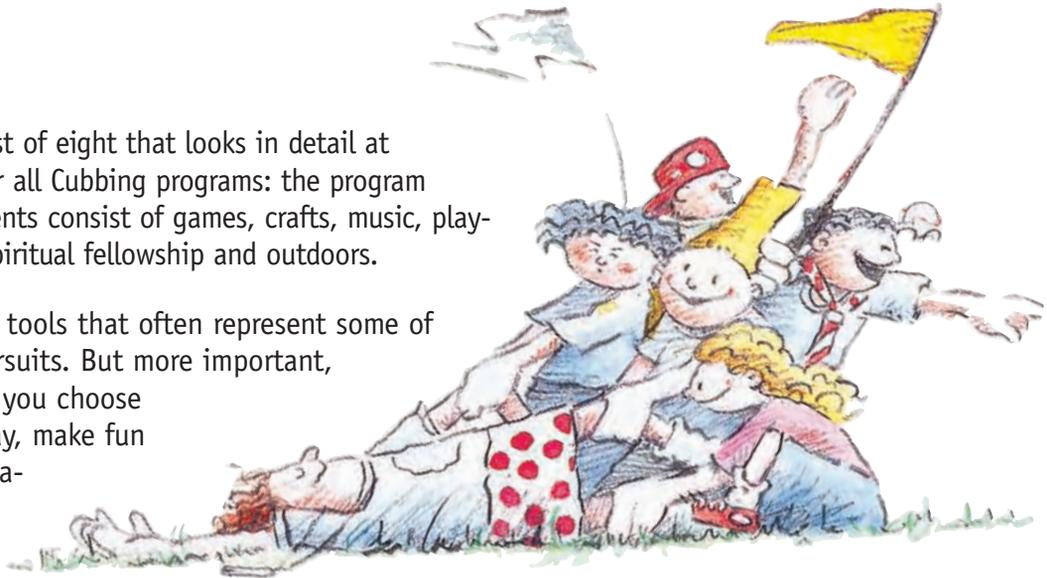


Chapter 9 - Games



This chapter is the first of eight that looks in detail at the building blocks for all Cubbing programs: the program elements. These elements consist of games, crafts, music, play-acting, storytelling, spiritual fellowship and outdoors.

Games are socializing tools that often represent some of life's most serious pursuits. But more important, games are fun. When you choose games for Cubs to play, make fun your primary consideration. Here are some important things games provide:



- They let Cubs burn off excess energy and release tension.
- They're an opportunity to learn to play fair and by the rules.
- They help Cubs develop muscular coordination and physical skills.
- They offer an exciting change of pace from other, quieter parts of the meeting.



Bear Wisdom: Everyone learns differently when learning a new skill (think of learning to tie your shoes). Some people learn by listening, some by watching and doing, or some by reading illustrations. Try to incorporate different styles of presenting an idea or skill with variety and ways to appeal to your whole pack.

Tips for Running Games

1. Call the pack together in a circle or play position to begin. Explain the rules and ask for questions; listen carefully to questions your Cubs ask because a youth will often bring up a point you haven't covered in your explanation. Sometimes it's useful to ask one or two Cubs to demonstrate the game before play begins. Make it clear how the game will end (after they've scored a certain number of points or at the end of a certain length of time).
2. Have all available leaders supervise the game, each concentrating on one team. Insist Cubs follow the rules without making a big issue of violations. Cubs can get carried away in the excitement of play; some may want to experiment by adjusting the rules.
3. Point out and correct violations casually, without stopping play if possible. If a Cub commits a flagrant violation, pull the youth out of the game, and point out the fault in a friendly tone. Then, let the Cub return to the game.



4. Sometimes a new game doesn't go as well as expected. Perhaps the Cubs just don't like it. If this happens, stop the game quickly and change the rules a bit to improve it. Ask your Cubs and other leaders for suggestions. If the game still doesn't capture the interest of your members, substitute an old favourite you know they'll enjoy.
5. When you play elimination games, consider this option. Let eliminated Cubs report to a leader to answer a skill-testing question and then return to the game. Unless the game is very short, eliminated Cubs become bored and frustrated at having to sit and watch.
6. Include all Cubs in your games. If a Cub has a disability that makes playing difficult, perhaps another Cub or a leader could be a partner to help. If that doesn't work, ask the youth to be a scorekeeper, timekeeper or referee.
7. When Cubs aren't very good at a game, they generally don't like it. Play a wide variety of games to give every Cub a chance to succeed and enjoy. Sometimes it's hard to find a game to suit your least capable Cubs, but the fun they have makes it well worth your effort.
8. Use different ways to form teams. Ask Cubs to form a parade circle and number off (e.g. 1, 2, 1, 2, 1, 2, making two teams). Use sixes. Choose teams on the basis of:
 - Age groups
 - Sock colours
 - Birth months

— whatever is interesting and unusual. The more ways you mix your Cubs, the better they get to know each other. It encourages friendships.

