



Spear Throw



High Kick



Hoop Jump



Rock Throw

Traditional Games

By Greta Brown

Traditional Games

All Traditional Games had their purpose. The games were used to train the youth and this continued into young adulthood. This life skill training was critical for survival skills. For example: in order to feed a family you were trained the skill to hunt large or small game starting at a young age.

The spear was about 6 feet long, and made from the Willow branch because of its' pliability, and its' easiness to straighten out, and/or the choke cherry branch because of the hardness of the wood, & they bent easily. The spear did vary in size when training the youth, its smaller size made it easier to hold & throw at varied distances. The spear head itself could have been made of flint, quartzite, or jade because of the easiness to flake and shape, or the spear could simply have been sharpened to a point.

The "Hoop" made for the Spear Throw was traditionally made of Rye grass, and was anywhere from 6, 18 inches to 2 feet in diameter, it's thickness varied anywhere between 8 – 10 inches, however, the 6 inch rye grass one would have been thinner. Inside this small hoop were four small targets which may have been made out of deer hide. Two adults would roll this Hoop from one to the other, with about 40 feet between them. A person would throw the spear and try to hit one of these four small targets. This distance varied as well depending on the size of young person.

The **Rock Throw** trained youth to aim and hit smaller game, such as birds, rabbits, or other small game. The rocks used were about the size of a golf ball. Distance between the target and youth was measured by taking a step which measures about 1 foot, this varied as well.

The true training for the “**High Kick**” game was originally called the “crow hop”: person would stand on left or right foot, hop three times to ball, kick, then land on that same foot. Goal – kick as high as your head. Originally the High Kick game didn’t come with a stand. An adult would hold the pole, (could be a large willow or cherry branch) and a hand made rawhide ball was tied on the opposite end. With each kick the adult would raise the ball. This too depended on the size of youth playing “High Kick”.

The **Hoop Game** – the hoop was made from the “willow branch” and about 5 to 6 feet in diameter. It is held together with “Spetsin”. The Spetsin is a local plant, picked and worked into a strong twine. The object of the Hoop Jump Game is to see how many times you can run through it as it’s rolling.....

By Greta Brown

These four Traditional Games were demonstrated by the grade 7 students at Merritt Central School, 2013/2014 school year.



High Kick



Rock Throw



Spear Throw



Hoop Jump



High Kick -
object is to see how high the student can kick. The ball is placed low, then is raised higher with each kick. Student needs to hit the ball with each kick.

Traditionally the High Kick Game ball was made of rawhide, and stuffed with straw, horse, or deer hair. The size of the ball was about the size of today's (fastball) baseball.



High Kick Game



He hit's it....



This grade 7 student takes a turn and kicks, looks like he's on tippy toe too... As few bystanders watch....



HIGH KICK GAME

Yea !! I did it....

HIGH KICK GAME



**This grade 7
student makes
the High Kick
Game look easy...**

**Tim explains
the object of
the Hoop
Jump Game.**





**Willow hoop
used for the
Hoop Jump.**



He continues to explain the texture, strength, & size of the Willow Branch apposed to the lighter, narrower plastic one.

“As you grasp the Willow Hoop about here to roll it you will notice where the Spetsin is tied. This will play a part of how the Willow Branch rolls”, he says



Object of the Hoop Jump is for the student to run through the right side of the Hoop & back through the left, or vice versa as many times as possible before the Hoop falls.



