoor pursuits.
20. examine moral and ethical conduct in specific competitive situations.

***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

- The racket games across much of the North American continent were played in all areas except the southwest.
- The game was to settle territorial disputes between tribes, to heal the sick, to teach tolerance of those smaller or weaker, and occasionally as a tactic to disarm and conquer an enemy.

### Essential Questions

- Why were racket games so universally appealing to tribes historically?
- Are racket games universally appealing today?
- Why were racket games played?

### Students will be able to…

- catch ball in racket from air toss or attain ball from the ground into the net.
- demonstrate fairness and tolerance in play.

### Students will know…

- how to play the racket games with increasing skill.
- ways to make a “community” racket game fair for all players.

# Stage 2 Assessment Evidence

## Performance Tasks

1. Catching ball in racket from air toss or attain ball from the ground into the net.
2. Demonstrating fairness and tolerance in play.
3. Playing in two different ty pes of racket games of Plains Indians.

# Stage 3 Learning Plan

## Teaching Area

Indoors: 100’ x 50’ for 26 students in four teams, two on one area and two on the other. Outdoors: two fields of 50 yards each.

## Equipment Needed

Station 1: Modern lacrosse sticks may be used for this game. Outdoors a regulation lacrosse ball may be used. Inside it is best to use a hacky sack or soft buckskin ball about 3” in diameter.

ITGS Photo modern Lacrosse sticks, courtesy of DeeAnna Brady-Leader

Station 2: The Chippewa racket is 26” in length with a circular opening about the size of a fist 4” – 5”. The ball should be about 2 1/2” to 3” in diameter with some weight in its center (sand or small clay ball) and stuffed around with buffalo or deer or horsehair.

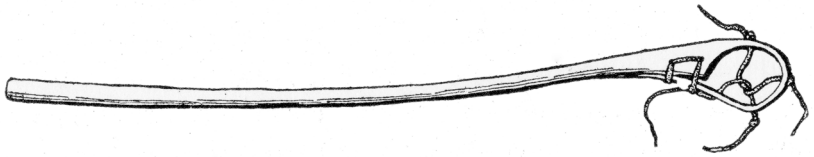


FIG. 750. Racket; length, 34 inches; Chippewa Indians, Wisconsin; cat. no. 22160, Free Museum of Science and Art, University of Pennsylvania.

US. 305.8 S 1 BAE, Vol 2 (1902--1903). Holmes, W.H., *Twenty--Fourth Annual Report to 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: *Traditional Community La Crosse: Gros Ventre (White Clay)*

This game came to Montana in 1999 from Robert Upham (White Clay), who worked for the Native American Blue Pony La Crosse League in Denver, Colorado. It was used as a community group warm-up before the single pole lacrosse games started. Since most schools do not have men, women, and children in the classes, this description can be used for special parent-student events.

Men, women and children formed a long line. The men carried the rackets or lacrosse sticks. The leader of the line drums and sings while all other participants follow him into a circle around the pole, tightening the circle in whirl wind fashion to form smaller spirals around the pole; then, undoing the spiral by turning the inside the other direction until the spiral unwinds. This was to prepare the field and to ward off any badness that may be in the way. The whirlwind was the protector. The game then starts; men have lacrosse sticks, women and children can use their hands to throw the ball at the center pole. Men must use their rackets to propel the ball at the post. Children can run up to the post, ball in hand, and touch the pole. Any man hitting a woman or child with a stick or bumping into them is sent out of the game. Any woman bumping or hitting a child is sent out of the game. Women may grab a man's stick or arm to prevent a good throw. Children may grab and hold a woman's arm to prevent a goal. The score is counted 1 point for a pole hit, or 3 points for a big pole hit between the colors, which were cloth, or buckskin tied three feet apart at the top.

For the gym classes, an effective playing variation of this game is to use a single pole in the middle of each half court so two games can be played at once. There are no boundaries in single pole lacrosse so occasionally players will end up in each other's courts to retrieve a ball. The object of the game is to hit the pole with a toss of the ball from the racket of any player. Players must be 10' from the pole to have the score count. Outdoor play can be a circular field around a single tall tipi post that may be decorated to indicate different scoring areas.

Station 2: *Chippewa Racket Game*

The following is a description from Dr. Walter J. Hoffman, 1890.

> If the condition of the ground permits, the two posts or goals are planted about one-third of a mile apart. The best players of either side gather at the center of the ground. The poorer players arrange themselves around their respective goals, while the heaviest in weight scatter across the field between the starting point and the goals. The ball is tossed into the air in the center of the field. As soon as it descends it is caught with the ball stick by one of the players, when he

> immediately set out at full speed towards the opposite goal. If too closely pursued, or if intercepted by an opponent, he throws the ball in the direction of one of his own side, who takes up the race.
>
> The unusual method of depriving the players of the ball is to strike the handle of the ball stick so as to dislodge the ball: but this is frequently a difficult matter on account of a peculiar horizontal motion of the ball stick maintained by the runner. Frequently the ball carrier is disabled by being struck across the arm or leg, thus compelling his retirement from the game. Severe injuries occur only when playing for high stakes or when ill-feeling exits between some of the players.
>
> Should the ball carrier of one side reach the opposite goal, it is necessary for him to throw the ball so that it touches the post. This is always a difficult matter, because even if the ball be well directed, one of the numerous players surrounding the post as guards may intercept it and throw it back into the field. In this manner a single inning may be continued for an hour or more. The game may come to a close at the end of an inning by mutual agreement of the players, that side winning the greater number of scores being declared victor (Culin, 564 – 565).

