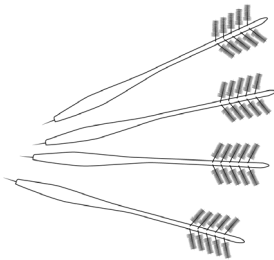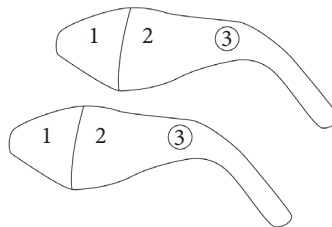# Augca'aq – Dart Game

Gaming is a favorite activity in Alutiiq communities. For centuries, people have gathered in each other's homes to test their skills and make bets. Traditional throwing games, like *augca'aq*, emphasized hand-eye coordination, mimicked the skills needed for hunting, and provided hours of fun. In this dart game based on sea mammal hunting, players take turns throwing darts at a wooden porpoise dangling from a string. Players kneel on the floor as if sitting in a kayak and throw their darts at the swinging model. The object is to score twelve points, which are awarded for the location of each strike. Elders recall that people would bet quantities of food, clothing, and even valuable items like firearms, outboard motors, and houses on the outcome of matches.
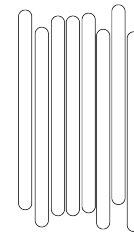
Supplies:

Darts   Targets   Tally Sticks

Play:
- Select teams. Two individual players may compete, or two team of two players each.
- If two people play, each player has two darts.
- If four people play, one player from each team has two darts.
- Players take turns throwing darts, until all darts are thrown.
- If playing in teams, one player from each team plays in each round. Then they alternate.
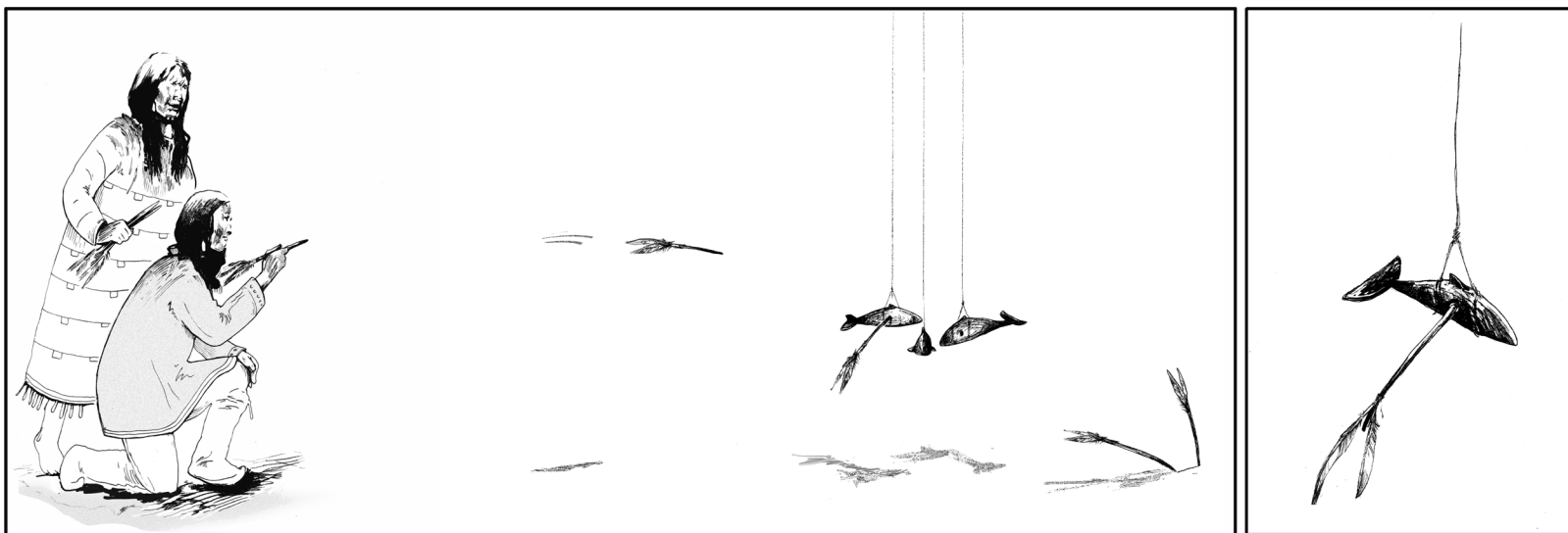- Scoring takes place after every turn.

Score:
- At the start, lay 12 tally sticks (counters) between the players/teams (counters may be twigs, pennies, etc.)
- Keep score by noting which section of the target the dart strikes and collect the corresponding number of counters.
- To score, a dart must stick in the target. If a dart bounces off the target, or falls out, no points are scored.
- No points are awarded if a dart sticks into a line drawn on the target.
- Eight points are awarded if a dart sticks into the string suspending the target.
- The player or team that wins all the counters twice consecutively, wins the match.
- If one dart sticks into another, the player who threw the second dart wins the match.

Alternative way to play:

- Play with bean bags and create a target with a hole (ex. corn hole) or area marked with point values.
- If two people play, each has two bean bags.
- If four people play, one member from each team had two bean bags.
- Take turns throwing the bean bags until all bags are thrown.
- Score as outlined above.

Men playing augca'aq. Illustration by Eric Carlson.

The rules and instructions shared here were passed down through generations by numerous Alutiiq community members. Other communities may have different variations of these games.