How to Run an Arctic Sports Competition

Introduction

One of the most popular and unique events at the Arctic Winter Games (AWG) is the Arctic Sports competition. There are eleven events in this sport. They represent historical Inuit and related activities from other circumpolar regions. Traditionally, many were played in confined spaces and were designed to reinforce the strength and agility that hunters needed to survive on the land. The endurance, power and patience of the competitors were enhanced and participation was more highly valued than winning.

Along with the Dene Games, Arctic Sports is the only AWG competition that includes adult athletes. Their participation provides an opportunity for youth to be mentored and taught by expert coaches and role models on the proper and traditional techniques of these Games. One of the unique aspects of Arctic Sports is that coaches and athletes provide technical advice and encouragement to their rivals during the competition. Fans who witness this for the first time are often amazed at the sportsmanship and camaraderie shown by coaches and competitors. These participants maintain the traditional idea of sharing, and demonstrate the concept that helping an athlete achieve his or her best possible result is a collective goal.

This manual was developed to assist Host Societies with preparing for and managing an excellent competition for athletes while providing a great experience for spectators and media. It will describe all the equipment and material required to help the event run smoothly. It should help organizers plan the event thoroughly and run the competition safely and efficiently. This module is intended to be used in conjunction with the approved Technical Package for Arctic Sports and the Arctic Winter Games Staging Manual. In the event that there is a conflict between these documents, the Arctic Winter Games Technical Director should be consulted.

The following sections outline the facilities, equipment, personnel and other factors required to run each of the events successfully.
Officials

Successful events cannot be run without expert officials. There are three categories of officials in Arctic Sports.

1. The **Head Official**, appointed by the Host Society to oversee all the technical aspects of the Arctic Sports competition. This position is not the Sport Chair for Arctic Sports.
2. **Arctic Sports Judges** who officiate individual events. A minimum of eight judges is required. The judges enforce the rules and advise the head official about disputes that may arise.
3. **Scorekeepers**, who track the competition results for each event. A minimum of four scorekeepers is required. Training must be provided prior to the Games to ensure a clear understanding of each event.

Unlike many other events, Arctic Sports does not have a certification system for developing officials. Officials are individuals who have been involved in the sport for a significant period of time. These officials are often former athletes or coaches who gain knowledge on how to officiate from elders who pass along this traditional knowledge.

While not an official, the Master of Ceremonies (MC) plays a significant role in Arctic Sports. The MC is an information provider, who speaks to the spectators about the athletes. The MC has a good understanding of Arctic Sports and its etiquette. He or she is mindful of each competitor’s need to focus and never speaks in the middle of an athlete’s attempt. The MC explains the proceedings to the audience in a way that clarifies the intricacies of each event. The MC may announce what height is being attempted in some events, and helps ensure that medal presentations occur in an appropriate manner.

The person who takes on this role must be well versed in Arctic Sports and have an ability to explain things in understandable terms to spectators who are new to the sport. The MC also helps the events move along in a timely fashion. The MC is often a combination of teacher, historian, storyteller and entertainer and plays a significant role at the venue.
Facilities

All Arctic Sports events must take place in a facility with a gymnasium hardwood floor. Cement floors or platforms over cement are not adequate. The safety of the athletes is paramount.

The competition floor must be the primary consideration in selecting a facility. The following sections detail the space requirements for each event. Athletes must also be provided with appropriate warm up and stretching space separate from the competition floor area, a medical or injury room and eating / resting space. Other considerations include a separate officials’ room, adequate seating for spectators and appropriate space for media access and services.

The separate officials’ room must be private so that they can meet on any disputes that arise or other related matters. A small classroom or equivalent, with a whiteboard or chalkboard would be appropriate.

While standardized dimensions of the gymnasium are not stipulated, organizers should be cautioned against choosing a venue that is too small given the competition, warm up, media and officials areas required plus the high level of spectator interest in this sport.

A warm up and stretching area is essential for the safety of athletes. Athletes need space to warm up near the location of their event. This space can be included inside the overall competition area or in a separate room in the same building. Organizers should also include scheduled warm up times on the competition surface ahead of each event to allow athletes an opportunity to familiarize themselves with that particular surface area. While structure in scheduling of warm up times will help the event run smoothly, it is worth noting that informality is part of the charm of Arctic Sports, and the contestants often use the warm up time to connect or interact with other athletes. Appendix E provides a typical floor plan for the Arctic Sport competition.
Events

This section will provide a brief description of each event detailing the requirements for equipment, officials and the MC. The description of each event is intentionally succinct. The Arctic Winter Games technical package for Arctic Sports is the definitive source for the rules and related matters for each event.

