

ATTESTAQNK (DICE)

The dice (attestaqnk) are made from the hind bone of a moose (tiaq). It is boiled for several hours to remove the oil, flesh, and marrow of the bone. Once boiled, cleaned, and dried, the bone will be softer to work with and easier to cut into squares. A master “attestaqnk” carver will be able to identify the perfect consistency of the bone and then begin to shape into a rounded shape using a chisel. One side of the circular shape is rounded, and the other side is flat. It is smoothed out into perfection, and a flower or curve design is carved in the flat side of the dice.

Once the design is carved in, natural dye is then used to color it so that when the game is played, points will be easily recognized.

A total of six dice is needed for the Mi'kmaw traditional game.

KITMAQNK (COUNTING STICKS)

The counting sticks consist of:

- 1 Kisikuo'p (old man wearing tie; edged both sides)
- 3 Kisikui'skwaq (old ladies; edged 1 side smooth 1 side)
- 51 individual (kitmaqnk) sticks (17 sets of 3's)

KISIKUO'P - The Old Man

You must score 6 round side down or 6 flat side up. It is called "pow." If won during "naskoqe'matink," it eliminates the 2nd round which is "esnoqemk" directly to the 3rd round wi'kuo'tatimk where not enough points can lead to "ela'lukwemk."

During Wi'kuo'tatimk, tqamuewe'l or “pow” when earned will be displayed as a 5-point stick in your hair.

KISIKUI'SKW - The Old Woman

There are three old ladies with the old man.

They are the first to be played in the game during "naskoqe'matink." Kisiku'i'skw can be won when you get all six of the dice up or down. It is also possible to win the Kisiku'i'skw when you get a point (5 dice & 1 up or down), 3 consecutive times "pekwis'k kisiku'i'skw." The old man cannot be won this way.

ATTESTAQNO'Q - The Bowl

The bowl is made out of "pqoq" a rock Maple hardwood burl. It is harvested during the summer or winter. It is easier to harvest in the winter as snowshoes (aqmk) make it easier to walk on the snow and see better, whereas in the summer, leaves make it much harder to harvest and to find. In the winter, a burl is easily transported using tepanj (sleigh). A skilled harvester will be able to make at least 2 bowls with one great harvest.

Preparation of the Burl

The burl is boiled in a large pot outside of the home along with the moose, elk, or caribou bone. The marrow and fat from the bone help the burl to be stronger and carve better.

You leave your boiled burl for a few days to acclimate to make carving of the bowl easier.

TQAMUEWEY

During "naskoqe'matink," if you acquire 6 up or down, you receive one of the Kisiku'i'skw. If you acquire 2 in a row, you win all 3 of the old ladies if they are available. If not, then a count of 5 will be awarded.

1 Point

A point is represented when 5 rounded sides & 1 flat side is displayed or 5 flat sides & 1 round side is displayed.

During "naskoqe'matink," a total of 3 counting sticks are given to represent a point. If you score 2 points in a row, you receive 3 counting sticks for each point and also a bonus totaling 9 counting sticks. $3+3+3$ (bonus) = 9.

If you acquire 3 points in a row, you receive a kisiku'i'skw (old lady) or 5 points, totally 15 counting sticks during "naskoqe'matink."

Point and Stick System:

- 1 Point = 3 Sticks
- 2 Points (Consecutive) = $(3+3) + 3 = 9$ Sticks
- 3 Points (Consecutive) = $(3+3) + 3 + 3 = 15$ Sticks

Tqamuewey (old lady [1 of 3], old man[tqamuewey])

- $(3 \times 5 = 15)$ sticks or 1 old lady)

Pow

- $(4 \times 4 = 16)$ sticks or 1 old lady + 1 stick)

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Note: The opposite player has the opportunity to win back the old man at this time; if unsuccessful, then payment takes place. It is also acceptable for the person who won the old man to just ask for payment by turning the bowl upside down to eliminate the chance of the opponent to win back the old man.

