

## LENAPE NAMES OF GAMES

These are names and photographs of some of the games played by the Lenape or Delaware Indians. In the first column there are links that can be clicked to take you to the Lenape Talking Dictionary ([www.talk-lenape.org](http://www.talk-lenape.org)). Place the cursor over the link and click to take you to the dictionary where you can hear the Lenape name. In the third column is more information about the game.

### GAMES

#### **Pahsahëman**

(the football game)

<http://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=8131>

pahsahikàn  
(the football)

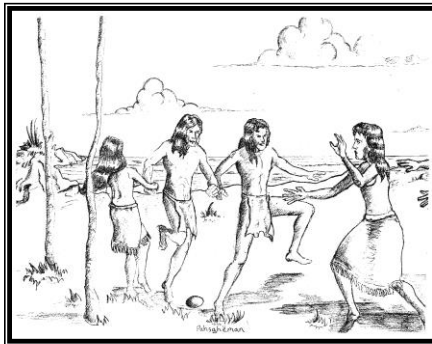
<http://www.talk-lenape.org/detail?id=8132>



The Lenape Football Game is played men against the women. Go here to see the rules:

<http://delawaretribe.org/wp-content/uploads/FOOTBALL-ART-2017.pdf>

Indian football, made of deerskin stuffed tightly with deer hair.



A drawing of what the football game might have looked like when the Lenape were still in New Jersey.



Photo of an Indian football game played at Anadarko OK in 1993. It was a get-together of four of the Lenape groups. The woman kneeling in the white pants has just tackled a man who was playing.



A group of Lenape teens in 2018 at Nipëni Maehëlan, a summer camp. They are being taught how to make footballs from scratch.

mamantuhwin

<http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=4291>

mamantikanàk

<http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=4290>



Indian dice game

Indian dice



Indian dice in a wooden bowl ready to be tossed. The bowl is brought down hard on a folded blanket causing the dice to bounce in the bowl.



Curtis Zunigha tossing the dice.



Another player tossing the dice.

## Mamantuhwin – Dice and Bowl Game

Another amusement played by the Delawares was the game in which dice cut out of bone, mussel shells or peach seeds in the shape of turtles, or some other desired shape were placed in a wooden bowl. The dice had one side in natural color, and the other stained some color. Men and women played the Dice and Bowl game for the purpose of wagering, the stakes being placed at one side before the opening of the game. The players sat in a circle around the bowl which rested on a folded blanket, each taking his turn by lifting the bowl off the blanket and bringing it down hard enough to cause the dice to fall randomly in the bowl. The count depended upon the number of dice that fell with the same color up. The number or count gained by each player was recorded by his accumulating a pile of beans representing his total.

The name of the game might be related to the name of a Whirligig Beetle, mamantuhwis, <http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=4292>, because of the way they whirl around in the water similar to the way the dice move around in the wooden bowl.

Chipahkwinalëtin

<http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=792>



Painting by Shawnee artist Earnest  
Spybuck of a moccasin game

Moccasin Game

## Chipahkwinalëtin - The Moccasin Game

The moccasin game was a type of gambling game that was very popular among the Delawares at one time. There are accounts of the game as far back as about 1800 but it is probable that it was played long before that. As time progressed the game came to be played more and more at funeral wakes when people would be sitting up with the body. Finally, the association with funerals and the unhappiness of that time caused the Delawares to stop playing the moccasin game. A number of elders who were quizzed about it said that the main reason they quit playing it was because of its association with funerals and death. Tribal members who talked about it remember different dates for the last time it was played with dates from the late 1800s to the early 1900s.

There are slightly varying accounts on how the game was played. Some accounts say it was for men only while others say it was for men and women. Basically, there were two teams and they sat facing each other on the ground and there were

moccasins, perhaps as many as four in front of them. The object was to hide something small under one of the moccasins while the opposite team tried to guess which moccasin the item was hidden under. The game was accompanied by songs sung by drummers who sang the moccasin game songs during the game using a water drum.