The One-Foot High Kick, Two-Foot High Kick and Alaskan High Kick have been combined into one category, as there are similarities between them, with respect to equipment, officials and format.

The Kicking Events:

One-Foot High Kick
Two-Foot High Kick
Alaskan High Kick

See charts on following pages:
### One-Foot High Kick

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<tr>
<th>Description</th>
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| The player begins with a running or standing approach with feet no more than shoulder-width apart at take off. A suspended target must be clearly struck by one foot and the player must land on the same foot with which the target was kicked while maintaining balance and control. The competitor who attains the greatest height is declared the winner. | The rotation of players will be established by draw and will be maintained throughout the event. Each player is allowed one attempt for each rotation and has three attempts at each height. A maximum of three minutes is allotted per attempt. | 1. Two (2) high kick stands, adjustable for height, with a horizontal arm for suspending the target.  
2. The target (typically a miniature model of a seal) is suspended by a rope from the horizontal arm of the stand.  
3. Measuring tape and measuring stick to a maximum of 12 feet (4 meters).  
4. A ladder to allow the judge to raise / lower the target.  
5. A broom to clear the kicking area.  
6. Score sheets - see Appendix D.  
7. Stopwatches to time the attempts. | For the kicking events two to four officials are required. Ideally, four judges will be available at each stand, so that collectively they can watch the target from various angles. This is especially important at the higher heights. When there are four judges, the judges observe the athletes while in a square formation around the athletes and the stand. One official may be positioned near the stand. There is no set format for the positioning of judges. One scorekeeper per stand. |
### Two-Foot High Kick

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<td>The player begins with a running or standing approach with his/her feet no more than shoulder width apart at take off. The target must be clearly struck with both feet kept parallel. Maintaining balance and control, the competitor must land on both feet at the same time with their feet no more than shoulder width apart. The competitor who attains the greatest height is declared the winner.</td>
<td>The rotation of players will be established by draw and will be maintained throughout the event. Each player is allowed one attempt for each rotation. A maximum of three minutes is allotted per attempt.</td>
<td>Please see the equipment section for the One-Foot High Kick section.</td>
<td>Please see the officials’ section for the One-Foot High Kick section.</td>
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### Alaskan High Kick

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<td>The player sits on the floor below the target, with one hand grasping the sole of the opposite foot. With the other hand, planted on the floor, the athlete springs up and attempts to kick the target with the free foot. The player must land on the kicking foot and demonstrate clear balance and control. The competitor who attains the greatest height is declared the winner.</td>
<td>The rotation of players will be established by draw and will be maintained throughout the event. Each player is allowed one attempt for each rotation. A maximum of three minutes is allotted per attempt</td>
<td>Please see the equipment section for the One-Foot High Kick section</td>
<td>Please see the officials’ section for the One-Foot High Kick section.</td>
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### Kneel Jump

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<td>The player begins in a kneeling position, with buttocks resting on his/her heels, toes pointed backward and hands on his/her knees. From this position, he/she jumps as far forward as possible, lands on his/her feet in a squatting position while maintaining balance, with the feet planted no further than shoulder width apart. The arms may move back and forth. The competitor who attains the greatest distance is declared the winner.</td>
<td>The rotation of players will be established by draw and will be maintained throughout the event. Each player is allowed one attempt for each rotation.</td>
<td>1. Measuring tape or stick to measure the distances jumped by the competitors. 2. Masking tape to mark the starting line on the ground.</td>
<td>Two judges are required. Judges determine if the athlete performed the correct action and then mark and measure the distance jumped after each attempt. One scorekeeper.</td>
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### Airplane

