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## **SPORTS GAMES IN THE ANCIENT NOVGORODIAN LAND**

Games historically created by people are a prominent feature of every nation's culture. The games accompany daily life of children and adults through the ages, and so they form people's mentality and personal peculiarities, indicate social structure of a nation and its mindset. Sports games came from native ones created in different countries and in different centuries.

A big role of Novgorod in Russia's history and uniqueness of its archeological exploring let us follow the millennial development of certain native games and holidays, understand their meaning in people's life.

There are descriptions of the most common games in ancient Novgorod and its surroundings listed below.

1) Hide-and-peek or 'pryatki' (Russian: 'прятки') is one of the easiest games, almost a part of human nature. An external form of the game has common things with animal's play behavior. And so it arose in high antiquity. However, originally easy pryatki became a base of many difficult team games, a part of traditional rites.

In ancient Novgorod there were a lot of similar games based on pryatki. Some of them used various objects such as balls or sticks and had an interesting plot.

2) 'Touch and run' or 'salki' (Russian: 'салки') is a playground game that involves one or more players chasing other players in an attempt to touch them, usually with their hand. There are many variations; most forms have no teams, scores, or equipment. Many nations have traditional games like salki. The most unusual forms of the game that were popular in Novgorod are 'shalyga' (Russian: 'шалыга') and 'water salki'. Shalyga players need to touch each other with a special ball made of hay dribbling it with their feet. Water salki was popular in summers when people could play it in rivers and lakes.

3) Games with 'kubar' (Russian: 'кубарь'). Novgorod's archaeological finds provide evidences that tell us about kubar's thousand years of history. A kubar is a kind of spinning top usually made of wood with a string.

Playing with a kubar consists of throwing the kubar and having it spin on the floor. Because of its shape, a kubar spins on its axis and swirls around its conic tip. A kubar uses a string wrapped around it to get the necessary spin needed. The player can direct a kubar by a cane. There were different team games with a kubar. For example, two teams play against each other by trying to maneuver a kubar into the opponent's goal using a cane or a stick.

4) Caldron or 'kotyol' (Russian: 'котёл') is a game with a ball appeared in Novgorod in the 10th century supposedly. There are 7-10 players with a stick approximately 1 m long. The game is played on a field with a hole 30-40 cm in diameter called 'kotyol' in the middle and small holes within the limits of 2 m from the kotyol. The number of small holes should be one less than the number of players. Every player uses a special stick or club. One player tries to deliver the ball into the kotyol while other players try to defend it.

5) Walking stilts or 'khoduli' (Russian: 'ходули') are hand-held pole stilts consist of two long poles made of wood, each with a foot support. The stilt walker holds onto the upper end of the pole, rests his feet on the foot plates and pulls upward on the pole while taking a step. It is easy to make them, that is the why khoduli were really popular and common in and around ancient Novgorod. Adults and children tried to walk as far as they can and as fast as they can in order to reveal the winner.

6) Townlets or 'gorodki' (Russian: 'городки') is an ancient Russian traditional game. This game has been mentioned in fairy tales, ancient legends, and the records of the time of ancient Russia. This game became a part of the Russian culture. Similar in concept to bowling and also somewhat to horseshoes, the aim of the game is to knock out groups of skittles arranged in various patterns by throwing a bat at them. The skittles, or pins, are called gorodki (literally little cities or townlets), and the square zone in which they are arranged is called the gorod (city).

The development of public manufacturing and the modification of social relationships change our perception of games, new meanings and new functions come out.

But only traditional sports and games can form the backbone of a community, bring people together and install a sense of pride in a society's cultural roots. Traditional sports and games are part of intangible heritage and a symbol of the cultural diversity of our societies. They are also an efficient means to convey values of solidarity, diversity, inclusiveness and cultural awareness.

So nowadays it is vital to save and promote our native traditions and games arisen ages ago in ancient Novgorod and the Novgorodian land.