Exploring Games Strategies and Tactics in Physical Education

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W.S. Hawrylak School

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**Renewed Physical Education Curricula**

The K-12 **aim** of the physical education curricula is to support students in becoming physically educated individuals who have the understandings and skills to engage in movement activity, and the confidence and disposition to live a healthy, active lifestyle.

### Three goals:

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<td>Enjoy and engage in healthy levels of participation in movement activities to support lifelong active living in the context of self, family, and community.</td>
<td>Enhance the quality of movement by understanding, developing, and transferring movement concepts, skills, tactics, and strategies to a wide variety of movement activities.</td>
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<td>Balance self through safe and respectful personal, social, cultural, and environmental interactions in a wide variety of movement activities.</td>
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**(Sask Ministry of Education, renewed curricula, 2010)**

### Big Ideas:

- Focus on achieving physical literacy
- Provide meaningful contexts, key ideas, and questions for students to explore
- Accommodates and challenges the needs and abilities of all students
- Provide learning opportunities based on the curricular outcomes
- Allow for students to develop movement skills and concepts in a wide variety of physical activities

### Questions to consider when planning:

- Which ____________ will students be working to achieve?
- What will I accept as ____________ that learning has occurred?
- What ____________ will facilitate student learning of the understandings, skills, and confidences described in the outcome(s)?
- How will I ____________ the activity to ensure learning for all students?
- What ____________ considerations for the activity?

### Five Strategies for Creating a Safe, Inclusive, and Comfortable Learning Environment:

1. Engage students in well-planned purposeful movement activities.
2. Allow for student choice.
3. Vary your instructional strategies by grouping students in different ways or using circuits or stations.
4. Ensure all students have many varied opportunities to develop their abilities.
5. Accommodate varied student needs by varying the activities; e.g., change the size of the playing area, change the rules of the game, use more equipment, make smaller teams.
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<th>Low Organizational, Inventive, Cooperative Games</th>
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<th>Invasion/Territorial Games</th>
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<td>Apply complex movement skills; simplified game play.</td>
<td>Score by getting the object closer to the target than opponents, while avoiding obstacles.</td>
<td>Score by getting the object into the opponent’s areas of play more often that they can return the object.</td>
<td>Score by striking the object and running within safe areas; prevent opponents from scoring by catching the ball in the air or getting it to a safe area before the batter reaches the safe area; make it difficult for opponents to hit the ball.</td>
<td>Score by getting the object into the opponent’s goal; attempt to prevent opponents from scoring.</td>
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It Tag

Curricular Connections: PE: Skillful Play, Strategies and Tactics (e.g., 1.8, 2.8, 3.7, 4.9)

Equipment: Obstacle free playing area

Tactical Focus: Moving into open space, tagging others, avoiding being tagged

Organization: Everybody is “it”. Everybody is trying to tag everyone else. When tagged, players kneel down on one knee until another player touches them on the shoulder (this can be any player other than the one who tagged), and they stand up and are back in the game! Players who tag each other at the same time must decide what should happen (e.g., both free, both tagged, rock paper scissors to determine who will be tagged).

Variation/Inclusion: Allow students an “auto-free” option, where they complete three jumping jacks and continue playing. Students each have a partner. Same game as above, except only their partner can touch them on the shoulder to get back in the game. Once both partners are tagged, they are out. Try groups of 5-8 students where there are 4-7 other players in your group who can free a tagged player. Vary the locomotor pattern from running to hopping on one foot, crab walking or shuffling to be inclusive of students of all abilities and consider allowing students to stand with a hand up as opposed to kneeling down when tagged. Allow students with visual impairments to move with a partner.

ASK: What are you doing to avoid being tagged (while on defense)? What are you doing to successfully tag others (while on offense)? What strategies is your team using to stay in the game?

Batman and Robin

Curricular Connections: PE: Strategies and Tactics; Relationships; Decision Making (e.g., 4.12, 5.7)

Equipment: Obstacle free playing area

Tactical Focus: Moving into open space, tagging others, avoiding being tagged

Organization: Students begin by standing beside a partner with elbows linked. Pairs stand scattered throughout the activity area. Separate one pair of students and determine who will be the first tagger. On the signal to begin, the tagger chases their partner. Should the tagger touch their partner, the two students switch roles (the student who was tagged may perform 3 jumps before chasing). The student who is being chased may at any time link elbows with one of the stationary pairs. The student in the stationary pair on the opposite side of where the student being chased linked elbows now becomes the student being chased. Play is continuous.

Variation/Inclusion: Increase the level of participation by adding more chasing partners to the game. Challenge stationary partners to lay face down on the floor as opposed to standing with arms linked.

