



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission



# Koolchee

A ball rolling game that was played by Aboriginal people in the Lake Eyre district of South Australia. The ball is called a *koolchee*. Several variations are shown. Koolchees are rolled either to hit other koolchees or to knock over a skittle.

## What you need

### INDOOR OPTION

- > An area about the size of a basketball court
- > Tennis balls, Kanga cricket balls or larger balls for the koolchee (ball) – one per player
- > A wall (for the ‘challenge’ variation)
- > 3 skittles per player

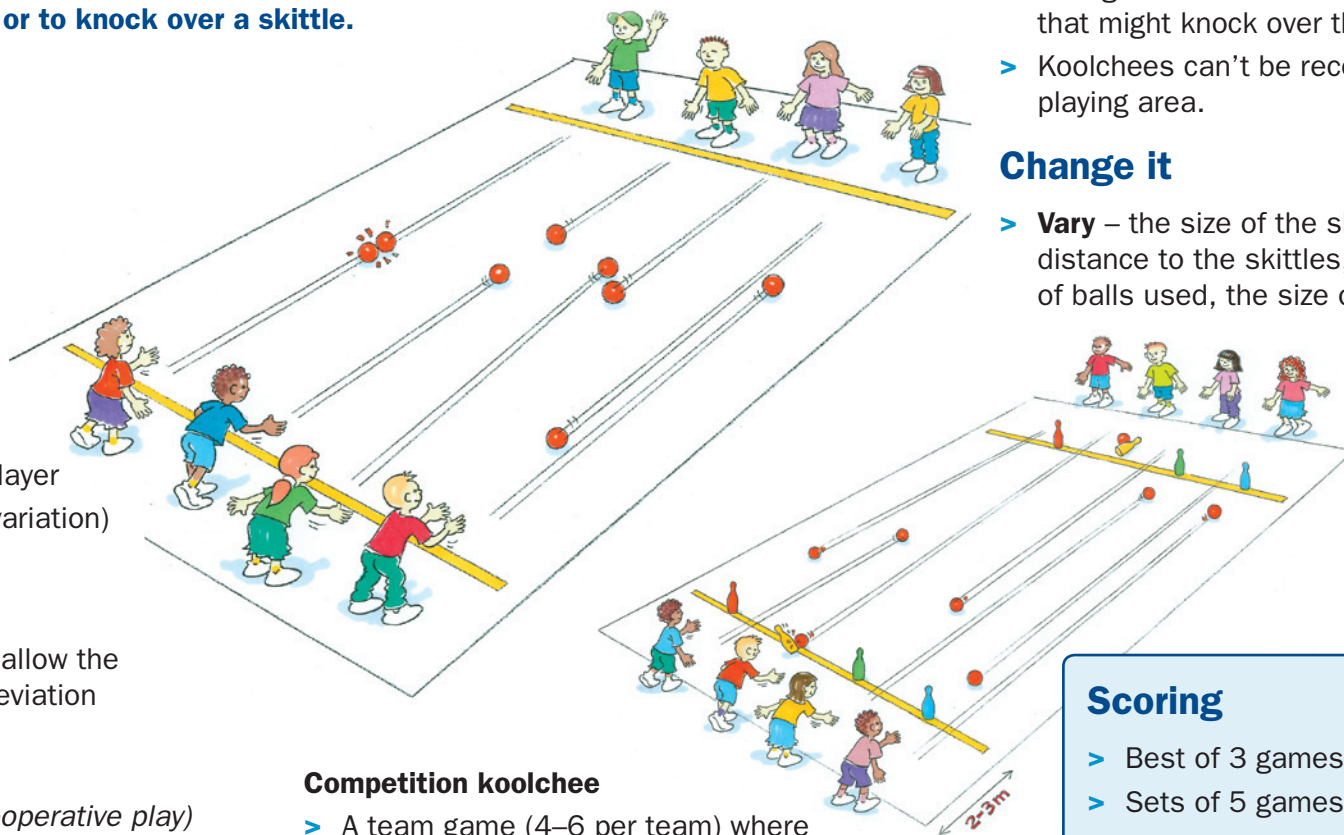
### OUTDOOR OPTION

- > A smooth surface that will allow the koolchees to roll without deviation

## What to do

### Warm-up – hit a koolchee (cooperative play)

- > Teams at each end of an area roll the koolchees (tennis balls) toward each other – no scoring.
- > The aim is to hit another koolchee. Depending on the ability level of the players, children start by rolling balls to each other.



### Competition koolchee

- > A team game (4–6 per team) where players roll a ball attempting to knock down an opponent’s skittle at the other end. Skittles are placed 2–3 metres in front of each team. The winning team is the one that knocks down all the opponent’s skittles.
- > Teams avoid hitting their own skittles.

