



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

# gorri

'gor-ri'



All school-age groups (K–12)

Post-school age

## Background

Bowling-ball or disc games were played by Aboriginal boys and men in all parts of Australia. A piece of rounded bark (disc) was rolled by one of the players for the other boys to use as a target for their short spears.

A version of this activity is still played in the Kimberley area and Northern Territory (and perhaps elsewhere) using flattened tin lids as targets and stones or other missiles.

## Language

*Gorri* was a disc-bowling game played in central Australia.

## Short description

This is a game involving the throwing of a ball (for a spear) at a moving target.

## Players

- A group of players of up to 20 or more

## Playing area

- Use an area about 15–30 metres long. Markers are placed at each end of the area, and throws may only be made by players when the target is between these markers.

## Equipment

- Marker cones are used to designate the playing area
- Large gym balls
- Two tennis balls for each player

## Game play and basic rules

- The player who will roll the target ball stands 5–10 metres to one side of the playing area, away from the throwing marker, and about 10 metres or more in front of the other players.

- The players who are to throw at the target stand behind a line along one side of the playing area and parallel to the direction that the ball is to be thrown.
- These players call out for the ball to be rolled when they are all ready.
- The thrower calls out 'gool-gool' and starts the ball rolling towards the other end of the area.
- As the target ball rolls between the markers in the playing area the players either throw or roll their tennis balls at the target in an attempt to hit it. Players stop throwing when the rolled ball goes past the marker at the other end of the area.
- After their turn players wait until told and then collect the balls they have thrown. (A whistle is useful here.)
- Vary the speed, distance and angle of the rolls and the number of balls rolled. For younger players some stationary targets might be used.
- Note: When a player makes a hit he or she is greeted with applause. Successful players are expected to be modest about their achievement.

### Variations

- Spear the hoop. Use a small hula-hoop or rubber quoit as the target and 1-metre pieces of medium-sized dowel that can be marked with different colours. Players stand behind a line marked 5 metres away from a target area, which is 10–15 metres long. The aim is to either make the hoop (or quoit) stop rolling, or to throw through it.
- Human *gorri*: Have players either side of the area and 15 metres apart. Players gently roll a soft ball underarm at a target player as they run through the area between them. Players must be hit below the knees. This can be played with three teams (two throwing and one running).
- Attach a cardboard box to a long length of strong twine and pull it through the target area.
- Use spear throwers (*woomeras*).

- *Gorri* contest: Conduct a contest for a set time or number of turns. Each player or team has a set number of balls. The player or team that hits the target the most number of times is the winner.

### Safety

The area to be used should be marked out and players who roll the ball have no chance of a thrown ball being directed towards them. The players should not move after they have thrown their balls, until a signal to retrieve the balls is given.

### Teaching points

- Wait for the signal.
- Pick your target. Stand side on. Ball in your fingers.
- Ready. Ball back behind the ear, wrist bent.
- Step, elbow leads, points the fingers.
- Throw and follow through.
- Wait. Retrieve.