At one time long ago people would wager on the outcome of the game but that stopped after the game came to be used in the funeral rite. The reason for having the moccasin game at funeral wakes was to provide a means of keeping the people awake and in good spirits while they were sitting up with the deceased person. Levity was customary during the playing of the game, but it did not seem to interfere with the spirit of the funeral. It was intended to lighten the grief of those who were paying their last respects to the deceased.

### Kokolësh

<http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=2701>

nkokolëshkwi (I play)

<http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=12041>

kokolàshkwiĥëna

<http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=18088>



Rabbit-tail Game

I play the rabbit -tail  
game

we play the rabbit-tail  
game

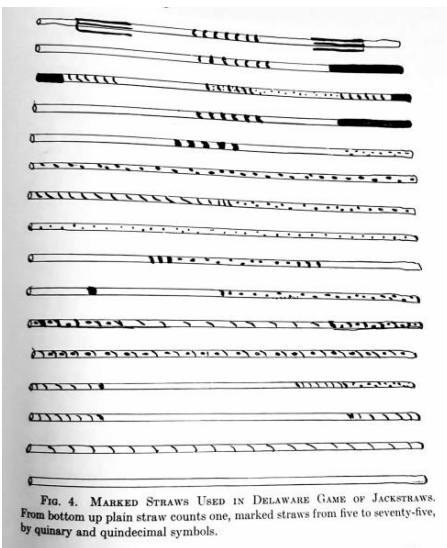
## Kokolësh – Rabbit-Tail Game.

This is a game with a wide distribution throughout North America. It is a game played for amusement by both sexes and ages. A leather string about 20 inches long fastened to a sharpened stick or bone, and at the other end of the string the tail of a rabbit is attached. On the string are threaded four or five hollow deer toe bones, the wider ends open toward the stick. The Delawares in recent times make these cones by hollowing out and tapering common wooden thread spools. The purpose of the rabbit tail is to keep the cones from coming off of the string.

The object of the play is to swing the cones in the air, catching as many as possible on the end of the pointed stick. Each player repeats the attempt to impale these cones until he misses three times. For each one caught on the stick he receives a count of one. The players keep count of their total score by memory. The winning total is decided on at the beginning of the game, it may be 15, 25, 50, etc. Small wagers are sometimes made on the outcome. The player to reach the total first takes the stakes.

## Selahtinalitin

<http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=9235>



A game similar to Pick up sticks or jackstraws.

The count value of the marked straws begins at 5 at the top of drawing and ends at 75

**Selahtinalitin** - the name means scattering straws. The game uses 50 plain straws of bog grass or thin wooden dowels about 8 inches in length. To this number there were 15 additional straws marked by being burnt to produce dots, spirals and dashes. The count value of the marked straws begins at 5 and ends at 75 as in the sketch above, the values assigned to them are according to the advice of several who still play the game.

The object of the game is to throw the straws upon a blanket folded to form a playing table and remove the sticks one by one by hand or by means of a quill, the thick end of which has been bent into a hook. There was also a special tool (see below) sometimes used in the game to pick the straws up. In removing the straws from the pile the player must avoid stirring the other straws as to do so causes him to miss and the next player to the right takes his turn. All the straws obtained by each player are

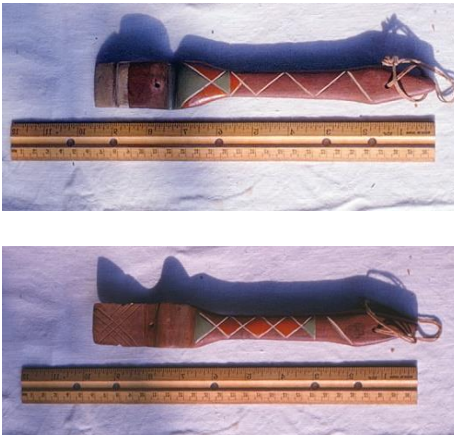


kept in a pile, the plain straws counting one point and the marked ones adding their combined values. The winning score is decided at the beginning of the game, 100 being the usual goal.