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<td>The player lays on the floor face down, with arms straight out in an “iron cross” position. Three assistants lift the competitor two to three feet (60 to 90 cm) off the floor and carry him forward at a constant speed over a pre-set course. The competitor’s body must remain rigid and fully extended. The attempt ends when the competitor is unable to maintain this body position. The competitor carried the longest distance wins the competition.</td>
<td>The rotation of players will be established by draw. The course will be pre-set.</td>
<td>1. A tape measure to measure the distance covered by each competitor. 2. Masking tape to mark the distance covered by the athletes and to mark the course on the floor. 3. A broom to clean the floor.</td>
<td>Two judges are required to determine that athletes are using the proper technique and when they have completed their attempt. Two groups of three assistants to carry the competitors. One pacer is to be used for all competitors to ensure consistency. It is advisable to have the pacer practice maintaining the same walking pace. A scorekeeper.</td>
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**One-Hand Reach**

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| In the starting position, the player must brace himself with the elbow of the balancing arm tucked into the body. He begins by lifting his feet off the floor, while balancing on his hands. With one hand the player reaches up to strike the target clearly, while maintaining his balance on the other hand. The striking hand must touch the ground before any other part of the body does so. The player should be positioned so that the target will not be any further away than the fingertips when the arm is extended to the floor. | The rotation of players will be established by draw and will be maintained throughout the event. Each player is allowed three attempts at each height and a maximum of three minutes in which to complete each attempt. | 1. This event requires a self-supporting stand similar to the jumping events. It must be adjustable for height with a horizontal arm for suspending a target.  
2. The target (typically a miniature model of a seal) is suspended by a rope from the horizontal arm of the stand.  
3. Measuring tape or stick.  
4. A broom to clear the floor.  
5. Stopwatches to time the attempts. | Two judges are required. The judges determine if the correct technique is used and if the ‘target’ is struck during an attempt.  
A scorekeeper. |
Arm Pull

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<td>In pairs, players sit on the floor facing each other and lock right arms at the elbow, with their left hands holding their opponent’s right ankle. The left leg is straight and the right leg is bent over the opponent’s straightened leg. (Positions are reversed for the left arm pull.) Competitors pull steadily at the elbow, while bracing their opposite hands on their opponent’s ankle. The object is to pull the opponent over or touch the opponent’s hand to one’s chest.</td>
<td>The initial pairs will be established by a random draw. A single elimination bracket draw format is to be used, see Appendices. In this event the contestants are placed in brackets for each match. As the tournament progresses, each winner goes on to play the winner in an adjacent bracket, until there are only two competitors left in the tournament and they compete in the finals.</td>
<td>None.</td>
<td>Two or three judges to determine that the proper technique is used. One scorekeeper.</td>
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# Head Pull

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| Two players lie on the floor on their stomachs facing each other. A looped  | The initial pairs will be established by a random draw. A single elimination bracket format is used. | 1. A soft leather thong or belt approximately three feet (90 cm) long and one and a half inches (4 cm) wide.  
2. Masking tape to mark a line on the floor.  
3. A broom to clean the floor.  
4. A single elimination bracket score sheet, see appendices. | Two judges to determine that proper technique is used.  
A scorekeeper. |
| soft leather thong or belt (no metal attachments) is placed over the back of |                                                                       |                                                                          |                                                                            |
| each athlete’s head above the ears. Rising to a “push up” position, with |                                                                       |                                                                          |                                                                            |
| only hands and feet touching the floor, the athletes pull with their heads, |                                                                       |                                                                          |                                                                            |
| bracing their hands out in front and using their whole body strength to pull |                                                                       |                                                                          |                                                                            |
| steadily backward. The object is to pull the opponent over a line that is |                                                                       |                                                                          |                                                                            |
| drawn between them. One successful pull determines the winner.              |                                                                       |                                                                          |                                                                            |
# Knuckle Hop

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<td>The athlete “hops” forward along the floor on a predetermined course on both toes and knuckles simultaneously until he collapses. The body must remain off the floor and is raised upward with each hop to the height of the elbows with the buttocks not to extend above the plane of the body. The competitor who covers the longest distance is declared the winner. Each player is allowed only one attempt.</td>
<td>The order of the athletes will be established by draw. The course is in the shape of an octagon to avoid sharp corners. Masking tape is used to mark the course or track that the competitors follow. A nylon rope may be needed to mark off the playing area. There must be a fully stocked first-aid kit, bandages, Polysporin or comparable antibiotic ointment, ice packs, water and a warm sanitizing wash. Arctic Winter Games medical personnel should be at the venue in case of injury to the athletes. Participants must be provided with immediate access to medical services upon completion of this event. The officials will sweep and mop the floor with a disinfectant after each attempt.</td>
<td>A measuring tape or stick, so that the officials can pre-measure and mark the distances around the planned course.</td>
<td>Two judges to determine if the proper technique is used as well as to determine the final distance travelled by each competitor. A scorekeeper.</td>
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**Sledge Jump**

