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Information on Outdoor Games



This article offers helpful tips and tricks for effectively planning and conducting outdoor games. With the right know-how, the planning and execution become much easier.

Excitement and success depend on

- an interesting, age-appropriate, and well-presented game concept (story).
- well-thought-out and clearly explained game rules.
- the game master.
- the size and shape of the playing area.
- the spirit of the game and the motivation of the players and staff.
- the engagement of individual players.

Preparation

- Reconnaissance of the area (Where are the hazards? Where are the protected areas?)
- Determine whether the area is a hunting ground, military firing range, or nature reserve; inform relevant parties if necessary
- If necessary, mark off the playing area and set up stations
- Explain the game to participants, assign tasks, and define in advance what kind of assistance is allowed...
- Prepare the necessary materials

Getting Started

- Getting the Players in the Right Mindset

- Players are familiarized with the starting situation
- Taking on a role (unit program, etc.)

Game Instructions

- Outline the game area with checkpoints and stations; mark the boundaries of the playing field and danger zones; announce the location of the first-aid station
- Explain the game so that everyone can see and hear you; pay attention to your choice of words
- Explain the game from different perspectives
- Allow sufficient time and let participants ask questions
- Ensure quiet

Rules of the Game

- Think things through carefully, pay attention to details, and try to identify gray areas
- Anything that hasn’t been prohibited is allowed (gray area)
- Some rules influence the dynamics of the game, while others are intended to ensure safety.
- Prevent things from getting out of hand, but allow enough leeway to allow for the development of strategies

Group Formation

- Should the groups be evenly matched or randomly assembled?
- Before the game begins, allow time to assign roles and discuss strategy within the group
- Have the players line up in order of age (from youngest to oldest) and then have them count off. This is usually fair…
- Group Identification

Game Management

- You and the first-aid kit are located at a central point and can be accessed by players at any time
- If necessary, additional staff members will patrol the game area to resolve any uncertainties.

Play Area

- Draw the boundaries on a map and mark them clearly (with barrier tape, flags, etc.)

- Use natural boundaries that stand out as much as possible (paths, ditches, clearings, etc.)
- Caution: The playing field is usually chosen to be too large!
- Mark hazard zones

Start and End of the Game

- must be clearly defined; an audible signal must be used
- Players should know where they need to go at the start and end of the game.

Game Duration

- Total time consists of the game explanation, group assignment, playing time, travel time to the playing field, and closing remarks
- Excitement can sometimes wane during longer games; it’s the staff’s job to keep players motivated
- Announce the playing time, if applicable

Closing Point

- Cool-down phase (especially for nighttime outdoor games), e.g., tea by the campfire, a quiet walk back to camp; reconciliation must take place between the teams (including among staff members!)
- Announce the game results, step out of character, and allow for discussion; emphasize the shared outcome/experience rather than the winning team
- Awards Ceremony and Prize Presentation
- Try to take the seriousness out of the game by approaching certain things with humor.

Common Mistakes

- Gray areas and rules that aren’t well thought out, which arise during the course of the game and are then somehow handled by the staff at the stations (frustration)
- In games where staff members act as “inspectors,” the staff-to-player ratio must be adjusted. It sometimes devolves into a competition to see “who can catch the most participants,” which can be frustrating for players. It’s better to use fewer staff members, since it’s hard to keep things under control otherwise.
- Staff members aren’t sufficiently informed, especially about the details.
- When explaining, you automatically assume your own understanding and knowledge, but often others interpret the same words to mean different things or procedures—for example, handling life ribbons, showing the opponent’s ribbon when passing it on, etc.
- Routes are too long and lead through varied terrain, e.g., thickets, thorns, ditches,...
- Remember to drink during racing games
- Not enough time is factored in, especially for preparations before the game starts; this is often not accounted for in the actual game time (stress)

- Pay attention to group placement and where groups intersect; groups positioned at the edge may have an advantage
- Groups whose stations are at the top or bottom of a slope may be at an advantage or disadvantage
- Unnecessary staff members are sitting around (frustration, motivation drops)
- Materials aren't thoroughly prepared (missing pens, etc.)
- Staff members discuss things that went wrong with the players right after a game, thereby dampening the mood
- If there are complaints, do not voice them in front of the participants; instead, address them constructively to the person in charge, except in cases of very serious errors

Outdoor Game Types

- **Smuggling Games:** An object must be smuggled somewhere.
- **Combat and Tactical Games:** Attack and defend using cunning and trickery.
- **Scavenger Hunt:** Searching and solving tasks.

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