

Predators and Prey on the Hunt

Activity

Resource:

Beyond the Walls: Activities for the Outdoors

Grade(s): 9 10 11 12**Division(s):** Senior**Setting:** Curricular**Season:** Fall

Activity Goal

Participants work together and apply strategies and tactics to evade capture by predators and avoid disease while they gather and cache food (implements) 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

- 6-8 blue pinnies
- 4 large cones/pylons
- 5 hoops
- 4-5 of each implement: balls, bean bags, cones/pylons, scarves, pins, discs, or any other small manipulative equipment (minimum of 4 different types of implements)

- 2-4 red pinnies

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.
- Determine a large, rectangular playing area with participants, and mark the boundaries using the 4 cones/pylons.
- Place a hoop in each corner, and one in the middle of the playing area. Explain to participants that each corner hoop represents the 'cache' of a pack of foxes and that the implements scattered around the playing area represent food items. The middle hoop represents the disease hoop.
- Discuss the feeding relationship between predators and prey and how foxes and wolves/coyotes are representative of this relationship.
- Designate 1 participant as a 'predator', such as a coyote or wolf. Give this participant a blue pinnie to wear.
- Designate 2-4 participants as 'disease' and provide them with a red pinnie to wear.
- Explain that all animals must avoid disease, as it can weaken, or even decimate, an animal population.
- Divide the remaining participants into four equal fox packs.
- Instruct the participants who represent the fox packs that their goal is to evade capture and gather as much food for their cache as they can. They can only gather one food item at a time. A fox may not prevent or block other foxes from entering their hoop to pilfer their food.
- Explain to participants that foxes must avoid getting tagged by the wolf/coyote. If they do, they must don a blue pinnie and become a 'predator'. If a fox or wolf/ coyote is tagged by disease, they must drop any food they have (foxes) and go directly to the hoop in the middle. They must perform 10 repetitions of a pre-selected activity such as one from [Ophea's 50 Fitness Activities](#) before returning to the game.
- Ensure all participants are aware of running with their head up, and aware of their surroundings, as play will be happening in multiple directions.

During Play

- Direct foxes to cache as much 'food' as possible, both from the caches of other foxes, and that which is in the open playing area.
- Encourage them to evade being captured by both predators and disease by moving evasively in the playing area.
- Remind foxes (participants) tagged by wolves/coyotes (blue pinnies) to get a blue pinnie and become a predator as well.
- Remind all participants that a tag is a touch on the back, shoulder, or arms, and not a push, punch, or grab.
- At the end of the activity (designated by the teacher) each fox pack tallies up the food items in their hoop, the pack with the most food items is the winner.

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 participating in outdoor activity throughout the year.

Question prompts:

- How do you think this game symbolizes what happens in food webs and predator-prey-disease relationships?
- What did the accumulation of equipment symbolize for the fox population in this game? How does this relate to what happens in nature?
- When you were playing, what did you do that kept yourself and others safe given the nature of this particular game?
- What strategies did you use to successfully gather and cache food while evading predators and disease?

Adaptations

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

- Consider increasing or decreasing the size of the playing area or the amount of available food to increase or decrease the challenge.
- Consider having foxes captured by the predator exchange places. The predator gives the fox their blue pinnie and takes their place in the fox pack.
- Consider having multiple types of predators or multiple types of diseases, with the consequences of being caught ranging from becoming a predator or an additional type of disease, to performing additional fitness activities to re-enter play.

Modifications

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

- For participants with dexterity issues, consider providing a variety of implements for participants to choose from to gather and cache food or to tag other participants.
- For those participants that are blind/low vision, consider using larger implements, or brightly coloured implements. Alternatively, tie a bell to each participant so they can be heard as they move.
- For participants with mobility issues, consider having the entire group use a different type of locomotion while gathering and caching their food, or mandate 'walking speed' if the terrain is uneven.