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| From an initial standing position, on a signal from the referee, the athlete jumps consecutively over 10 sledges placed parallel to each other on the gym floor. The athlete turns around using one jumping movement, and then proceeds to jump over the 10 sledges again. The player continues to jump until he/she displaces one of the sledges with any part of the body, lands or takes off without both feet together or falls. A maximum of five seconds is allowed to turn at either end of the row of the 10 sledges. Each player is allowed three attempts, and the attempt in which the player has jumped over the greatest number of sledges is scored. The player who jumps over the greatest number of sledges is declared the winner. | The order of the players will be established by draw. Players will make all three attempts in the same order as drawn. | 1. Twenty sledges for each course. It is essential that the sledges be built to the exact specification as follows:  
   - Made of wood,  
   - 50 cm in height,  
   - 50 cm width at the top,  
   - 70 cm width at the bottom,  
   - Between 150 and 200 cm in length.  
   As the sledges are frequently damaged, replacement slats for each sledge must be available. Extra sledges must also be on hand (10 per course). Caribou hides are required to cover each sledge.  
2. Stopwatches for officials to time the turns.  
3. Masking tape to ensure that each sledge is placed in the appropriate location.  
4. Tape measure to determine the spacing between sledges.  
5. Score sheets to record the results. | Three judges and one scorekeeper are required for each set of 10 sledges. One official is stationed at each end to serve as a timekeeper turn technique judge. A third judge moves with the athlete to ensure that the proper jumping technique is used. The scorekeeper accompanies the official moving with the athlete to count the number of sledges the athlete successfully jumps. |
## Triple Jump

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<tr>
<td>Using a running or standing start, the athlete completes three consecutive jumps. The athlete’s feet must remain no more that shoulder width apart. The result is determined by measuring the shortest distance from the back of the starting line to the nearest point touched by any part of the athlete’s body. If the jump has been properly completed, the referee will hold a flag in a downward position. The start is a clearly marked line on the floor (103 cm long and 25 cm wide), completely filled in a by colour different than the surrounding floor.</td>
<td>The order of the athletes will be established by draw. All three attempts will be in the same order as drawn. The course will be flat and level and at least 30 meters long and five meters wide. The run up area will be a minimum of 10 meters.</td>
<td>1. Tape measure, 2. Masking tape to mark the starting line on the floor. 3. A flag for the referee.</td>
<td>Two judges to determine that the proper technique is utilized. A scorekeeper.</td>
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Conclusion

Careful planning is required to run a successful Arctic Sports event. All required equipment, materials and personnel should be in place prior to start of competition. Key planning elements include:

1. A qualified MC with all the necessary event information.
2. An adequate number of judges, scorekeepers and assistants with a clear understanding of their duties.
3. All necessary materials and equipment (with sufficient extras).
4. A review of the larger apparatuses such as kicking stands and sledges ensuring they have been built to the specifications outlined and that extras (or repair parts) are available.
5. A sport opening ceremony (with Unit flags and national anthems).
6. A public address system for the MC.
7. A projector for displaying recorded scores and other information about the events for the spectators. This allows the athletes to focus without the distraction of announcements during the competition.
8. Adequate medical equipment and personal during the events.
9. A plan for the medals presentations.
10. Morning planning meetings prior to the event to review every aspect of the competition for the day.
11. A proper sport schedule showing the order of events and athlete warm-up times.
12. Appropriate water and eating arrangements for the athletes and officials.
13. An area to tabulate results and determine the overall rankings of the competitors and to transmit results to the Games results center.

Arctic Sports is one of the most popular events at the Arctic Winter Games having both a national and international following. The spirit of sportsmanship, fellowship and traditional sharing amongst competitors makes it unique in the sporting world. This module has been designed to help organizers ensure that the events occur as efficiently and safely as possible while accommodating the needs of athletes, officials, coaches, media and the public.