

Coaches: Here's A Climbing Game That Invents Itself

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in [CWA Blog](#)



Creating new games and activities for a climbing program re-energizes participants, coaches, and brings a creative experience to climbing skills. It gives coaches new activities that they can use throughout the season with their teams, sparking creative thinking and group bonding.

The Invent-a-Game activity can be used in staff training as a way to get coaches thinking creatively and collaborating. It can also be used during practice as a teambuilding exercise for climbers to train their weaknesses. With a creative approach to facilitating, this activity can take on many forms and be used to achieve countless learning outcomes. If new parameters are set each time, it can be facilitated many times for the same group without becoming boring or stale.

There are many potential learning outcomes, so choosing one ahead of time is paramount. There is room for the facilitator to adjust parameters of the activity and contrive scenarios that challenge the group in different ways. For example, the facilitator might make a rule that only one member of the group is allowed to speak, that each group is required to incorporate exactly three pieces of equipment in their game, or that each participant must have a direct role in the game.

The beauty of this activity is that it provides agency for participants, allowing them to create the activity they want and need as a group. Allowing your participants to identify the training goals they want out of this activity can help you discover needs that you might not have been aware of. Creating this opportunity makes the process of learning and training more collaborative.

Activity Name: Invent-a-Game

Rules:

1. **Participants have a predetermined amount of time to create a completely unique climbing game that challenges specific climbing skills.**
 - a. Ex: The goal of the game is to help the climbers improve their footwork and groups are required to incorporate a hula hoop, jump rope, and handkerchief.
1. **When the time is up the team must be able to:**
 - a. Explain the rules of their game and how it fits any and all of the parameters established by the facilitator.
 - b. Demonstrate the game by playing one round as a group.
 - c. Explain how the game challenges the targeted skill.
 - d. If time permits, each group can teach and lead the other groups through a round of the game.

For the Coach:

1. Make sure to **clearly state the parameters.**
2. Pay attention to how the groups work together and **notice things they do well** or do not do well so you can refer back to specific things during the debrief.

Considerations:

1. Make sure to **emphasize safety.** You can even tell the participants that they will have to explain how they took safety into consideration when inventing the game.
2. The wider **variety of equipment** you make available to the groups, the better.

Debrief:

1. Lead a discussion that challenges participants to reflect on what they did, how they did it, and why they did it.
2. Challenge them to think about how the outcomes of the game apply to their rock climbing.

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About the Headwall Group



The [Headwall Group](#) distills the lessons learned as educators and leaders working in dynamic and high risk environments and brings them to youth-serving organizations. The Headwall group provides trainings, consultation, and curriculum development services that are rooted in our experience as outdoor experiential educators for climbing gyms, summer camps, and schools.



The Headwall Group was founded by Bix Firer and Pat Brehm. Bix Firer (MA, University of Chicago) is currently the Director of Outdoor Programs at College of Idaho and has worked as a wilderness educator, trainer, facilitator, and experiential educator for over a decade. Pat Brehm works as a professional organizational trainer and has spent his career as a climbing coach, facilitator, and outdoor educator.

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