SCENARIO 1

The old man can be won even when the counter still has sticks to distribute. If so, payment will come from the remaining sticks, and the opposite player will complete the payment. During this time, 2nd Stage will be eliminated, and players can switch with partners at this time or continue on with the game to 3rd Stage.

The old man is paid as 3 sticks of 5, which is 15 sticks in the 1st Stage.

If you won the old man plus another "pow" you must pay the old man first with 15 sticks or an old lady.

Payment will continue for the other "pow" which will be 4 points which is 16 sticks.

Your opponent has a chance to win the old man back, and if so, the old man will be worth 10 points which is 2 sets of 5 sticks or 2 old ladies.

It is recommended that when you win the old man; STOP and ask for payment.

If the old man is won during esnoqemk, which is 2nd Stage (gathering wood for the old man), each point is worth 3 sticks.

When you accumulate a point, you put 1 point, which is worth 3 sticks. In other words, if you accumulated 9 sticks and your opponent accumulated 5 sticks, and the old man was won by you, payment is as follows:

- Player A has 9 points
- Player B has 5 points
- Player B wins the old man

Payment is as follows:

Player A, which has 9 points, must pay the 5 points for the old man to Player B and has 4 points left. Player B must pay Player A the remaining 4 points in the pile.

Payment will be as follows: Player B will pay the 4 points, which is 12 sticks (4×3).

After payments, the game continues to 3rd Stage Wi'kuo'tatimk.

SCENARIO 2

During Esnoqemk Stage 2 (Gathering wood for the old man)

- Player A: 9 points
- Player B: 5 points

- Player A wins the old man & stops & asks for payment

The old man is only worth 5 points and the 9 points accumulated.

Player B will pay 5 points (3×5 which is 15 sticks or an old lady) for the old man plus the 9 points, which will be 27 sticks or 1 old lady (5) and 12 sticks (3×4).

SCENARIO 3

- Player A: 5 points (15 sticks)
- Player B: 0 points and they won the old man

Payment as follows:

Player A will pay Player B 5 sticks (15 sticks)

ELA'LUKWEMK

This is when a player has limited sticks and has a chance to redeem themselves by “dancing with the chances of the dice to accumulate 7 points”. The opponent at this stage is prohibited to “a'ma” or wave the hand. As soon as the opponent waves the hand, they lose the game and the one that was dancing with the dice wins. All you need to dance is a point. When you win ela'lukwemk from dancing you win 2 games.

Sticks

1 stick Dance 7

2 sticks Dance 7

3 sticks Dance 7

4 sticks Dance 6

Old man + 1 stick Dance 6

**Old man + 2 Dance 7
sticks**

**Old man + 3 Dance 7
sticks**

Old man Dance 7

ATTESTAQNEY A'TUKWAQN

“WikipatImi’k” is a Mi’kmaw gathering of traditional ways & knowing. As part of this “Wikuatimk” the call to play among one another the Mi’kmaw traditional game of “Attestaqnk” known today as Waltes takes place.

So many sacred teachings have been known amongst our people who shared the love of the game, traditional knowledge & teachings.

Let me begin with the “attestaqnoq” known today as the Waltes bowl. It was made by “pqoq” the burl of a tree. The craftsperson would begin the process of harvesting the burl by offering sacred medicines, prayer, and smudge for the removal of the burl from the tree for the purpose of making of the “attestaqnoq”. A period of one year is allotted for the wood to be dried. It is boiled with the bone for the dice, to remove the sap but during this process of loss; it has to be replaced with other natural ingredients.

The game Waltes or Attesta’mink was played by the Mi’kmaw, Mohawks, the Inuit and Ojibway peoples. It was “wikuatimk” which is calling upon one another for the game or “wikipalitmik” gatherings. There are three old women who are identified as “Wikun” the bean, “Piskiman” the corn, and “E’kuj” the squash. These three women grew strong together supporting one another and acknowledged that their survival depended on one another. The three women grew old together and are known as “ne’jsik kisiku’wiquaq” in the traditional game Attestaqnk.

