Tug Of War

How to Play Tug of War

Tug of war is one of the most ancient games on Earth—dating back at least to ancient Egypt, Greece, and China among others. Tug of war even spent some time as an Olympic sport between 1904 and 1920. The contest hasn’t changed much over time as it still essentially pits at least two players on either side trying to pull the other past a mid-point using a rope in between. There are numerous variations of the game, and organizations that play it in national and international leagues.

Playing the Game

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Instructions

1 Lay out the rope.

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In tug of war, opposing player or teams will pull on a rope until one of the teams or players succeeds at pulling the majority of the rope over to one side. To get started, all you need to do is take your rope and lay it out in a straight line on the ground. There should be a flag or marker in the center of the rope. If not, then place one in the center of your rope before you start the game.

2 Place the opponents.

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You can play tug of war in teams or as a one-on-one game. If you are going to have a team game, then make sure that you have an equal number of players on either side of the rope. If you are playing with just two people, then stand at opposite ends of the rope.

3 Grip the rope.

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Have all of the players pick up the rope and grip it tightly with both hands. Do this before you start the game so that everyone has a chance to get a good grip on the rope. Never anchor the rope around your waist or coil it around other parts of your body. This can result in severe rope burn, dislocations, or rope breaks that can snap and inflict other severe or even fatal injuries.

4 Place the judge in the center.

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If you have not chosen a judge yet, then do so now. The judge can be someone who does not want to play or an extra person if you have an odd number of players. Have the judge stand in the center of the rope. The judge will also need a whistle (or a loud voice) to signal to other players that the game has started.

5 Sound a whistle.

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The judge can blow a whistle or yell “Go!” to signal to the players that the game has started. Have the judge signal the start of the game so that the players will know when to start pulling. When the judge sounds the whistle or yells, then the game has officially started.

6 Pull as hard as you can.

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All players on either side should lean backwards with their feet planted as they pull to start. Try to use your body weight and leg strength to pull the rope back and away from the other team.

7 Keep pulling until there is a victor.

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Each team’s goal is to pull the marker or flag past the center point. When one team or player has accomplished this goal, that team or player will be declared the winner. Don’t stop pulling until the judge declares a winner.