

XC Ski Ball

Cross Country ski ball is a game that takes elements from ultimate frisbee, football, kickball, and XC skiing. The objective of the game is to score 10 points before the other team. You score a point by having a team member ski into the end zone with the ball. Teams consist of 5 players with skis on. The area needed is roughly 45x20 yards, adjustments can be made as needed to lengthen or shorten the field size. Cones should be placed as seen in the picture below. Spirit of the game is an emphasis on this game to avoid petty arguments, and help with the flow of the game. Spirit of the game is asking everyone to be honest, and if there is any dispute on a play, redo it.

How to play

The game begins with two players from opposing teams playing a game of rock, paper, scissors, shoot and the winner starts on offense and the loser must roll the ball. The defense rolls the ball to the offense to start the game. The defense and offense must start from their end zone and then move up to receive the ball or defend their end zone respectively. If the ball goes out of bounds the defense must re roll the ball to the offense again. Once the offense has received the ball the person who picks it up can begin to throw the ball to a teammate either forward, backwards, sideways, or ski with the ball. If someone from the opposing team tags the person skiing with the ball they are “down”. When you are down you must stop moving with the ball and pass it to a teammate or throw the ball away. Once the ball is passed if it is caught by a teammate they can ski with it until they are tagged or score a point. After the point is scored the team that just scored will now roll off to the opposing team. Now, if the ball is dropped, swatted, lost, or thrown away, then it is a “live ball” and whichever team picks it up first will gain possession of the ball. If the ball lands out of the back of the endzone or out of bounds during a pass then the defense will now maintain possession of the ball. This pattern of the roll off, skiing, passing, and defending, and then scoring is done until one team scores 10 points (you do not need to win by 2 points).

Rules

- Teams can substitute as many players as they like, but they must substitute when a team scores, or when the ball goes out of bounds and announce it to the opposing team
- If there is a tie during rock, paper, scissors, shoot, then two new players must play the next game, and so on until there is one team that wins
- No one can move from their respective end zone until the ball hits the ground during the roll off. Once the ball touches the ground players are allowed to move anywhere on the field
- Defense must re roll the ball until it does not go out of bounds and they are not allowed to touch the ball until the offense does (you cannot perform any type of onside roll to get the ball back before playing defense)

- If you have the ball and are untouched you can ski with it, throw it forward, throw it sideways, throw it backwards, or throw it anywhere they chose to
- If you have the ball and are touched you must stop moving immediately when tagged and then throw the ball either forward, backwards, sideways, or away
- If you do not have the ball you can ski anywhere you want to, catch the ball, or for defense only, you can tag the player with the ball
- Players get 10 seconds to throw the ball when tagged. Otherwise, possession changes and the ball is handed to the opposing team
- Once the ball is thrown it is a live ball regardless of whether it is caught or not. If the ball is caught, the defense can no longer get possession of the ball until it is thrown again. If the ball is dropped whoever picks it up starts with possession of it where the ball is
- If the ball goes out of bounds the defending team gets the ball where it was roughly last in bounds and the play will resume once the person with the ball announces they are “restarting offense”
- If the ball lands in the end zone it is not a point, either team can pick up the ball. The team that gets the ball then moves with it right in front of the end zone and stands still. They must pass to a teammate in order to score or continue the play
- After you score you will move your team to an end zone and then roll the ball to the other team. Nobody can leave the endzone until the ball hits the ground. The same rules apply for this roll as the one that happens at the start of the game.
- The defense cannot steal the ball out of a players hand or swat it out of their hand but they can block a pass or punch a pass to break it up
- If someone falls the play continues
- “Spirit of the game” is in effect for this game so every player is expected to be honest, as well as a good sport

Covid precautions

Like many other things in the world this game is no exception and is susceptible to spreading coronavirus. Due to this various adjustments and precautions can be taken in order to preserve the health of all players and people involved in this fun and fast paced game.

- 1) Masks, all players can wear masks to protect themselves and others from spreading the virus
- 2) Gloves, whether they are winter or rubber gloves should be worn to avoid hand to hand contact
- 3) Poles, or any sort of device such as poles, hula hoops, brooms, etc should be used to tag the opposing team rather than using your hands
- 4) 6ft defender rule, to avoid unnecessary touching, breathing, and close contact players must 6ft from the person with the ball and try to continue this space within each other

Equipment needed

As the name of the game suggests, XC skis are needed, which means ski boots are also needed. Since it is cold it is important to dress warm and properly. One ball is needed and it should be the same ball that is used for kickball. If that ball is not possible to use, a dodgeball, tennis ball, beach ball, soccer ball, volleyball or rubber ball is sufficient. Cones are the final aspect needed for this game as they are needed to mark out of bounds as well as end zones.

Why play?

Ski ball is a fast paced game that requires lots of energy due to the amount you move, how fast you move, how much you end up moving in total, as well as using skills such as catching, throwing, diving, skiing, and spacial awareness. As a result this game is a great cardiovascular workout, since it is nonstop action and movement. All players are equally as impactful and all plays hinge on the communication and execution between the players on each team therefore, anybody can play and have an immediate impact on the game. Catching, throwing, and skiing are all skills useful to have and you get to practice all three within this game. Spatial awareness is also another aspect that is worked in this game, as you need to be constantly aware of where you are, where the ball is, where your team is, where the opposing team is, and where the end zones and out of bounds are. As stated above there are lots of skills used and this game can be played at a fun, casual level with less advanced players up to the most competitive and athletically talented players.

Picture of field

