



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

# ngarinbarm

'na-rin-barm'



SCHOOL  
YEARS  
4-6

SCHOOL  
YEARS  
7-9

## Background

The swimming game of *ngarinbarm* (turtle) was played by the Jagara (Jagera) people in lagoons around the Brisbane area.

## Language

The name *ngarinbarm* (turtle) is taken from the language used by the Jagara (Jagera) people of south Queensland.

## Short description

Players in a canoe chase and attempt to catch a *ngarinbarm*. The players who are the turtles swim underwater to avoid capture. The players in the canoe may enter the water to touch the turtles if they are within 2 metres of them.

## Players

- A group of four to ten or more players

## Playing area

- A swimming pool or suitable water area

## Equipment

- An inflatable rubber mat or small canoe capable of holding two to four players

## Game play and basic rules

- The players in the canoe start in the middle of the pool. Players (the turtles) slide into the pool and surface about 5 metres from the canoe, blowing air like a *ngarinbarm*. A signal for the game to commence is then given and the turtles immediately go underwater again.
- Each *ngarinbarm* may only move around by swimming underwater. Turtles may surface to rest and take a breath but cannot swim on the surface of the water or hold onto the sides of the pool. For safety reasons underwater swimming is restricted to 10 metres.

- The players in the canoe chase the turtles and at any opportunity when a *ngarinbarm* surfaces one of the players may slide underwater or dive/jump into the water to 'grab' (touch) the turtle and 'capture' him or her. The player entering the water must not jump on the turtle but can slide underwater or dive/jump after the turtle when he or she is within 2 metres.
- If the player misses the *ngarinbarm* and it moves more than 5 metres away, the player climbs back into the canoe. The catchers from the canoe may swim no more than 5 metres underwater. Players on the canoe take turns in attempting to catch the *ngarinbarm*.
- When a *ngarinbarm* has been touched (caught) another player in the canoe may enter the water and help to put the *ngarinbarm* in the canoe. The turtle is then returned to the start area or a designated area on the side of the pool.
- The players in the canoe catch a designated number of turtles (one to three) before a new group is selected to start a new game. When more than one turtle is caught in a game the player caught rejoins the game. He or she is returned to the start — no elimination from the game.

### Suggestion

To make it harder on the turtles the game may be played so that players are not allowed to touch the side of the pool and to rest they may only surface and float. To move about they have to be underwater (10 metres at a time only).

This activity might be useful as part of training or lessons in underwater hockey or water polo, or a fun activity as part of water games in physical education.

### Comment

When a turtle is caught it is usually taken to the shore amid much joking and laughing and comments from the other turtles and any spectators.

### Variations

- Players may only rest on the sides of the pool for 10 seconds.
- Have several turtles and boats and conduct a team competition.
- The *ngarinbarm* is allowed to either swim on the surface or underwater. A set stroke might be designated. (Recommended for physical education classes.)
- Only touches on the head when a player has surfaced count.
- Use a boogie (or body) board, or a rubber surf mat. The player (hunter) on the mat/board attempts to touch a turtle on the head (catch) as he or she surfaces.

### Safety

For safety reasons and to monitor the activity closely, only one to three turtles at a time might be allowed. Players involved should all be capable of undertaking the activity safely.

### Teaching points

- Canoe in the middle. Rest, spread out.
- Only underwater swimming for the turtles.
- No diving from the canoe. 5 metres only.
- Caught. Take them to the side. Let them go.
- Dive and swim.
- Keep moving.