

Ski Games

Games are at the heart of the NEBKL program and should be incorporated into every club gathering. Games teach balance, coordination, feel for the snow, and agility. Games provide challenge, stimulation, and the chance for everyone to feel successful. Games teach cooperation and are instrumental in transforming a group of individuals into a community.

But most of all, Games are FUN!

Having said this, we must find a balance between playing games and other learning activities. One model is to work on a skill, play a game which reinforces that skill, then return to the skill to reinforce what taught and to provide feedback. The bottom line is:

- 1) Play games purposefully— not because you have nothing else to do
- 2) Integrate games into your practice— not the other way around
- 3) Don't play games too long. Observe your children. Sometimes ten minutes is adequate. Move on to a new game or to something entirely different.

How to Use Games

Use games to involve everyone. Children unwilling or unable to play can be used as officials or helpers. Games also provide the perfect forum in which to integrate parents into club activities. Ski games are great ambassadors for your club as well. Give newcomers and visitors a chance to watch, and if possible, to participate in club games.

The following guidelines will help you to use games successfully:

- 1) Identify what games you will use before practice. Use this manual to guide you to the games which will reinforce the skills you want to develop.
- 2) Have everything you need to play the game ready to go beforehand.
- 3) If the area needs special preparation have it done before the kids go out.
- 4) Divide kids up BEFORE you go out, if at all possible. Read off the teams you have selected. Letting captains pick can end up with injured feelings. You can always count off "1,2,3,4" if you need four groups, with "1's" being a team, "2's" being a team etc. Make adjustments outside if teams prove uneven.
- 5) Don't let a game go on too long. Call for a rest or switch to something else when you see signs of fatigue or boredom.

GAMES TO START PRACTICE

There is always a time lapse between the first skiers being ready and the last skiers being ready. The larger the group, the longer the differential. Prepare an obstacle course, or a slope with a jump, or an area where tag can be played so that the hares can play games while the tortoises ready themselves. Or have an assistant leader or child lead the group of kids who are ready in a circle game of Hokey Pokey, Simon Says, while the Leader is preparing and sending the other kids out.

Hit the Deck!

Practice falling, rolling onto the back to untangle skis. Place skis on snow parallel to each other. Then move forward onto knees to get up. Slide one ski forward and push up.

The Hokey Pokey

Stand the group in a circle and sing/say: "Put your left ski in, put your left ski out, you put your left ski in and you shake it all about. Then you do the hokey pokey and you turn yourself about. That's what it's all about." Do whatever the lyrics tell you to do. Repeat with various body parts and pieces of equipment.

Hopscotch

Same as the game of squares drawn on pavement with crayons! Use food coloring or spray paint, or simply draw the squares in the snow with a ski pole. Use an extra hat or a pine bough to throw on the hopscotch square.

Red Light/Green Light

Have the skiers moving randomly around you. Then say, "Red Light!" Give skiers 5 seconds after to stop and try to hold the position they were caught in. When you say "Green Light" they can begin moving again.

Simon Says

This game is popular with younger Kochers. "Simon Says: step sideways; now hop up and down . . ."

GROUP SKIING GAMES

The Blob

The Blob is a type of tag. Play on a field with a defined size. Start the game with two fast children joining hands to become the Blob. They ski while holding hands until they tag someone. The Blob is now a threesome. They ski until they tag a fourth person— then the Blob splits up into (2) 2-person Blobs who go on the hunt for more victims. Tip: the size of the field is important— too big and the Blobs won't be able to tag people. Also, encourage blobs to work together to "sweep" the field.

- play without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow

Cut the Pie

Make a large pie circle in the snow; there should be four slices in the pie. The players can only ski around the perimeter or along the four cuts in the pie. One person is "it" and tries to tag another player. Anyone who falls into the pie or cuts a corner becomes "it", so don't cut the pie! Safety is a circle five meters in diameter in the center of the pie, but there cannot be more than three skiers there. The skier who has been in the safety circle the longest has to leave if a new skier enters. The pie can be about 50 meters in diameter if there are 10-15 players, bigger if there are more or older skiers.

- play without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow

Duck, Duck, Goose!

Arrange the skiers into a circle facing the center. Choose one skier to be "It". This skier skis around the outside of the circle tapping each skier, saying "Duck, duck, duck, . . ." then he/she taps someone and says, "Goose!" The "goosed" skier jumps up and chases the "it" skier, trying to catch him/her. That skier is then "It", and starts the second round of "Duck, Duck, Goose!"

