

SHINNEY



"The Shinney Game is the grandfather of the Hockey Game. It is sometimes called "Shinney" because you keep getting hit in the shins, but has also been thought to have its name from the Scottish game of "Shinty". In Blackfoot it's called Moot'tsina. Shinney was also played in ceremonial games.

The sticks would be carefully selected from trees to have the curved shape at the end or would be taken from the root as the root has a hooked shape .

We would have to dig down to the tap root and clean it off.

They were often taken from choke cherry and willow trees. The Salish and Kootenay people would often use spruce trees. This style would be to find a bough that resembles a hook on a stick then to strip the stick and dry it straight.



The ball that was originally used for the game is called a Pookoon (Boo-goona). It is very, very heavy, like stone. When a buffalo bull is dead and gone the only remaining part of him is the pookoon. A covering of buckskin is wrapped around it to make the shape of a ball. Then it is stuffed and stitched to make a ball".

(Mary Ellen Little Mustache)

Shinney is primarily a women's game, but is also played by men alone, or a mix of genders. Shinney has been regarded as a universal game throughout tribes in the United States. The ball cannot be touched with the player's hands, but can be kicked and batted with sticks to reach the opponents goal (Culin, 1975). The goals were often sticks at each end and could be set from 100 ft. to 1400 ft. apart. The object of the game is to achieve as many goals as a team. A game was finished when a goal was made; therefore the team with the most goals won the series of games (The International Traditional Games Unit, 2013).



"The goals made by the Blackfeet are usually be made from boughs woven together to make a semi-circle" (Mary Ellen Little Mustache).

References

Culin., S. (1975). Games of the North American Indians. (p 616, 617). Dover Publications Inc.: New York, New York.

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The game of Shinney could be considered a game that requires three important aspects of indigenous games; running, dexterity and intuition.

- ♦ *“Running was one of the most powerful skills to develop strength, lung power and endurance. Running was involved in various games and were vast among tribes throughout all seasons. Running was at the root of all arduous competitions that began in childhood reaching puberty running ceremonies, and continued into adulthood play and competitions” (Brady-Leader, 2012).*
- ♦ *Game creativity is developed in playing games such as Shinney that requires cognitive abilities of sustained attention, cognitive flexibility and judgements based on a continuation of activity requiring players to coordinate either kicking the ball and/or hitting it with a stick. Working memory and monitoring actions throughout the games require players to learn strategies necessary to overcome their opponents moves to reach the goal (Memert & Perl, 2009).*
- ♦ *Playing games like Shinney teaches problem-solving skills that necessitate making good decisions based on the strategies learned to coincide with skill movement and intuition about their opponents approach to the game. “It also enables young people to design, create or invent their own games. This form of learning is viewed as a self-organizing process that is emergent and adaptive to different conditions” (Mermert, et., al., 2015).*



References

Brady-Leader (2012). *How we learned is who we are: Blackfeet and traditional learning practices. Research of the Blackfeet: Manuscript for Blackfeet Community College, with permission.*

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