



# The Snowsnake Game



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In this book, you will meet:



Melodie



Monica

Melodie and Monica are going outside to learn a new game.

It is called snowsnake.

Snowsnake is a Dene game.

It was played a long time ago.

They are going to learn how to play it today.



“Snowsnake will be fun,”  
says Monica.

“I’m going to try to throw it  
a long way.”

“I’m going to try hard too,”  
says Melodie.

She wants to throw the  
snowsnake just as far as Monica.





Henry shows them the snowsnake.

He tells them, “This snowsnake is made from a spruce tree.

It is pointed at one end.

The snowsnake has to be very smooth and straight so it can slide fast and far on top of the snow.”



Henry tells them, “Long ago this game helped the Dene learn how to hunt with spears.”



Henry gets ready to throw the snowsnake.

It must go fast on top of the snow.

“Will it go to the end of the field?”  
asks Monica.

“I think so,” says Melodie.

Henry throws the snowsnake.

It slips and slides over the snow all the way  
to the end of the field.



Henry says, “Now it’s your turn Melodie. Take off your mitts. Hold the snowsnake like this.”

“This looks hard,” she thinks.

“Are you ready?” he asks her.







“Yes,” says Melodie.

She holds her  
snowsnake the  
way Henry showed  
her.

She feels like a  
hunter with a spear.

“Go!” says Henry.  
“Throw it hard.”

Melodie runs up to  
the starting line.



She throws the snowsnake as  
hard as she can.

It slides over the snow just  
like a snake.

It goes and goes.

How far will it go?



Now it is Monica's turn.

She gets ready to throw.

"I'm going to throw it as far as I can, she says. "Here I go."





She runs up to the starting line.

She throws it as hard as she can.

The snowsnake slides over the snow.

It goes and goes.

Will it go as far as Melodie's snowsnake?





“Good throw!” says Henry.

“Let’s go and look at your snowsnakes.”

They go down the field to  
look at them.

“Here is my snowsnake,”  
shouts Monica.

“Here is my snowsnake too,”  
shouts Melodie.



Henry tells Monica and Melodie,  
“You both threw a long way. Maybe you  
will get to go to the Arctic Winter Games  
some day!”

Monica and Melodie are very happy.

They have learned to play a new  
Dene game.



## DENE SNOWSNAKE GAME

The snowsnake was traditionally a hunting tool used to catch small game.

**Formation:** An individual game that is played by throwing a long spear along the surface of the snow with the intent of throwing it as far as possible.

**Equipment:** A spear that is a straight spruce stick — 4-1/2 feet in length and 3/4 inches in diameter with a sharpened (use blunt ends for safety purposes). The surface of the spear must be varnished. A javelin, hockey stick shaft or a wood handle can be used in place of the spruce stick. A packed channel (trough) of snow and ice must be used so that the stick can travel along the top of the snow (can be done along a parking lot surface).

**No. of Players:** Individual competition

**Skills:** Underhand throwing.

- Play:**
1. Object is to make the spear slide as far as possible along the trough using an underhand throw to deliver the stick.
  2. Players are allowed to take a 20 foot run prior to throwing the stick.
  3. Each player has three attempts at throwing the stick with the longest throw counting as the competitor's score.
  4. The distance is marked where the stick exits the trough.

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