Competitive vs. Cooperative

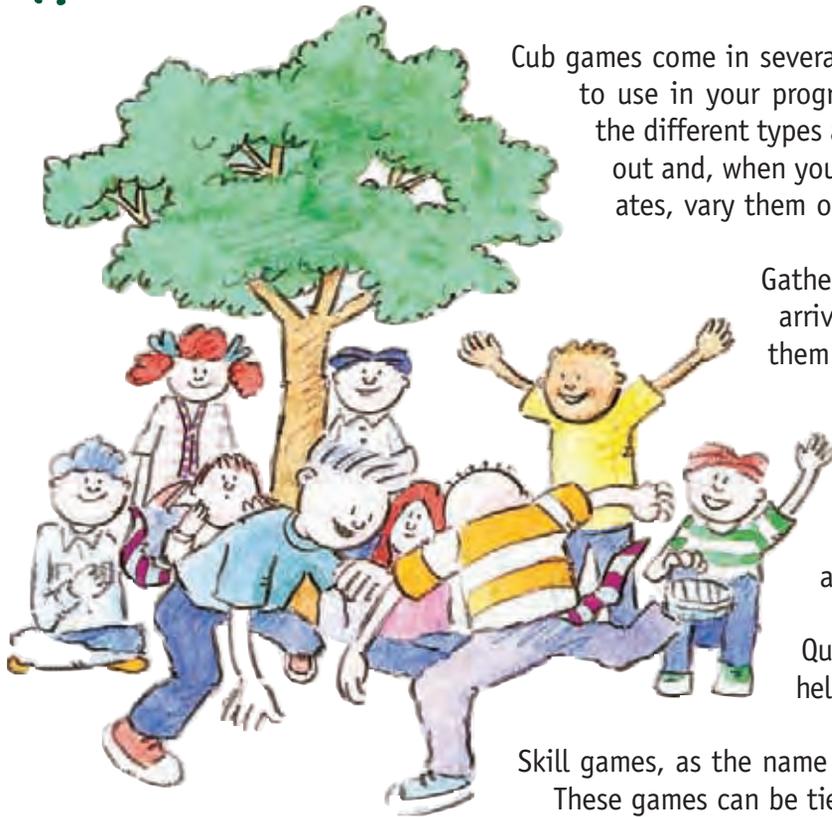
Many packs play down the importance of competition in their games; their leaders believe that too much competition is less fun for members because some Cubs worry they might let down their team members. You can reduce competition in your pack in a number of ways, including:

- Play mostly cooperative games.
- Forget about keeping score.
- Adjust the rules to give each team a fair chance to win; this will keep final scores close.
- Stress the idea that all games are cooperative in the sense that players must agree to abide by the rules, and do their best to challenge each side.
- At the end of the game, congratulate all teams for their efforts (i.e. "do your best").



In the Beaver program, all play is cooperative. Although we introduce the idea of competition in Cubs, it's still important to avoid putting heavy emphasis on winning. Where there's a winner, there's a "loser," and a sense of failure. Cubs respond much better if you put the emphasis on doing their best. When you run a competition and award points or prizes, be sure that even the last Cub or team gets something.

Types of Games



Cub games come in several categories, all of which you'll want to use in your program from time to time. Let's look at the different types and a few examples of each. Try them out and, when you're familiar with how each kind operates, vary them or create your own games.

Gathering games collect the youth as they arrive for a meeting or event, and keep them busy.

Steam-off games are used to use up excess energy in Cubs. These games are usually run before getting into an activity (e.g. craft, first aid training).

Quiet games calm the pack down, and help lead into the close of the meeting.

Skill games, as the name implies, help Cubs learn a new skill. These games can be tied to theme activities or badge work.