ASK: What are you doing to avoid being tagged (while on defense)? What are you doing to successfully tag others (while on offense)?
**Playing Card Relay**

**Curricular Connections** | **PE: Skills and Strategies, Relationships (e.g., 3.7, 4.9)**
---|---

**Equipment**: Obstacle free playing area, a deck of playing cards, pylons

**Tactical Focus**: Skillful movement, communication

**Organization**: Instruct groups of 2-3 students to begin behind a designated start line. Scatter a deck of playing cards face down in an area 5-10 meters away. On the signal to begin, one group member at a time will move to the cards looking for cards from their designated suit (hearts, clubs, spades, diamonds), or of a designated number. Each group member is allowed to look at two cards at a time and will return to the group with cards that match their designated suit/number. The challenge is for each group to communicate and work together to gather their designated cards in the more efficient manner. Continue the relay for 1-2 minutes. Return the cards to pile face down, shuffle, and repeat the activity, challenging each group to collect more cards than the previous attempt.

**Variation/Inclusion**: Assign each group an animal (e.g., eagle, dog, beetle, spider) and challenge students to move to the cards on the same number of body parts as the animal has legs (spiders move on 8 body parts).

**ASK**: How did you communicate with your partner/group members? What strategies allowed you to successfully complete the challenge?

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**Knock Down** *(Source: Playsport)*

**Curricular Connections** | **PE: Target Games Strategies, Tactics, and Skills (e.g., 3.7, 5.7, 6.8, 6.9)**
---|---

**Equipment**: Targets (batons, pins, pylons, rolled paper), balls (variety of sizes and weight)

**Tactical Focus**: Aim and accuracy

**Organization**: Pairs of students choose a ball (have balls of different sizes available) and four targets. One partner sets up the targets (the retriever) while the other partner (the thrower) stands 5 or more meters away. The retriever chooses a target the thrower will attempt to hit by rolling the ball. If the chosen target is hit, select another target for the thrower to hit. If a target other than the chosen one is hit, the retriever stands it back up and the thrower tries again. Switch roles every two minutes, or after the thrower has successfully hit all four targets.

**Variation/Inclusion**: Increase the distance between the thrower and the targets. Try throwing with the other (non-dominant) hand. Place an obstacle in front of the targets to change the line of vision, throwing angle, or challenge the thrower to add spin to the ball. Challenge the thrower to hit two targets with each throw. Designate three lines from which you can throw to hit the targets – the closest line is worth one point, the farthest line is worth 3 points. Keep track of your score. Slide a disc, puck, or scooter at the targets instead of rolling a ball. Students could place a ball on a ramp to send it toward a target if they are not able to roll a ball.

**ASK**: How did your throw change when you were further away from the target? What did you do to get the ball around the obstacles in front of the targets?
Net/Wall Games

**Balloon Volleyball**

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<tr>
<th>Curricular Connections</th>
<th>PE: Game Strategies and Tactics, Relationship (e.g., 4.9, 4.10, 5.7, 7.7)</th>
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*Equipment:* Balloons (or scarves, plastic bags), beach balls

*Tactical Focus:* Communication, placement of object

*Organization:* Instruct groups of 3-5 students to stand in an obstacle free area. Provide each group with one balloon (check for latex allergies first!) and challenge them to keep the balloon in the air with striking motions using hands, elbows, feet... Gradually add more balloons.

*Variation/Inclusion:* Change the equipment from balloons to beach balls or other objects that will fall more quickly to the floor. Limit the body parts that can be used to keep the balloons in the air (e.g., feet only). Allow group members to catch the balloon and throw it.

ASK: What strategies are you using to keep the balloons in the air? How are you effectively communicating with your team?

**Bounce Ball**

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<th>PE: Game Strategies and Tactics (e.g., 4.10, 7.7, 8.6)</th>
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*Equipment:* Pylons, bean bags or other objects to identify boundaries, balls (various sizes)

*Tactical Focus:* Ready position, placement and positioning of object

*Organization:* Instruct students to find a partner. One partner will collect 6 boundary markers (pylons, beanbags) and one ball, while the other finds a space in the activity area. Each pair will set up a rectangular playing area divided in half. One player will begin by bouncing the ball in their half of the playing area and hitting it with an open palm into the playing area of their partner. The partner will allow the ball to bounce once before hitting it on the opposing half. Partners will work cooperatively to count how many successful passes they can make over the centre line.

*Variation/Inclusion:* Change the size of the playing area to create a long and narrow space, or a short and wide space. Place a bench or chairs across the centre of the playing area to create a net. Change the game from cooperative to competitive, where each player attempts to hit the ball into their opponent’s court in a space where it cannot be returned. Change the size of the ball or use a paddle/racquet to strike the ball. Play “doubles”, with two players on each half of the court.

