



# Snow Snake Construction



## History:

Snowsnakes was a Seneca Indian sport of strength and skill. The game was simple; the goal was to slide a long smooth stick along a trough in the snow the farthest. Expertise required not just strength but an accurate eye and great skill at placing the shaft properly in the trough to enable it to travel the maximum distance.

Snowsnakes were between 5 and 9 feet long and were made of hickory, maple or walnut wood. They were superbly designed for speed and, if skillfully handled, traveled with the velocity of a loosed arrow. To give the stick sufficient weight, its conical head was enlarged and beveled up in shape of a snakes head.

The trough was made by dragging a smooth barked log length wise through the snow several times until a trench was about 1500 feet long and at least 10 inches deep. Any number could play the game individually or as team members. In addition to active participants, each side had Snowsnake “doctors” who cared for the sticks, rubbing them with “medicine” (beeswax or animal oils) to reduce the friction/ Contestants were judged by umpires who made certain the rules of the game were strictly observed.

## Materials Needed:

$\frac{3}{4}$ " by 1  $\frac{1}{2}$ " wood stick between 5 ad 6 feet long

## Construction:

Cut off one end of the stick on an angle to become the “head” of the snake. Carve or shape the snake with a wood rasp and sand paper. Be careful not to make your Snowsnake to top heavy. Paint and decorate the Snowsnake. Gloss alkyde paint works the best. Use auto wax for a highly polished surface & use several coats.

## The Game:

Practice throws are NOT allowed in the competition trough. You will have to go elsewhere to practice. Your best of two throws in the competition trough will count for your score. If you choose not to make a “real” Snowsnake, you may still compete with a scout stave, but don’t expect much of a score for distance as they tend to “dig in”