Cooperative games build teamwork and promote unity in small groups.

Outdoor or wide games require lots of space, and incorporate the outdoors into your program. You can adapt most games for outdoor play.

Gathering games

Use a gathering game before the opening ceremony for some meetings. It will get Cubs doing something as soon as they arrive and focus their attention. It also allows you an opportunity to take a head count. For example, a version of "Hot Potato" is excellent. It allows Cubs to join at any time, and puts them generally in one area, making it easier for when you call "Pack." To play, Cubs sit in a circle and pass an object from player to player. On a signal, the Cub with the object must run around the circle or do some other stunt before the "potato" starts its rounds again.

"Consequences" This game is meant to be played in groups of nine. Adjust the text for smaller or larger groups. Give each Cub a piece of paper and pencil. Start by writing down the name of a man or boy (real or fictional). Add the word "met". Then fold the paper in half and pass it to the Cub on their right. Open the paper and on the next line, write down a female's name, and add the word "at". Fold the paper and pass it to the right. The game continues until the story is complete. The completed stories are placed in a hat. Each Cub draws one and reads it out loud.

Game: Consequences

What Cubs Write In

(Male's name)
(Female's name)
(Place name)
(enter what he thought)
(enter what he said)
(enter what she thought)
(enter what she said)
(enter what happened)
(report public opinion).

Standard Items

Met
At
He thought
He said
She thought
She said
The consequence was
The world thought



Steam-off games

1. Circle Games

Dodge Ball is a popular circle game. Cubs stand in a circle with one group (possibly a six) in the centre. The Cubs in the circle try to hit the players in the centre with a soft ball. When a Cub is hit, the youth joins the circle.

Some packs insist that the ball must hit below the shoulders or the belt. When all players in the centre have joined the circle, another team takes their place.

It's particularly good if leaders take a turn, too. Few things are more satisfying to a Cub than a bit of harmless authority-bashing. The winner (if you choose to name one) is the team that manages to stay longest in the centre.

Most circle games are like Dodge Ball: one team takes the centre while the others form a boundary for the action, and wait their turn to join the centre.

2. Team Games

Soccer is a typical team game that divides the pack into two teams that play against each other. You can play indoors or out. Indoors, use a soft ball and two chairs to mark the goals.

If your pack is large, keep the number of players on the floor manageable by dividing each team in two. Each half plays in turn as — every minute or 45 seconds — you roar "Change!" to signal wholesale substitutions.

German Ball is a different kind of team game. A centre line separates the teams; Cubs must not cross it. Players try to hit members of the other team with a soft ball. Those who are hit cross over to the other side and stay behind their opponents where they try to retrieve balls and attack opponents from the rear. The game ends when the last player in a team is hit.

Some packs allow hit players who catch a ball before it bounces to return to their original positions. Most packs play German Ball with three or four balls in play at once; this adds extra excitement.



3. Line Games

Teams line up on either side of the hall. Each player has a number, and is paired off with a player having the same number on the other team. Generally, teams number off from right to left so that the corresponding pairs are at opposite ends of the hall.

When a leader calls a number, the two Cubs run to the centre and try to score a point against each other. How they score depends on the game. Perhaps they do it by kicking a ball through the other team's goal or by grabbing a hat and returning to their team without being tagged by the other Cub. When a point is scored, players return to their places and the leader calls another number. Sometimes the leader may call a new number while play is still on, signalling opponents to return "home" and let another pair try.

Change players every minute or so, and try to keep track of who has played so you can give every-one a turn.

4. Relay Races

At one end of the hall, several teams (often sixes) line up, one Cub behind the other. On a signal, the first Cub in each team runs, hops, skips, etc., to the other end of the hall, often to perform an action (e.g. drop pennies into a bottle; eat a cracker and then try whistling) before returning to the rear of the team and giving the second Cub a turn. The first team with all members finished and sitting quietly in line wins, and cheers on the other teams.

Most leaders agree that, if you run relays with sixes of unequal numbers, it's not a good idea to balance teams by asking a Cub to join another six. Instead, keep the sixes intact and have one or two Cubs run twice.

Quiet games

Sense Training Games

In sense training games, Cubs use one of their five senses to try to identify something. They might try to guess what's in a paper bag by feeling it; or by sniffing the contents of a plastic cup, blindfolded or through a perforated lid; or by identifying sounds (keys rattling, sandpaper on wood) made by a Scouter standing behind them.

