

# NICA

## Group Learning Activities

### FIELD GAMES

Field games are activities played in an open field environment such as a soccer field. Be sure to seek permission from property managers before riding on playing surfaces. Bicycle tires may damage grass playing surfaces.

#### **Bike Soccer**

A relatively straight-forward game of soccer...while riding bicycles. Designate a rectangular playing area with cones. Size varies depending on the number of players. Also create a goal at each end with cones.

All players must be riding with feet off the ground in order to kick the ball. If a player puts a foot down near the ball, he/she must freeze and allow another player to kick the ball or ride away without kicking the ball. The bike can be used to block or redirect the ball. No hands allowed! No goalie or goaltending.

The game begins with players lined up along their goal line and a coach throwing the ball into the middle of the field. Use a ball similar to a thick beach ball or traditional school playground kickball. Soccer balls are too heavy. Beach balls will get punctured quickly by chainrings.

Variations:

No out of bounds. Players can follow the ball and continue play. Goals can only be scored when ball goes into the *front* of the goal.

Penalty for kicking the ball while the other foot is on the ground. Player would then be required to ride to the nearest sideline before returning to play.

#### **Bike Tag**

"Tag! You're It! Designate a playing area and the first rider to be "It". That rider chases others and tags them with a hand.

Variations

Sharks and Minnows. One shark is "It" as the game begins. As riders are tagged, they become sharks and chase the remaining riders, Minnows, until all riders have been tagged.

Freeze tag. Riders are divided into two teams. When a rider tags the helmet of another the player of the opposing team, the tagged rider must freeze and stay in place. Games ends when all riders on one team are frozen.

#### **Bike Tire Toss**

Similar to ring toss or horseshoes. Place two stakes in the ground using rebar or Step-In stakes similar to a game of horseshoes. Designate a perimeter circle around the stake that riders can't cross. Players are given a spare tire to throw onto the stake. Points given for getting the tire around the stake. Steel beaded tires are preferred because they hold their round shape.

Variations:

Offer more points for a further throw.

#### **Foot Down**

If you put a foot down, you are out! Make a square or other shape using cones or climbing rope. Size varies depending on the number of riders. The games begins with riders moving in any direction. Riders must remain within the boundary without putting a foot down. Riders can block riders or force them out of bounds. The last rider on their bike wins.

Variations:

Allow mild contact between riders while keeping hands and feet on the bike.

Decrease the size of the playing area as riders are subtracted.

#### **B-I-K-E**

A combination of Follow the Leader and H-O-R-S-E basketball shootout. The idea of the game is to match riding challenges.

Divide into groups of 2 or more riders. The first rider announces a riding challenge. Examples are riding over a log, up a steep incline, across a skinny

feature, under a tree branch, etc. If the first rider succeeds in the challenge, all other riders are obligated to do the same. Those who do not succeed in the challenge are given the first letter B. If the first rider does not succeed, the next rider can attempt the challenge or choose another. Each time a rider does not succeed, they are given a letter. When you can spell B-I-K-E, you are out.

### **“None Shall Pass”**

A game of close proximity and passing. Have riders follow one another in a circle. As they are riding closely behind each other, announce the start of the game. Riders attempt to pass the rider(s) ahead of them to eliminate them. If you get passed, you are out. The circle gets smaller and smaller until only two remain. See if the final pass can be made.

Variations:

Designate which side the passing should be done. For example, pass on the outside or inside of the circle.

Create a short course with turns in multiple directions. If you are passed, you are out. Try having faster riders start at the back of the line.

Limit the number of laps to increase urgency.

### **Cardboard Slide**

It's a skidding contest without damaging the ground or bike tires. Lay a large square of cardboard in the grass. Have each rider approach with speed and use their rear brake as they roll over the cardboard. See how far they can slide with their rear tire on the cardboard. Try it on a slight downslope to allow for more distance. Mark the longest distance and see who wins.

### **Ultimate Bike**

In the spirit of Ultimate Frisbee but on bikes. Create a rectangular playing field with end zones. A small ball or foot sac is used. Play is initiated by the defense throwing to the offense. Player cannot pedal when they have possession of the ball. They must coast or come to a stop and pass the ball to another player. Passes can be intercepted or knocked down. In either case, possession changes to the other team. When a pass is completed to a teammate in the opposing end zone, a point is awarded.

### **Bike Limbo**

It's the Limbo...on bikes. Have two coaches hold a portion of rope or other object between them. Riders ride down a runway towards the coaches and attempt to go under the object. Height remains the same for all participants. Those that successfully go under can move onto the next round. After all have attempted, lower the height of the object and the next round begins. How low they can go!?!?

## **MOCK RACES AND RELAYS**

The NICA Short-Course is the basic mock race for student-athletes to use their skills in a competitive or challenging race-like environment.

### **Short Course Relay**

Use your typical NICA short-course creation and turn it into a relay race. Divide the group into five teams and have the first rider of each team line up at the start line. As each racer finishes, the next racer on that team begins. The first team to finish wins.