ASK: What strategies are you using to be successful? Where are you moving after you hit the ball? How did your strategy change with the size of the playing area? Where did you position yourself when playing doubles?
**Striking/Fielding Games**

**CN Tower** (Source: Playsport)

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<th>PE: Skillful Movement, Strategies and Tactics (e.g., 3.7, 5.7, 7.7)</th>
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*Equipment:* Foam balls (variety of sizes)

*Tactical Focus:* Offense – attacking the goal

*Organization:* Two teams of 4 students stand in alternating positions in one large circle, with legs wider than shoulder width apart. The outside of each foot should be in contact with the person standing on either side. Playing with one foam ball that must remain on the ground at all times, players strike the ball with their hands and attempt to send the ball through the legs of an opposing team member. Players must maintain contact with the feet of their neighbours at all times.

*Variations/Inclusion:* Add a target between the legs of each player and try to knock down the target while sending the ball between the legs of an opposing team member. Play with 2, 3, or more balls. Sit on the floor with legs in a straddle position.

ASK: What strategies are you using to successfully score a goal (e.g., looking one way while striking the other, adding spin to the ball, using fakes, quick passes to teammates).

**Burning Ball**

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<th>PE: Decision Making, Strategies and Tactics (e.g., 7.7, 7.8, 8.7, 9.6)</th>
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*Equipment:* 6 or more pylons, a basket, crate, or box, foam ball

*Tactical Focus:* Scoring runs, object placement, gaining possession, prevent scoring

*Organization:* Place the pylons around the playing area in two rows. Two groups of 5-6 players each will participate in one game of Burning Ball. The batting team begins in a line near one row of pylons while the fielding team begins scattered throughout the playing area. The first batter in line will throw the ball in the playing area and run to touch as many pylons as possible before the fielding team is able to place the ball in the basket. While the first batter runs, the fielding team retrieves the ball and passes it to each team member before placing the ball in the basket. Fielders are not allowed to move with the ball. The batter must be touching a pylon when the ball is placed in the basket, or they are ‘out’ and return to the back of the batting line. Play continues with the next batter throwing the ball. More than one batter may be touching a pylon at the same time. Should a batter successfully touch all pylons without being ‘burned’, they score one point for their team. The batting and fielding teams will switch roles after three outs.

*Variation/Inclusion:* Add an obstacle between each of the pylons through which the batter must pass before advancing to the next pylon. Increase or decrease the size of the playing area. Allow each batter two throws before changing the batting and fielding teams.

ASK: Where should you throw the ball to increase the likelihood of scoring more runs? What did you consider when deciding whether or not to advance to the next pylon? What strategies are effective at returning the ball to the basket?
**Chuck the Chicken (Source: Playsport)**

### Curricular Connections
**PE:** Decision Making, Strategies and Tactics (e.g., 5.7, 7.8, 8.7, 9.6)

**Equipment:** One rubber chicken for every 20 students, large obstacle free area.

**Tactical Focus:** Placement of objects away from fielders

**Organization:** Divide students into groups of 8-10. Each group will be playing against one other group, while one team is on offense; the other team is on defense. The team on offense starts with the chicken, one shouts “CHUCK THE CHICKEN” and throws the rubber chicken wherever they like in the playing area. The team then stands in a very tight circle while one person travels around the circle scoring “runs”. The entire team counts the number of runs until they hear “chuck the chicken”. The team on defense runs to the chicken, wherever it was thrown. They line up in a single file and pass the chicken alternating over the head and between the knees until the chicken reaches the end of the line. The last person in line then shouts “CHUCK THE CHICKEN” and throws the chicken to a new location. The teams then switch roles and continue to score as many runs as possible! The same student is not allowed to throw the chicken, or score more runs until each person on the team has taken a turn.

**Variation/Inclusion:** If working with a large group or double classes, provide each group with a different object to throw – “chuck the chicken”, “pitch the pig”, “fling the fish”, “boot the ball”. Adapt the method of passing the chicken down the line and moving around the circle to score runs to include students of all abilities. Have students with visual impairments move around the circle with a partner.

**ASK:** Where is the best place to “chuck the chicken”? What strategies did you use to effectively score runs?

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**Invasion/Territorial Games**

**Tail Tag**

### Curricular Connections
**PE:** Skillful Movement, Strategies and Tactics (e.g., 3.7, 4.9, 5.7, 6.8)

**Equipment:** flag belts and flags, or pinnies

**Tactical Focus:** protect your flag, remove the flag of others, team strategies

**Organization:** Provide each student with a pinnie, flags, or other objects that can be tucked into the sides of shorts/pants to create a tail. On the signal to begin, players move throughout the activity area attempting to steal the tail of others without having their tail stolen. Players are not allowed to make body contact with each other while stealing or protecting their tails. Should a tail be stolen, it is dropped on the ground. The player whose tail was stolen will pick it up, move to the side of the playing area, tuck it back in and keep playing. Stop the game after 1-2 minutes to discuss successful strategies. Ensure each player has a tail and begin again.

