

Greetings to all tribal members,

I hope everyone had a good holiday and were able to spend time with family and friends. The New Year is now upon us and let us strive to continue on a forward path as a person, family and tribe.

I wanted to let everyone know that Hubert Skye one of our northern brothers has taken seriously ill. For those that do not know Hubert, he is one of the ceremonial elders from the Six Nations. Hubert has been instrumental in teaching new ceremonial speakers the language and prayers for the Six Nations. He has been coming to our long house for many years to help us in what ever way he could. Please keep Hubert in your thoughts and prayers.

In keeping with the football bowl season I thought a newsletter on “Indian Football” might be a good subject for this month. For those that have not witnessed or participated in the game it is truly a sight to see. Your first question may be well how old is it? Or when did it begin? Well those are questions that I can only answer with “for as long as I remember”, and if you were to ask our ancestors they would probably also say “as long as I can remember”.

There are 2 types of football games we play at our grounds. The Medicine game and another kind which is one just for fun. The medicine game is played as part of healing with the participation, good thoughts and actions are displayed to our creator. Bets are taken and prayers given to our creator so that everyone will be blessed and he will help keep his people healthy. The Medicine game is cared for by a family and is handed down through each generation. The responsibilities were once Aunt Edna’s which with her passing having been handed down to Deana Rae. Deana sets the time, asks for a speaker and makes sure the bets are gathered. For this we are grateful the tradition continues.

For the fun games which always occur after the break from the peach seed game we have Tony Hall keeping things going. You will hear him hollering for football players all through the grounds. He even get’s a game going for the little kids so they get a chance to play. We all appreciate his help and support for he has been doing this for years and for that I say “Nya Weh”. *Below is Tony getting the kids lined out and the adult’s game.*



The football is approximately the size of a man’s hand with a shape being kind of circular and oblong like. It is 2 pieces of deer hide sewn together and filled with deer hair.

The playing field at our grounds is approximately 40-50 yards with 2 poles about 5ft apart put in the ground which make up the goal posts. There are no yard line markers, game clock, out of bounds (up to a point anyway) or other markings. Just the goals, the ball and the players. Although the playing field often has an occasional parked car in the way (which this usually only happens once), trees, electrical pole or water hole. People soon realize they better move their cars elsewhere.

In Indian football it is the women vs. the men where the men have to kick the ball on the ground and the women have the option to kick, run or throw the ball. Points are scored if the ball makes it through the goals. The game always brings a crowd of players and spectators to watch the fun. Usually there are two games played one for the young players and one for the grownups. There is no set number of players and if you want to play you just “get out there”.

Tony makes sure things don't get to ruff and anyone getting out of hand will either be made to sit out or they will have to put on an apron and play for the women. I say play for the women because I have yet to see the women get in trouble for playing to ruff.

I hope you found this interesting and informative and I will continue to send in articles to be included in the newsletter. Be safe and warm this winter.

Nya Weh  
Toot no son dee  
Ceremonial Chief  
Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma