

**Purpose:** This guide meant to...

- Provide games to be played to enhance mountain bike skills learned in NICA.
- Ways for coaches to assess student-athlete skills in a fun way.
- Gamify the drill!

## Method for Presenting NICA OTB Games

- **Tell it**
  - What's the name of the game
  - Present the rules as simply and concisely as possible. Explain what skills will be used.
- **Show it**
  - No matter how effective the explanation, a brief demonstration will clarify the rules.
  - Prompt for questions - Ask, "what questions do you have?"
- **Do it**
  - Play the game!
  - Adapt- If you suspect that their energy or enthusiasm is flagging, offer a modification or a progression.
- **Review it**
  - Reflect = Ask questions to draw learning from the game

## Ten Fundamental Elements

- Neutral and Ready Position
- Bike/Body Separation
- Pedal Position
- Eye Movement
- Braking
- Steering
- Speed
- Gear and Cadence
- Timing and Coordination
- Pressure Control

## 3 Key Essentials

- Level Pedals (Athletic Stance)
- Finger on Each Brake Lever
- Head Up, Eyes Scanning Ahead

## 101 Skills

- Neutral/Ready Position
- Braking
- Bike and Body Separation - Forward and Back/Side to Side
- Intro to Cornering
- Shifting
- Seated Climb
- Crouched Climb
- Standing Climb



# NICA On The Bike Games

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## NICA On The Bike Games

### No Equipment

Foot Down/Circle of Death!  
Sharks and Minnows  
Freeze Tag  
Infected/Zombie Tag  
Space Alien Invasion  
Red Light/Green Light  
B-I-K-E  
None Shall Pass  
Slow Race  
Passing Game

### Bike Tube/Wheel/Tire

Ring Toss

### Rope/Webbing/Pool Noodle

Bike Limbo

### Cones/Flags

Minefield On Bike  
"Spin to Win" Slalom Racing  
Bike Soccer  
Rock Dodge Challenge  
Between The Lines  
Front Wheel Flick

### Miscellaneous

Cardboard Slide  
Water Bottle Pickup

### Grass Track Races

## No Equipment

### **Foot Down/Circle of Death!**

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can build a positive team culture. I can build timing, coordination, pressure control, and steering skills. I can have fun.

**Setup:** Create a circle out of cones/coaches. Larger circle for larger groups of riders.

**Rules:** Once the game begins, if you put a foot down or are forced out of the circle, you are eliminated and have to exit the circle. Hands must remain on handlebars (no pushing). Eliminated riders begin cheering for those that remain. Get Loud!!! Eliminated players can be used to make the circle smaller.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separation

**201 Skills:** Ratcheting, Small Circles, Track Stands

Everyone inside the circle begins riding in the same direction. When all are in motion, the game begins. Make the circle smaller as people are eliminated.

#### **Progression:**

- Have the eliminated riders remain where they've put their foot down and become obstacles for others to navigate.
- When only a few skilled riders remain, increase the challenge by adding any of the following instructions one at a time.
  - Ride with only one hand on the bars.
  - Switch direction.
- Have multiple games occurring at the same time. As a rider is eliminated from one game they immediately join another group. This allows riders that need more practice on the bike to continue to play. No one is eliminated.

**Reflection Question:** How can you apply what you learned from this activity to future rides or your life?

### **Sharks and Minnows**

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can build a positive team culture. I can have fun.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separations, Cornering, Shifting

**201 Skills:** Ratcheting

**Setup:** Best for a group of 10 or more. Use four tall cones for boundaries, or landmarks for boundaries. Field sized for number of riders, your best judgment used. Have all riders come into the middle of the boundary to explain the rules. Ask for a volunteer to be the shark.

**Rules:** 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.

**Reflection Question:** What did a fellow teammate do that was really helpful?



## **Freeze Tag**

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can build a positive team culture. I can have fun.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separations, Cornering, Shifting

**201 Skills:** Track Stands, Ratcheting

**Setup:** Best for a group of 10 or more. Use four tall cones for boundaries, or landmarks for boundaries. Field size is determined by the number of riders, your best judgment used. Divide your group into two equal teams. Have all riders come into the middle of the boundary to explain the rules.

**Rules:** Riders are divided into two teams. When a rider tags the shoulder of another player of the opposing team, the tagged rider must freeze and stay in place. The game ends when all riders on one team are frozen.

**Progression:** Once a player is tagged, if they can track stand a team mate can unfreeze that player. If the player has to put a foot down they are permanently frozen, until the game ends.