### **Slalom Course**

Use cones to create race gates similar to Slalom Skiing. A mildly descending grassy slope works perfectly. Set up two or more courses side by side to create a Dual Slalom race. Run elimination heats until you have only two riders left.

Variations:

Designate an easy or hard gear to be used by riders.

Do the races uphill too.

### **Slow Race**

Form lanes for each 'racer' using cones. The rules of the game include staying in your lane, moving forward, and not putting a foot down. The last person to finish wins. Ready, Set, Slow!!!

### **Twinning**

Have riders form pairs, or buddies. Designate some way that buddies must team up to compete. For example, riding with one hand on each other's back, holding hands, arms crossed, one rider pulling the other, etc. Form lanes and have pairs race one another.

## GRASS TRACK RACES

Many races common to the velodrome can be done on flat grassy areas with mountain bikes. The space and equipment required is minimal. Use cones to designate the inside edge of the grass track. Indicate a start/finish line with additional cones. Use your creativity to introduce variations: a standard oval track, triangular, or four-corner track. If available consider including small challenges to the track such as sloping terrain, drainage swales, small logs, water hazard, etc. Grass track races are also very exciting for spectators. Watch as parents, family members, and the random passerby begin to pay attention as you add grass track races to your practice. It is far more than riding in circles. When spectators realize that, it can become great fun to watch. Try this at an after-school practice and you will notice that it attracts attention. Maybe it will even get #morekidsonbikes.

### **Time Trial**

Time each rider for a designated number of laps. One rider at a time.

### **Match Sprint**

A race contested by only two riders. First across the line wins. Use elimination heats to determine a winner. Or have the winner of each race stay on until they lose. That will tire them out!

### **Chariot Race**

A group of racers contesting a short race. Racers are held at the start so they can immediately accelerate away from the start line. First across the finish line wins.

### **Scratch Race**

Similar to the Chariot but racers start with a foot down.

### **Points Race**

Racers score points for periodic sprints at regular intervals throughout the race. Also score points for lapping the field. These can be longer than average races while keeping the interest of racers as they try to score points. Top three of each sprint are scored 3-2-1 points. 10 points for lapping the field. Bring a clipboard and be ready to write down the points on each racer.

### **Snowball**

Another form of points race in which increasing numbers of points are awarded as the race wears on. Formats vary, but a 10-lap snowball might award points on every second lap to the first rider only, with points available as follows: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10.

### **Miss-And-Out**

The miss-and-out is distinctive to velodrome racing. As its name suggests, is a race at the rear of the field to avoid being the last rider across the line. The race continues with one rider being eliminated at regular intervals depending on track length. When just three riders remain, the format changes to a scratch race and the first across the line wins.

### **Win-And-Out**

The win-and-out is an unusual format, and there are many variations. The idea is to award the victory to a single rider on the basis of a sprint – and then that rider leaves the race. The rest of the riders – whether they were last in the sprint or got second place by half a tire – are left to duke it out for second place in the next sprint. A common variation is when lower finish places are awarded first. Fifth place is awarded to the winner of the first sprint, then fourth, then third and so on.

### **Keirin**

At the velodrome, a Keirin race uses a motorbike to pace the racers up to speed and then the race is started. We can use a NICA coach to pace the racers around the grass track and then announce the start as he/she moves out of the way. Let the racers battle for one or two more laps around your grass track.

## OFF THE BIKE GAMES

Coaches often notice that student-athletes tend to bond with their peers based on ability and fitness on the bike. Use NON-bike games to break that trend and build a stronger team culture. These NON-bike games and activities become icebreakers and team bonding opportunities. Watch as the student-athletes work together and interact with those that may not gravitate to naturally.

### **The Human Knot**

Huddle up, and put your left hand into the center. Grab hold of another person's hand. Then, put in your other hand and grab the hand of another person. Don't let go. Slowly move away from the center and attempt to untangle yourselves until you form one big circle.

### **The Smallest Island**

Teams of ten stand on a sheet or tarp. Get off and fold it and stand on it again. Get off, fold it and stand on it again. Then, again. How small can you make the island and still fit the entire team?

### **Cross the Lava Relay**

Supply each team with five items on one side of a lava river. Everyone needs to reach the other side of the lava river using the items. Be creative with items and distance from start to finish.

### **Crazy Relay**

Provide props, activities, and/or costumes that the team needs to relay to the next member.

### **Birthday Lineup**

Line up along a log or line in a parking lot. They need to stay on the object/line and get in order of their birthdays WITHOUT using their voices.

### **Fill the Bucket**

Divide into small teams. Provide a full bucket of water and an empty one...and a vessel for transporting water...but the vessel has holes in it. Work together to fill the bucket before the other team.

### **Trust Me**

Small teams are assigned colors. Scatter items of varied colors around a field or trail. 1 member is blindfolded while others instruct him/her to find the objects.

### **Hula Hoop Race**

Form two lines and link hands. Race to get the Hula Hoop from one end of the line to the other without breaking your hands or falling over.