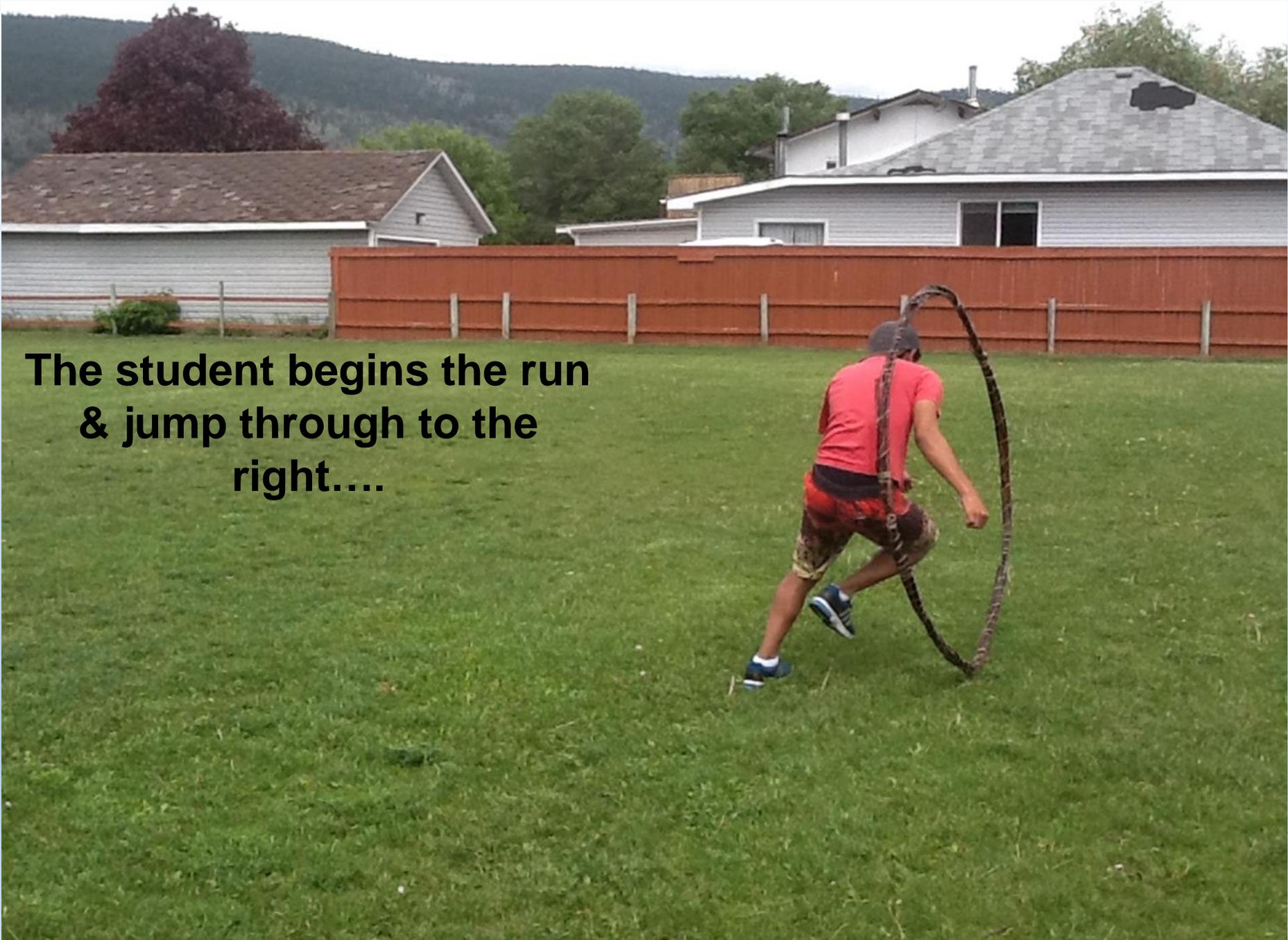
Grade 7 student sturdies his hat & gets ready to try his skill at the Hoop Jump.



**He gets ready to demonstrate
as Tim begins to roll the
Willow Hoop**



Get ready....