For gym classes, this game could be played with single poles (old volleyball stands work) at each end of the court. The players attempt to score by hitting the racket-tossed ball against the opponent's pole for a score. For outdoors play, one side of the football goal posts can be used, or 22-foot tipi poles can be placed 3 feet into the ground at each end of a playing field. These posts can be decorated with Chippewa colors or have colorful cloth tied at the top and three feet down from the top to indicate a higher score for the ball hitting between the cloth marks.

*When we judge others, it is from our own cultural context.*

"***There is no "right or wrong" way to play Indian racket games, just different ways.***"

*International Traditional Games Society*

## Vocabulary

*Tolerance* - To recognize and respect other people's beliefs and practices.

*Circle* - American Indian beliefs that all things are in the circle (the Way of Life, Cycle of Life, Cardinal Directions, all spirit and matter, etc.)

*Inclusion* - Taking everything or everybody into account or into consideration.

## Concepts

The elders helped the young people learn and practice the games. Cooperation was the essence of all sports. The best players held a traditional place of honor in the communities. Almost everyone played the games depending on their age and type of activity. Young people played the most rigorous games of strength and endurance. The elders advised the young how to be good at the skills they were trying to learn.

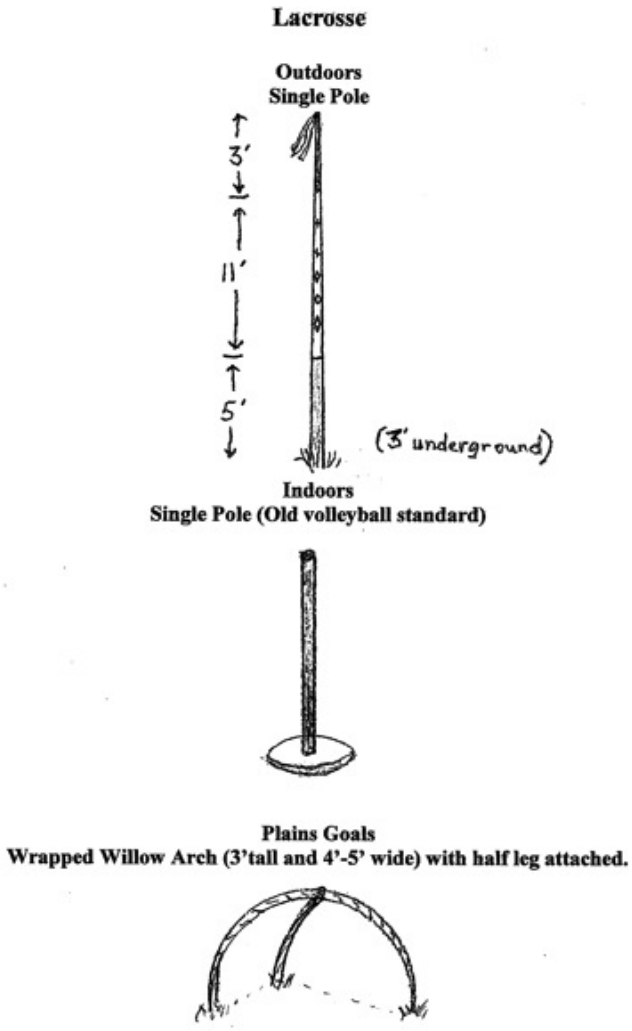
Everyone was encouraged to participate in the spirit of the games. Prayers in which players asked for power and reward for their efforts were an important part of the gaming ways. Sometimes the clans and tribes would gather for days, fasting and praying, and playing the most exciting games. Many

goods were exchanged in the bets of winning and losing in the adult's competitions. The children also wagered for the games they played, but this was not as common as the adult wagers.

The most important aspect of all games was the development of the natural physical and mental skills of the people. This was highly integrated into spiritual- beliefs as well. Combining the efforts of mind, body, and spirit. Prayers by all members helped the players give their best to the competitions.

The judge usually carried an instrument or artifact of authority such as a staff or war club. The staff had a wooden shaft. Atop the staff was a hide or antler. The war club was a short thick stick of hard wood, which had a shaped hammer or clubbed head. Feathers or carvings decorated both staffs and clubs.

Concepts: tolerance, circle, all nations (including the animals), and territory




## Resources

*Books*

Cajete, Gregory. *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.

Upham, Robert, Gros Ventre (White Clay). Summer Camp of International Traditional Games Society, Village LaCrosse Game Rules and Song. July 1999.

Traditional Games Video – see the games being played!