**Reflection Question:** How did you overcome negativity in the team? Did this affect how you approached the game?

## **Infected/Zombie Tag**

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can build a positive team culture. I can have fun.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separations, Cornering, Shifting

**201 Skills:** Track Stands, Ratcheting

**Setup:** Best for a group of 10 or more. Use four tall cones for boundaries, or landmarks for boundaries. Field sized for number of riders, your best judgment used. Have all riders come into the middle of the boundary to explain the rules. Ask for a volunteer to be the first infected rider.

**Rules:** One rider starts off as the infected scourge. They attempt to tag other riders that have not been infected. The goal is to get everyone infected. Once a rider is infected they help in getting other riders tagged. Tags must be completed with hands, no feet. If someone puts a foot down at any time they are infected. Infected riders can only make zombie sounds; if an infected rider prompts another rider with a zombie sound an infected rider must respond with their sound, UN-infected riders do not have to respond.

**Reflection Question:** What did you enjoy about the activity? What didn't you enjoy?

## **Space Alien Invasion**

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can build a positive team culture. I can have fun.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separations, Neutral/Ready

**Setup:** Best for a group of 10 or more. Use four tall cones for boundaries, or landmarks for boundaries. Field sized for number of riders, your best judgment used. All riders are spaceships riding around in the designated area.

**Rules:** When the coach yells, “invasion” all riders must dismount their bikes, find a partner, and play rock-paper-scissors. The losing side earns one point. Riders re-mount their bikes and continue riding until the next “invasion.” When a rider earns three points they must remain off their bike and stay in one position as space dust until another rider tags them in a rescue mission and they can resume play.

**Reflection Question:** What did you enjoy about the activity? What didn't you enjoy?

## **Red Light/Green Light**

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can have fun.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separation

**201 Skills:** Track Stand

**Setup:** Divide your team into pairs of relatively equal ability. Create a starting line with plenty of distance to go in front of the riders. Riders pair up on the starting line.

**Rules:** When the coach says “green light” each pair of riders pedals as far as possible until the coach says “red light.” Riders must stop and either put a foot down or track stand until the next “green light” command. Winner is the rider that covered the most distance.

**Progression:** Add obstacles to ride over or to avoid.

**Reflection Question:** How did you support others when you found the activity difficult?

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

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can build a positive team culture. I can have fun.

**101 Skills:** The players and coaches determine the skills

**201 Skills:** The players and coaches determine the skills

**Setup:** Divide into groups of 3-5 riders of similar abilities . A combination of Follow the Leader and H-O-R-S-E basketball game. The object of the game is to match and perform riding challenges.

**Rules:**

**Guided Version:**

- The coach determines boundaries for the game.
- The coach sets up some obstacles or knows some skills that can be done in the field. Combinations of things are allowed.
- The coach determines the attempt order for the riders.
- The coach explains the skills and the list of requirements for how the skills are to be done successfully.
- The coach allows the riders to attempt the skill, one at a time until all the riders have tried the skill.
- If a rider fails to accomplish the skill, they get a letter (B, then I, etc.).
- The coach calls out another skill and play resumes like above.
- If a rider receives all the letters in the word BIKE, they are out of the game. They are encouraged to cheer on the other players and help the coach come up with other skills.
- Play continues until there is only one rider left...and they become the WINNER.

**Discovery Version** (No Coach involvement except to initiate the game and to set boundaries):

- Play Rock, Paper, Scissor to determine the attempt order.
- The rider that goes first is called the "Setter". The Setter explains the skill and the list of requirements for how the skill is to be done successfully.
- The Setter attempts the skill. If they fail to complete the skill as described, they get a letter (B, then I, etc.) and the next person in line becomes the Setter. The new Setter determines the next skill to be accomplished.
- If the Setter is successful at accomplishing the skill, each other rider, one at a time, must attempt the skill.
- If a rider fails to accomplish the skill, they get a letter (B, then I etc.). and the next rider attempts the skill.
- If a rider receives all the letters in the word BIKE, they are out of the game. They are encouraged to cheer on the other players and help the setter come up with other skills.
- Play continues until there is only one rider left...and they become the WINNER.

**Note:** In the Discovery version each rider gets one Mulligan during the game to be used any time they want. It allows them to have one more attempt at a skill. Skills can be combinations such as: Ratchet the bike for 15 feet then hop the bike so both tires come off the ground. Skills can use objects such as trees, rocks, rope, hose, wood, etc.

**Reflection Question:** Think about your own personal experience in the activity, what would you do differently next time?

## None Shall Pass

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can build a positive team culture. I can have fun.

**101 Skills:** Cornering, Bike-Body Separation, Shifting

**201 Skills:** Cornering

**Setup:** A game of proximity and passing. Divide your team into groups of 8-10 riders. Have groups begin riding in a circle.