- play without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow; turning

Easter-Egg Hunt

No need to wait for Easter! Use small candies and scatter them in a field or open woods while skiers are not watching. Younger children start two minutes before the older children.

- play with or without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow

Ghostbusters

Spread the group out in a field (or gym) in a random formation. Use poles if on snow. Choose one person to be the ghostbuster. All others are ghosts. Anyone tagged by the ghostbuster becomes the haunted house (and must stand with arms and legs stretched out to the side). Haunted houses are freed only when a ghost goes under their legs. Haunted houses must remain stationary when tagged. Game starts when you yell "one, two, three, ghostbusters!"

- play without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow

The Great Ski Chase

Designate several tag areas and their boundaries. Pick teams of skiers, the taggers, for each area. Then

pick older skiers, coaches, or parents for the taggees, one for each area. At the start, the taggees get a 30-second start. They then zigzag in their specified area and try to avoid being caught by their team of young taggers. Which team will capture their Leader first?

- play with or without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow

Hares and Hounds

The hares get a two minute start into a wooded area. An overgrown field is ideal terrain. The hounds are released to track down the hares, who can hide or run. The hares are given long streamers, ribbons, or scarves to wear as bunny tails. When a hound catches/tags a hare, the tail is collected as a trophy of the hunt. The game continues for +/- 10 minutes, when a whistle calls everyone in. The sides switch: hares become hounds, and hounds become hares. Who can catch the most hares? Count up the trophies from the hunt. Which side has the best hounds?

- play with poles or without
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow

Mystery Time Race

This type of race is designed for any one in the group to be able to win, regardless of ability. Pick an approximate length of time for the activity, say 20 to 45 minutes. Select one person to pick a time between 20 and 45 minutes (to the nearest second), write it down, and hide it. Start the group out skiing, telling them to be back between 30 and 45 minutes. Score the race by those that come back closest (absolute time) to the mystery time. Distance, speed, and style are of no concern.

- play with or without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow

Obstacle Course

Ski over bumps, climb over a bench, ski under a rope, around poles and bushes, sidestep up a ramp or hill. Turn the course into a relay.

- play with or without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow
- technique: incorporate hills and corners to teach a variety of techniques, eg, herringbone, skate corners, etc

Red Rover

Each team has a turn to defend a square "battlefield" from invasion by other teams. When the defending team is ready, it challenges one of the attacking teams to try to ski through the field to the other side. "Red Rover, Red Rover, send the (club's name) team right over." The club's skiers then try to rush or sneak through to the far side without being tagged (touch with hand). The greater the number of skiers that reach the other side of the field, the higher that team's score. Each team takes a turn playing offensive and defensive positions.

- play without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow

Rock, Paper, Scissors

Divide skiers into two groups. They play on a field that has two well-defined “end zone” lines and side boundaries. The width of the field should be roughly half the length. Each group huddles at its end zone and chooses 2 signs: one to be used first signal and the other as a back-up in case of a tie. Teams then ski to the center of the field and face each other spread out along the width of the field. At the command each team presents its signal— the losing team then flees toward its end zone with the winning team in pursuit. Tagged losers go over to the winning team. Repeat until a time limit is reached or there is only one team.

- play without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow

Samurai Swordsman

Form a large circle with all participants. A samurai is located in the middle with an object representing a large sword. Game starts with all participants bowing to samurai. If he swings the sword up high then you must duck; if he swings it low, then you must jump; if he jabs forward then you must side step. The key to this game is to keep it moving and to make analogies regarding participants destruction (e.g., “John, you look like a piece of Swiss Cheese!”).

- play with or without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow
- technique: side-stepping

Sharks and Minnows

Minnows line up on the “beach” and one shark is in the “ocean”. When the shark yells “minnows!” all the minnows have to ski across the sea to the beach on the other side. The beaches are safety zones. If a minnow is tagged he becomes a shark, too. Continue the games as more and more minnows turn into sharks until only one minnow is left.

- play without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow

Ski Soccer

Skiers play soccer on skis but use their hands instead of their feet to move the ball. With a large group, try using two balls.

- play with or without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow

Spider Man

Random formation on a field with all players having a flag tucked in the back of their pants or pocket. On the start signal each person tries to steal the others’ flags. Once you lose your flag you cannot ski but must keep one foot on the flag on the ground. You can reach out and steal the flag of someone else skiing by you. Last person with a flag wins.

- play without poles
- balance, agility, coordination, feel for snow