- > Players may ‘defend’ their own skittles by rolling koolchees to hit other koolchees that might knock over their own skittles.
- > Koolchees can’t be recovered from the playing area.

## Change it

- > **Vary** – the size of the skittles, the distance to the skittles, the type and size of balls used, the size of the activity area.

## Scoring

- > Best of 3 games
- > Sets of 5 games for older players

### LESSON LINK

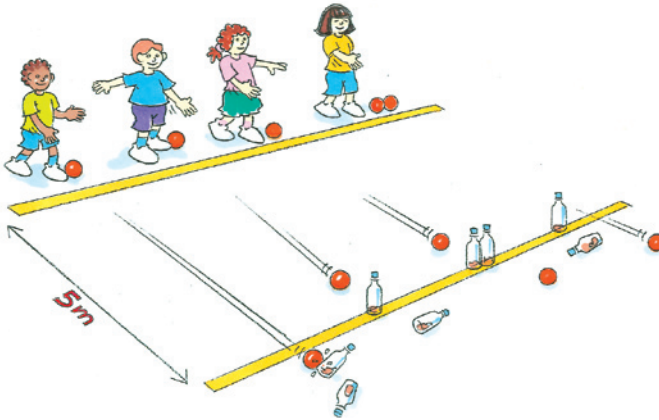
The koolchee variations require accurate rolling, team communication and an understanding of how to rebound a ball (koolchee challenge). A useful lead-in to games like bowls, ten-pin bowling and any sport where a fielder can return a ball by rolling.

SESSION  
PLANS

Combo > Get into it INV 07a + Get into it TG 07 + Get into it TG 06  
Mixed combo > Get into it INV 11 + Start out TG 06 + Get into it TG 06

## Practice koolchee

Players roll koolchees attempting to knock down skittles. Play individually or in teams.



### SETTING UP

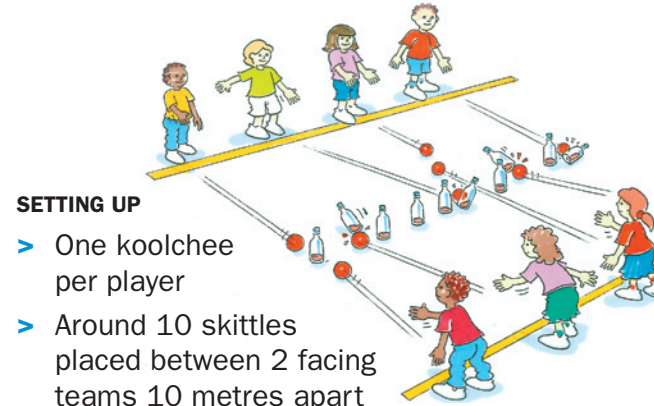
- > Individual game – 3 skittles and 3 koolchees per player
- > Team game (3–4 per team) – 5 or more skittles per team and at least 4 koolchees per team
- > Skittles 5 metres from players

### PLAYING

- > **Team variation** – allow each player 5 attempts. Increase the distance and repeat, e. g. 10 metres then 15 metres – teams keep a total of skittles knocked down.
- > **Individual variation** – the player who knocks down the highest number of skittles is the winner.
- > Players are not allowed to retrieve koolchees from the area between the throwing line and the skittles.

## Cooperative koolchee

Two teams facing each other work together to knock the skittles over.



### SETTING UP

- > One koolchee per player
- > Around 10 skittles placed between 2 facing teams 10 metres apart

### PLAYING

- > Players communicate and work together to achieve the end result.
- > Players are not allowed to retrieve koolchees from the area between the throwing line and the skittles. Other koolchees can be retrieved without running onto the playing area.
- > Repeat for 2 or 3 rounds.

### SCORING

- > Time taken to knock the skittles over – attempt to set a record.

### CHANGE IT

Change the separation between skittles, use different sized koolchees, use a bean bag or similar, adjust the distance between teams.

## Koolchee challenge

A koolchee is rolled to a wall where it rebounds. The aim is to knock over a skittle.

### PLAYING

- > Use a larger koolchee (soccer ball size).
- > Skittles are placed 5 metres from the wall and players stand 10 metres from the wall. Adjust distances to suit the group.
- > 3 attempts allowed. If the skittle is knocked over the skittle is moved back one metre.
- > If the skittle is missed on all 3 attempts, it is moved closer to the wall.

### CHANGE IT

**Vary** – the angle of the rebound, roll with non-preferred hand, the time/number of hits, size of skittles or balls, distance to walls or skittles.

## Safety

- > Ensure adequate space for the number of players.
- > **Rebound variation** – ensure that children roll the ball *along* the ground and don't bounce it *at* the wall.
- > In face-to-face variations, players should keep an eye out for oncoming koolchees.