

ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

The idea for the Arctic Winter Games came in 1967, at the first Canada Winter Games. Some people felt that the games were not fair for the athletes from the North. They did not train as much as some other athletes did, and there weren't as many of them to take part. So new games just for athletes from the North began. There were about 500 athletes in the first Arctic Winter Games in 1970. Over four times as many now take part.



Quick Fact

Winners are given a gold, silver, or bronze ulu medal. It is a medal in the shape of a traditional Inuit knife.

LET'S GO!

Do you want to go to the Games? You may have to go very far north. The Games have been held in Whitehorse and Yellowknife. They have been held in Slave Lake and other cities in the North, too. In Whitehorse, many events are at the Canada Games Centre there. Schools in the city also host events.

The Games are more than sports — they are about sharing history and culture. That's why there are also Aboriginal art shows, craft sales, concerts, and fashion shows. What you won't find is much daylight! In these places so far north, the days are very short in the winter.

? Team spirit and doing one's best are very important in these games. In fact, during the games, athletes have to give advice to their rivals. In your opinion, is offering advice more important than winning? Explain.

The Expert Says ...

“ [The] Arctic Winter Games are important because it feels like a family here ... There's no other competition in the world like this. ”

— Garry Hull, Arctic Winter Games athlete



Dog mushing

ARCTIC WINTER GAMES, PAST AND PRESENT

The Arctic Winter Games are different from any other sporting event in the world! They are games based in tradition. In the past, they kept Arctic people fit for hunting and their minds alert in the long winter. Read the chart to learn more.

WHAT'S IT CALLED?	LET'S LEARN ABOUT IT!
Head Pull	Tug-of-war with a twist! A strip of leather is looped around the heads of two men. They pull each other until the leather comes free or one gives up in pain.
Knuckle Hop	In a push-up position, athletes hop forward on toes and knuckles. Contestants must suffer through the pain.
Snow Snake	A spear is thrown underhand through the snow. The contestant who throws it the farthest wins. This was a technique used for hunting caribou.
Two-Foot High Kick	Athletes run at a target that hangs in the air. They must kick the target with both feet at the same time. Many people say this is one of the most difficult events.
Airplane	Three contestants carry a man face down, by his ankles and wrists. He is about 60 to 90 cm off the ground. He must stay in a plank position. This requires a lot of strength. The contestant who is carried the longest distance wins.
Hand Games	These are games of strategy. There are two teams of four. The goal is to guess the location of a hidden object in the hands of the other team.
Pole Push	Two teams of four stand in the middle of a ring. They grasp the opposite ends of a large pole and try to force the opposing team out of the ring.



Jasmin Simeon of Aniak, Alaska, competing for Team Alaska, takes part in the junior female two-foot high kick.

Take Note

The Arctic Winter Games at #4 are known by people in many parts of the world. They rank ahead of the Canadian Tulip Festival because the Games benefit athletes from around the Arctic Circle. What's more, many of the events at the Arctic Winter Games are unique.

- Why is it important for athletes of the North to have their own games?

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