**Rules:** 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.

**Progression:** 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.

**Reflection Question:** Looking back on the activity, what two things stand out to you the most and why?

## Slow Race

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** Slow speed balance, break modulation, and vision.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separation

**201 Skills:** Ratcheting

**Setup:** Divide your team into equal groups. Form lanes for each “racer” using cones. Number of lanes will be dictated by the open space/size of the group.

**Rules:** Riders must stay in their lane, move forward, and not put a foot down. The last person to finish wins. Ready, Set, Slow!!!

**Progression:** Play as an uphill or downhill slow race. Designate as a ratchet race only.

**Reflection Question:** How did you support others when you found the activity difficult?

## Passing Game

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** Vision and Communication

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separation, Cornering

**201 Skills:** Cornering

**Setup:** Divide your team into pairs of relatively equal ability. Create a short course loop.

**Rules:** Teams ride the loop alternating passing each other; both riders must use appropriate communication and safe passing skills.

**Progression:** Can be played as a race.

**Reflection Question:** How did you support others when you found the activity difficult?

## Bike Tube/Wheel/Tire

### Ring Toss

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can have fun. I can build timing and coordination skills.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separation

**202 Skills:** Ratcheting

**Setup:** Place a traffic cone and create a line with rope, hose, or small cones about 12' away. Riders ride parallel to the line and throw the inner tube over the line onto the cone.

**Rules:** Toss an inner tube onto a traffic cone while riding past at a distance.

**Progression:** Add multiple cones with different values, and different distances away from the rider line. Add smaller or larger tubes worth different values.

Create teams and have them accumulate points. The first to earn a certain amount of points wins.

**Reflection Question:** What challenges did you face?



## Rope/Webbing/Pool Noodle

### Bike Limbo

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can build timing, coordination, and pressure control skills. I can have fun.

**Setup:** Two coaches hold a long thin object such as rope, webbing, broom handle, or a rod of bamboo (for authenticity). Riders form a line and try to ride under one at a time.

**101 Skills:** Bike-Body Separation

**Rules:** Riders must ride under the height without touching the ground. Lower the object as riders progress. Riders are eliminated until you have a winner.

**Reflection Question:** What would you do differently next time?





## Cones/Flags

### Minefield On Bike

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can have fun. I can build steering, timing, and coordination skills.

**Setup:** Designate a square area a couple bike lengths long and wide. Scatter many cones throughout the area. Ask participants to ride through without touching a cone with either tire.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separation

**202 Skills:** Ratcheting, Rock Dodge, Track Stand

**Rules:** Don't touch a cone. Hopping is allowed but one wheel must remain on the ground at all times.

**Options:** If the area is wide enough, have two riders challenge each other to get across first without touching a cone.

**Progression:** Add squeaky toys. The objective is to run over the toys, and the rider earns extra points. Or in challenge mode, when the rider runs over a squeaky toy all other riders must pause for 3 seconds (attempting to trackstand).

**Reflection Question:** What was your plan for the activity? How did you come up with it?



### “Spin to Win” Slalom Racing

**Where:** Open field with a consistent low grade downhill slope.

**Objectives:** I can build gearing and cadence skills. I can have fun.

**Setup:** Divide your group into equal teams. Build a side by side dual slalom course using soccer cones or flags. Student-athletes start at the top and race down side by side.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separation

**Rules:** Riders have to start in their easiest gear and cannot change gears. This makes the race more about looking ahead and picking a line that preserves their speed.

**Progression:** After several rounds of easiest gear only, open it up to full on, any gear with shifting. End the practice with an elimination race for the whole team until one student is left standing.

**Reflection Question:** What advice would you give to a new teammate playing this game?

## **Bike Soccer**

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can cooperate and communicate with my teammates. I can kick and giggle. I can build timing and coordination, pressure control, and steering skills.

**Setup:** Make a field of play using soccer cones, flags, etc. Size is dictated by the number of players. Tennis court size. Add two goals 4'-6' wide. Divide the group into two teams of a max of 5-6 riders. Teams start on their own goal line. Coach in the middle drops the ball to begin play. This repeats after each goal is scored.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separation, Shifting

**202 Skills:** Ratcheting

**Rules:** Riders must remain riding without feet touching the ground when kicking the ball. If they put a foot on the ground near the ball, they must ride away without kicking it. "Foot Down! Ride Away!!!"

- Play is neutralized when the ball goes too far out of bounds.
- Return the ball to the playing area and resume.
- Shots on goal must be below the knees to count.
- Contact with other riders (pushing, leaning, bumping) is not allowed.

**Options:** No boundaries but goals can only be scored through the front of the goal. Penalty for kicking with one foot on the ground - Rider must exit to the sideline. Then, is allowed to return to play.

