

Guard the Nest

Activity

Resource:

Beyond the Walls: Activities for the Outdoors

Grade(s): 7 8

Division(s): Intermediate

Setting: Curricular

Season: Fall

Activity Goal

Participants use game strategies, passing and sending skills in this territory-type game to knock down the 'logs' of the opposing team while engaging in physical activity in a fall environment.

For participant safety, please review the contents of the [Beyond the Walls: Safety Considerations](#) page for information on Safety Standards, Fall Safety Considerations, and Outdoor Playing Areas and Surfaces.

Equipment

- 4 large cones/pylons
- 10-12 'logs' for the nest (bowling pins/relay batons/pylons)
- 1 pinnie per participant (two colours to denote the two teams)
- 1-2 playground balls
- 12 cones/pylons

- 10-12 tennis balls, wiffle balls, or beanbags (stored food)

Before Play

- Review the safety rules and activity instructions with participants prior to the activity.
- Establish the boundaries for the designated playing area and share them with participants.
- Use four cones/pylons to mark the playing area and divide participants into two 'nest groups' or teams.
- Provide each team with four cones/pylons to designate their 'nest' within their half of the playing area. Direct teams to strategically place their nest within the boundaries established, considering how the land around the nest might impact their design, and how they can effectively defend it against predators.
- Connect participants with the notion of nest building as a necessity of life for many animals. Encourage participants to consider where they build their nest, what makes a good 'nest area', and why they might choose some areas over others (e.g., dry spot, accessibility to food, safety from predators, camouflage).
- Provide each team with half of the 'logs' (bowling pins/relay baton/pylons) and half of the acorns (beanbags). Direct them to place their logs balanced vertically, with an acorn on top then return to the middle of the playing area to prepare to play.
- Have teams designate 3-4 players as defensive players who must return to the nest to 'guard' their winter food storage (i.e., the acorns). These participants may not leave the nest. Emphasize that the game is non-contact and guards are not allowed to physically touch a thrower to prevent a throw and must allow a thrower to enter the nest to gather their food.
- The remaining participants may not return to the nest and must instead stay outside the nest area. These players are offensive players.

During Play

- Play commences with a jump ball, whereby the teacher or group leader tosses the ball up into the air, and all participating players must scramble to get possession of the ball.

- Participants must then send/receive the ball between team members to enter the opposing team's half of the playing area. Consider adding a limit to how many steps a player can take with the ball prior to passing or dribbling (with hands or feet), or permit or exclude travel outside the playing area based on available space, terrain, and participant preference.
- Direct participants to throw the ball to knock over the log/pin. The throw must be from outside of the four cones/pylons that designate the nest. Throws inside the nest area do not count. If successful, participants take the acorn back to their nest, and stand up one of their own knocked over pins to replenish their food supply.
- Co-construct rules for defenders with participants after the first round of play. Encourage them to consider if they can block attempts to hit the nest/knock acorns off and what should happen if they are hit by the sent object. Have participants decide how to amend the rules as necessary to promote inclusive play.
- Play recommences with another jump ball. Knocked over pins remain down until offensive players return with a new acorn.

After Play

Use the following prompts for participants to reflect on ways to be active in fall and engage others in activity to build a habit of engaging in outdoor activity throughout the year.

Question prompts:

- How would the game change if we altered the number of logs we are playing with on each team?
- How would our game change if we didn't allow replenishing of our food supply? How does this simulate what could happen in nature if an animal doesn't store enough food for winter?
- How will our game change if we alter the location of the 'nest'? How does this relate to what you know about how animals choose their nest locations?
- How would the game change if we changed the dimensions of our playing area? What if we were playing in a different season?
- How does the diameter of the log affect the stability of the log?

Adaptations

Consider these tips to maximize the challenge and the fun for participants.

- Adjust the playing areas based on availability of play space and in accordance with conditions of the playing area.
- Consider mandating the number of passes that must be completed prior to throwing the ball.
- Consider allowing participants to send with both hands and feet to add an additional challenge to the game.
- Consider using different sized logs/pins and assigning a point difference for the different log diameters.
- Consider changing the number of logs/pins for participants to knock down, or the diameter of the logs.
- Assign more acorns than there are logs/pins to increase the challenge.

Modifications

Consider these tips to maximize inclusion and fun for all participants.

- For participants with mobility challenges, consider having participants utilize various locomotions to speed up/slow down the speed of play (e.g., have participants bear walk to slow down the rate of play for participants using mobility aids).
- For participants that are blind/low vision, consider using a brightly coloured ball or an object that is easier to receive (e.g., netball, rattle ball).