**The student begins the run
& jump through to the
right....**



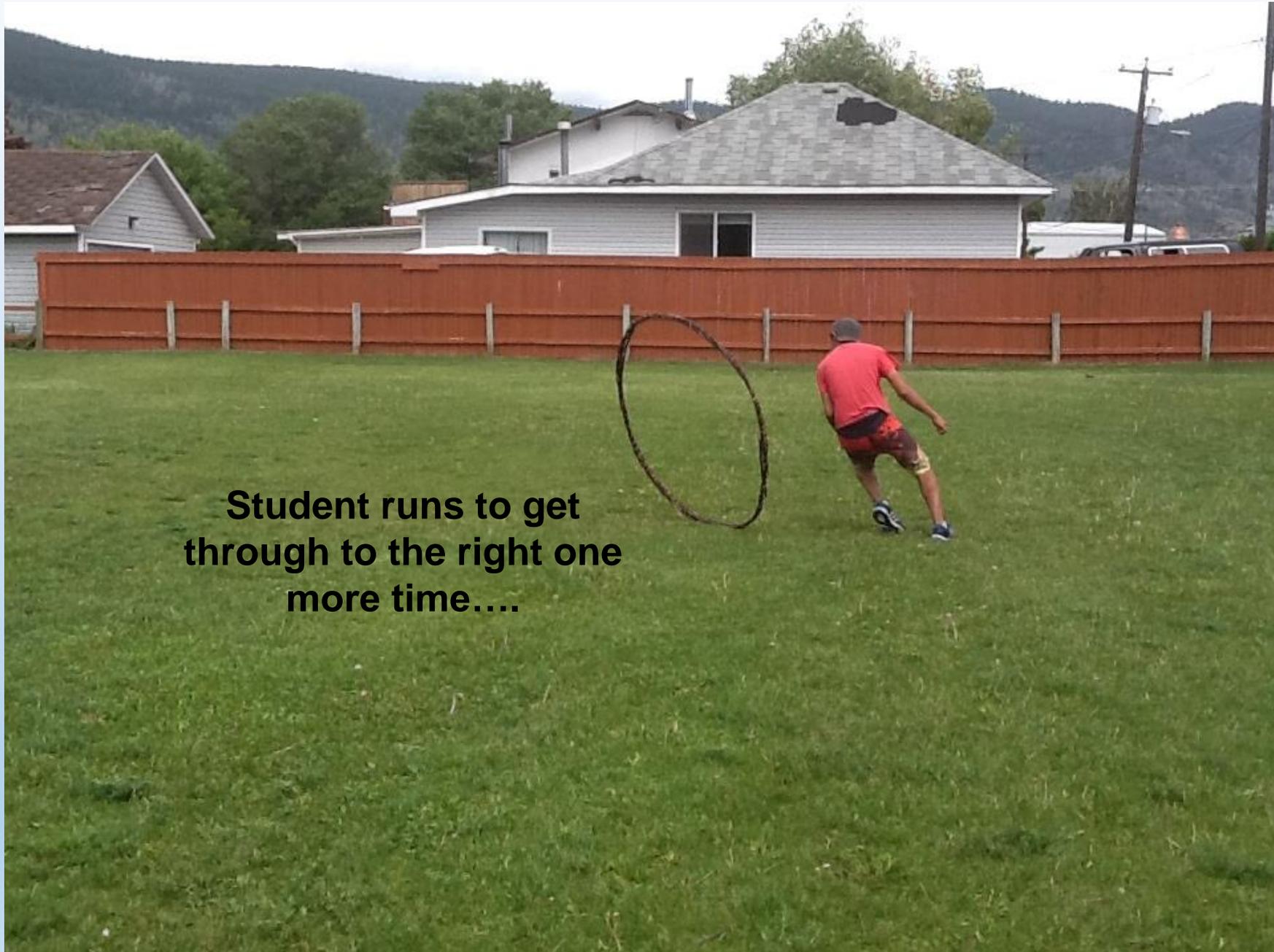
Then Left

Right again...





Left again....



**Student runs to get
through to the right one
more time....**



WAIT.....



**How many times was
that...Four times
were counted....**



Student carries Hoop back to the next grade 7 students' turn.



Tim explains the difference between the Plastic & Willow Hoop, it's size, and texture

**Another
difference
between the
Plastic Hoop is
how light it is
compared to the
Willow Branch**





The Width is different too, the Willow Branch is wider which makes it more sturdy.

**Student tries the
Plastic Hoop Jump,
what differences do
you see?**





Pictured above an explanation is given about the small Willow hoop, it's texture, size & how it's used in the Spear Throw.



Student holds two items used for the Spear Throw Game, the Small Willow Hoop, & a Wooden Spear (Pole)

**S
P
E
A
R**



**Student takes aim as the
adult rolls the small Willow
Branch**



She throws....



**The Spear goes right
through the small Willow
Branch Hoop.**



**She cheers....with
arms raised....Please
note...the hoop is still
rolling....**

**T
H
R
O
W**

The Rock Throw – Game
Pictured is two upside down “T” shaped targets, Object of the game is to see how many times student can hit & knock over the target. There is only three small rocks (golf balls) used, one throw at a time.

Rock Throw Game





Pictured is students trying their skill with the Rock Throw Game



Rock Throw Game

In summary, the traditional games were played for fun, and later innocent competition. However, these fun games were vital as young person grew into adulthood. The games taught agility, patients, and accuracy in order to kill large/small moving game.

The items such as the willow branch or the cherry branch needed had to be picked before sap runs, some say the willow branch can be picked any time of the year. Spetsin would be used to hold it together. All items used were cut, dried, collected, shaped & were local to the territory.

The distance between target and person/youth varied too depending on size of the youth. Items used were age appropriate too, for example the rocks used for the “rock throw” were golf ball size.

The Traditional games were introduced to the grade 7 students at Merritt Central in the 2013/2014 school year. The Traditional Games is now an annual event among all grade 7 students in the district to experience & enjoy.



Small rocks



Small Willow tree.



Cherry branch (with flowers)



Spetsin