**Progression:** If you have a large team, keep group size max of 5-6 rides to increase participation. Create a time limit for games, and rotate groups in and out of the game based on time limit (2 minutes tops per game).

**Reflection Question:** What positives can you take away from the game?



## Rock Dodge Challenge

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can have fun. I can avoid hitting my wheels on an object. I can build timing, coordination, and steering skills.

**Setup:** Divide your group into equal teams. Create an entrance and exit gate. Between the gates stage a small pile of cones.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separation, Braking, Neutral/Ready Position

**201 Skills:** Ratcheting

**Rules:** Student-athletes ride towards the cones, turn sharply so the rear wheel passes on the other side of the cones.

**Progression:** Line up the cones and see how many cones they can successfully dodge in a row. Example: 1 cone then 2 cones then 3 cones etc.

**Reflection Question:** How did you support others when you or others found the activity difficult?



## Between The Lines

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can ride a line. I can build coordination. I can have fun.

**Setup:** Divide your group into equal teams. Create an entrance and exit gate. Between the gates stage two lines of cones 8-12 inches wide.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separation, Braking, Neutral/Ready Position

**201 Skills:** Ratcheting

**Rules:** Student-athletes ride towards the cones and ride between the lines.

**Progression:** Increase the challenge by making the lines closer together, creating curves, riding faster or slower, standing, or having other student-athletes stand outside the lines trying to distract the person riding. (No touching allowed.)

**Reflection Question:** Did you adapt your approach to the game at any point? Why did you change it?

## Front Wheel Flick

**Where:** Open Space

**Objective:** I can improve my front wheel lift, timing, pressure control, and coordination.

**Setup:** This game requires setting a 10'x10' square on the ground with rope or cones with left and right goal lines. A ball (small soccer ball, softball, or baseball) is placed in the middle of the square. Two teams of about 4-6 athletes line up on opposite sides of the square.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Body-Body Separation

**201 Skills:** Front Wheel Lift, Trackstand, Ratcheting, Rear Wheel Lift

**Rules:** Athletes attempt to flick the ball with their front wheel outside of the square. Each team takes turns attempting to knock the ball out of the square across their goal line. When the ball is knocked across their goal line that team earns a point and the ball is reset in the middle of the square. The game can be played to a certain number of points or to a length of time.

**Progressions:** The smaller the ball the more difficult the game is. You can have multiple balls in the same game with different point values for each ball (soccer 1; softball 2; baseball/tennis 3). You can have athletes attempt to only use their rear wheel.

**Reflection Question:** What surprised you the most?

## Miscellaneous

### Cardboard Slide

**Where:** Flat to slight downhill open space

**Objective:** I can have fun. I can build timing, coordination, and pressure control.

**Setup:** Designate a start point or line. Put a square of cardboard about 20' feet away.

**101 Skills:** Breaking, Bike-Body Separation, Braking, Neutral/Ready Position

**Rules:** Riders ride towards the cardboard and over it. When the rear tire is on the cardboard, lock the rear brake and slide on the cardboard while remaining balanced. Who can slide the furthest?

**Optional:** Relay Race - Create teams, each team member slides as far as they can. Next team member continues towards the finish line. First team across the finish wins, or each team scores one point each time gets the cardboard across the finish line. First team to five points wins.

**Progression:** Play as a tug of war, with teams on opposite sides taking turns. Establish an end line for each team. Teams take turns attempting to move the piece of cardboard over the opposing teams line.

**Reflection Question:** What positives can you take away from the game?



## Water Bottle Pick Up

**Where:** Open space

**Objective:** I can have fun. I can build timing, coordination, and pressure control skills.

**Setup:** Designate a start point or line. Place a water bottle on the ground.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separation

**Rules:** Riders attempt to pick up the water bottle without putting a foot down. If they put a foot down they must ride away and try again.

**Optional:** Relay Race - Create teams.

**Progression:** Maybe start with tall cones, move to water bottles, then flat cones for extra challenge.

Create two teams: have many items on the ground and two buckets on each side. Teams try to pick up as many items as they can then put them into their bucket. Team with the most items wins.

**Reflection Question:** What challenges did you face?

## Grass Track Races

**Where:** Open space

**Objective:** I can build fitness and test bike handling skills at race pace. I can have fun.

**Setup:** 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.

**101 Skills:** Braking, Bike-Body Separation, Shifting, Intro to Cornering

**201 Skills:** Advanced Cornering

**Rules:** Rules vary for each type of race, see progressions.

**Progression:**

### **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 scored 3-2-1 points. 10 points for lapping the field. Bring a clipboard and be ready to write down the points for 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. 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.

**Reflection Question:** What lessons did you learn from the grass track race that you can apply to a league race?