To start, the entire bundle in which the plain and marked straws are shuffled is held between the palms a little above the blanket then dropped. They fall in confusion and the picking out begins by the one who cast them, each player casting his own straws. Wagering may be indulged in and the men and women may take part. The person with the lowest score forfeits a blanket or money, or as a minor stake the penalty is to go on an errand for the winner.

selahtikàn

<http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=9234>



tool used to pick up a jackstraw

**Selahtikàn** - This device was used in the Jackstraw's game. It was kind of a tool that could be used to pick up the sticks without moving the other sticks. Notice that on one end there is kind of a groove and you could slip that tool under a stick and put it in the groove and use it to pick it up. Not far from the groove there was a little hole and you could slip that over the end of one of the sticks and pick it up. We are not sure if using this tool was to help a person win the game or to make it more difficult.

Kwtëskahtin

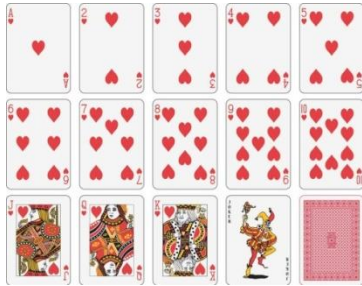





<http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=13730>



**Race**

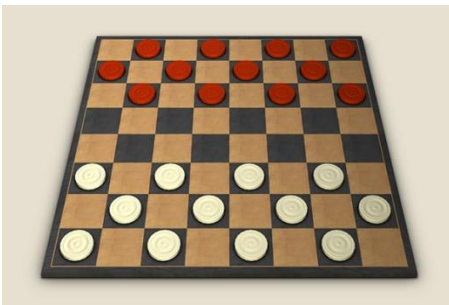
"they race each other"

## Games Adopted from European Games

<p>shkëpàk</p> <p><a href="http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=13857">http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=13857</a></p> <p>shkëp</p> <p>spade card</p> <p><a href="http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=9544">http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=9544</a></p> <p>halët</p> <p>heart card</p> <p><a href="http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=1256">http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=1256</a></p> <p>lish</p> <p>diamond card</p> <p><a href="http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=4012">http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=4012</a></p> <p>kwëlas</p> <p>club card</p> <p><a href="http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=3321">http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=3321</a></p>	 <div><div>shkëp</div><div>lish</div></div> <div><div>halët</div><div>kwëlas</div></div>	<p>playing cards</p> <p>spade card; a playing card</p> <p>heart card</p> <p>diamond card</p> <p>club card</p>																																				
<p>Kwtamelahta</p> <p><a href="http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=11946">http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=11946</a></p>		<p>Horse Racing</p>																																				
<p>NSIHO</p> <p><a href="http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=11941">http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=11941</a></p>	<table><tr><th></th><th>N</th><th>S</th><th>I</th><th>H</th><th>O</th></tr><tr><td>máxke it is red</td><td>ahpón bread</td><td>chinkwe bobcat</td><td>alukwëpi hat</td><td>kéku what</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>palenáxk five</td><td>ulepén onion</td><td>nahéném raccoon</td><td>kakuna leggings</td><td>hè hello</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>kwéti one</td><td>shukéi sugar</td><td>ahas crow</td><td>lénhaksén moccasin</td><td>ksi please</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>áskáskwe it is green</td><td>pépéi pepper</td><td>chikéném turkey</td><td>lélèhun fan</td><td>ku no</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>nishash seven</td><td>hopénis potato</td><td>sisille buffalo</td><td>lekhikán book</td><td>taktani I don't know</td><td></td></tr></table>		N	S	I	H	O	máxke it is red	ahpón bread	chinkwe bobcat	alukwëpi hat	kéku what		palenáxk five	ulepén onion	nahéném raccoon	kakuna leggings	hè hello		kwéti one	shukéi sugar	ahas crow	lénhaksén moccasin	ksi please		áskáskwe it is green	pépéi pepper	chikéném turkey	lélèhun fan	ku no		nishash seven	hopénis potato	sisille buffalo	lekhikán book	taktani I don't know		<p>Bingo-like game used to teach Lenape language.</p> <p>Nsiho means - I beat him in a game.</p>
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## Chunkòhtasuwa

<http://talk-lenape.org/detail?id=14930>



## Checkers

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