



Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

dhandang

'dhan-dang'



SCHOOL
YEARS
4-6

SCHOOL
YEARS
7-9

SCHOOL
YEARS
10-12

Post-school age

Background

Tree-climbing activities and climbing contests were widespread and helped to develop a skill of practical use. There were a variety of methods of climbing trees used in different parts of Australia. Some of these involved the use of vines or notches cut into trees.

The Victoria River people in the Northern Territory arranged competitions among the boys in tree-climbing. The boys were required to climb up a number of selected trees and down again in the quickest time possible.

The Noongar people of the south-west of Western Australia had climbing contests in the big timber areas, with the women being the best in this pastime. The highest and broadest trees were climbed with the aid of an axe.

Language

In the Noongar language of the south-west of Western Australia the word for 'climbing' is *dhandang*.

From the Bundjalung language that was spoken in northern New South Wales:

mala baygal wande-la muna:ya dall-ya
The man is climbing the tree.

In parts of Victoria a champion tree climber was called a *berebom-biel*.

Short description

This is a climbing contest.

Game play and basic rules

- Use an indoor climbing wall to conduct climbing contests or climb up a rope ladder or climbing frame as quickly as possible.

- The contests could be undertaken individually and timed or against another player. Where possible the climbing course organised should attempt to imitate tree climbing.

Variations

- Arrange a group competition to climb to the top of ropes or a pole.
- Have the players climb a number of ropes as part of a competition.
- For younger players a tower of high jump and gymnastic mats could be used.
- Construct an obstacle course with climbing activities. For example, run up an incline board and climb to the top of a climbing frame, climb down in a prescribed manner, climb up on a vaulting horse and jump down onto a high-jump mat.
- Have a long pole at an angle to represent a coconut palm for players to climb.
- Use climbing walls for various competitions.

Safety

Appropriate safety gear such as harnesses and ropes should be used. Players should be given correct instruction on how to climb, and activities should be strictly controlled. Under no circumstances should players slide down ropes or jump from towers.