**Variation/Inclusion:** Provide each player with multiple tails. Create teams of 4-5 players each (students with the same coloured tail on the same team). Assign two teams to play against each other, who will try to steal the tails of all opposing team members without having their tails stolen. In team play, should a tail be stolen, it is dropped on the ground, but must be retrieved by a teammate (not the player who had their tail stolen).

**ASK:** How did you move to successfully protect your tail, or steal the tails of others? How did you communicate with your team members? What strategies were successful during team play?
**Goals Galore**

| Curricular Connections | PE: Skillful Movement, Strategies and Tactics (e.g., 4.9, 5.7, 6.5, 6.8, 7.7) |

*Equipment:* Pylons, balls (a variety of sizes)

*Tactical Focus:* Maintaining possession of an object, scoring

*Organization:* Create several goals throughout the playing area by placing two pylons beside each other. Instruct each student to choose a ball and dribble it with their feet around the goals, while maintaining control of the ball and avoiding contact with others. Invite students to ‘score a goal’ by kicking the ball to a target on the wall (post hoops, or students can choose a brick). Stop the activity several times and instruct students to change balls with another student to allow for practice controlling balls of various sizes and weight. Ask students to find a partner, choose one ball (return the other ball to a designated area), and move throughout the activity area by passing the ball to each other. Challenge students to score as many goals as possible in a pre-determined amount of time. Students must move to a different goal each time they score and are not allowed to move with the ball – passing only.

*Variation/Inclusion:* Increase or decrease the size of the goals. Add 4 defenders to the game, who attempt to intercept passes and prevent the scoring of goals. Instruct students to pass the ball with their hands instead of their feet. Control the ball with sticks (lacrosse, hockey, broomball).

ASK: What did you do to maintain control of the ball? What strategies did you use to complete successful passes to a moving partner? How did you effectively control the ball against a defender?

**Characteristics of Good Games:**

- Contribute to skill development,
- Are safe,
- Include as opposed to eliminate students from participation,
- Have high participation rates,
- Are structured in a way that allows all students to experience success and be challenged.

*(Adapted from P. Hastie, 2010, p.6)*
Resources

There are many resources available to physical education teachers describing ready-made lesson plans and movement activities. Here are a few questions to consider before using them in your classes;

- How do the activities support student learning of the curricular outcomes?
- Will the activities allow all students to actively participate and develop skills?
- How do I need to modify the activity to better meet the needs of my students and for the space in which we will participate?

Saskatchewan Ministry of Education

- Renewed Physical Education Curricula: Online access to physical education curricula and lists of core and additional resources to support implementation, [www.education.gov.sk.ca/pe-curricula](http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/pe-curricula)
- Inspiring Movement: Towards Comprehensive School Community Health – Guidelines for Physical Activity in Saskatchewan Schools, [www.education.gov.sk.ca/physicalactivity](http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/physicalactivity)

Saskatchewan Physical Educator’s Association (SPEA)

A Special Subject Council of the STF, SPEA provides support and resources to physical education teachers. The SPEA/SHEA Conference is being held May 4-6, 2011 in Saskatoon, [www.speaonline.ca](http://www.speaonline.ca)

Online Resources:

Growing Young Movers (G.Y.M.)

A toolbox including videos and activity ideas for physical education. [www.growingyoungmovers.com](http://www.growingyoungmovers.com)

Moving to Inclusion, National Steering Committee of Moving to Inclusion Initiative, 1994

Resources and strategies for including students of all abilities in movement activities. Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability, [www.ala.ca](http://www.ala.ca)

Playsport, Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) and partners

Playsport, now housed in the OPHEA activity database, describes game challenges for children ages 6-12 that align with a Teaching Games for Understanding approach. [www.playsport.net](http://www.playsport.net)

Dr. Tim Hopper’s Games Website

Lessons plans and activity ideas based on the TGfU approach. [http://education2.uvic.ca/Faculty/thopper/tactic/index.htm](http://education2.uvic.ca/Faculty/thopper/tactic/index.htm)

Books:

PHE Canada

PHE Canada provides information, news, school programs and initiatives, advocacy tools, and a bookstore to support the implementation of quality health and physical education programs in Canada. One of the many resources available through PHE Canada is Fundamental Movement Skills: Beyond the Fundamentals - A Games Approach (2010) Product #PE-FMS4-E, $40.00, [www.phecanada.ca](http://www.phecanada.ca)

Teaching Games for Understanding: Theory, Research, and Practice (2005), Griffin, L., & Butler, J.

A comprehensive overview of the TGfU approach, and activity ideas. Available from Human Kinetics, $30.95.

Student-Designed Games (2010), Hastie, P.

“Attitude is a little thing that makes a BIG difference”