Kim's Game comes from the jungle story about Kim, who was taught to memorize things he saw. Put a number of items on a table and cover them with a neckerchief. Have Cubs take turns looking at the objects for 10 seconds, trying to remember as many as possible. This game can be played in sixes as well, with each member of the six calling out an object until all of the items have been recalled.

Skill games

In skill application games, members use Cubbing skills to achieve the purpose of the game. In **Rope Rescue**, Cubs use simple knots to join several short ropes into a long rope, throw it to a "marooned" player sitting on a piece of cardboard, and pull him to safety. For **Compass**, Cubs, in turn, place small cards labelled with compass points in their correct positions around a circle.



A word of caution... Unless you're sure your Cubs have mastered the skill, avoid asking them to use it in a highly competitive situation. In Rope Rescue, for example, it may be better to let a leader help each team join together the ropes before they compete to be the first to rescue their marooned Cub.

Cooperative games



In a cooperative game, everyone is on the same side, and players work together to achieve the game's purpose. **Knots** is a cooperative game.

Play **Knots** in groups no larger than 12. To start, it's probably better to play in groups of six or eight. You can do this even with a large pack, because it doesn't take up much room and several groups can play at the same time.

Group members stand in a small circle. All players reach across the circle to grasp the hands of two other players. When everyone is ready and the centre is a knot of arms and hands, players try to unravel the knot and form the circle again without dropping hands. As they pass under and over linked hands, they may become even more tangled but, with patience and persistence, they will solve the puzzle. It's great fun to have one leader play with each group, as long as he or she is prepared to bend, stretch, twist and crawl around with the Cubs.

Outdoor games

Outdoor games are often called "wide games" because they take up a lot of space. Many of them are "capture" games.

In **Capture the Flag**, two teams try to locate each other's flag, remove it from its hiding place, and return it to their own zone. Play in a partly open, partly wooded area. Divide the playing area in half, making each half the "safe" zone for one team. Teams conceal their flags in such a way that players can see them if they know where to look; they also designate a small area in their zone as a prison. Team members can serve as guards or attackers, and may switch from one to the other at will.

Guards remain in their safe area to defend the flag and prison by capturing the other team's attackers with a two-handed touch. They must stay at least three metres away from their flag and prison. Captured players must go to their opponents' prison and stay there until rescued. Players may not be captured in their own safe area.

The attackers' job involves moving into their opponents' safe area to try to rescue prisoners, and find and take the other team's flag. Prisoners are rescued by touching them. If all prisoners are holding hands when a rescuer touches one of them, all are freed, but they're liable to be captured again as long as they are not in their own safe area.

The game ends when an attacking side finds the other team's flag and escapes with it to its safe area.

Game Sources

Cub leaders are always looking for good games, and pack members are one of your best sources. Cubs are eager to tell you which games they like and which they don't. They often will suggest new games they've learned in school or other groups.

Your local Scout Shop carries several books of games, including cooperative games. One good source of games is a book entitled *Games ... From A to Z*. You'll find many more books in your public library. Two excellent books are written by Terry Orlick, *The Cooperative Sports & Games Book* and *The Second Cooperative Sports & Games Book*.

Check out a lot of sources. Why? Because in any one book, you'll generally find only a few games suitable for your pack, and perhaps one or two others that might do if you tinker with the rules.

Other Scouters are valuable resources, too. Ask about games at your next Scouters' Club meeting. Better still, arrange to visit or do an exchange meeting with neighbouring packs to see what games they enjoy playing.

There are many excellent web sites for games. Visit Scouts Canada's web site (www.scouts.ca). It has links to other great sites.



Bear Wisdom: Check out Chapter 14 for more outdoor game ideas!

Other Elements

Games are often a good way to introduce or incorporate other elements of the Cub program. For example, you can hold races with the model helicopters described in *The Cub Book*, or play other skill-testing games in teams or sixes. Go outdoors as often as possible to play games, especially games that teach skills: knots, tracking, compass directions, etc.

Tie in games with Activity Area requirements: a knots relay (Green Star); an Olympic evening (Athlete Badge); a chance to lead a game they've created themselves (Red Star); and so on. When you can't find a ready-made game, make one up to suit your needs.