

## ROUND ROBIN RIVALS

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**This lesson will illustrate how the ice hockey tournament was played during the 1980 Olympic Winter Games in Lake Placid, NY, and encourage participation through a rock-paper-scissors tournament that mimics the 1980 tournament style.**

### CONTEXT

The 1980 "Miracle on Ice" was a historic ice hockey game during the Olympic Winter Games in Lake Placid, NY. On February 22, 1980, the underdog U.S. team, mostly amateur and college players, defeated the heavily favored Soviet Union team in a stunning 4-3 upset. This game took place during the medal round of the Olympic ice hockey tournament.

The ice hockey tournament followed a round-robin format, with teams split into two divisions. Teams played against each other once in division play to accumulate points—two points for a win, one for a tie, and zero for a loss. The two teams from each division with the highest point totals advanced to the medal round, where the U.S. team eventually won gold. Although this round-robin structure ensured every team had multiple opportunities to compete, it often is a source of confusion regarding the point system. Your students will explore this point system in an engaging rock, paper, scissors tournament while practicing simple addition.

### AIMS & OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

1. Understand the format of the 1980 Olympic ice hockey tournament
2. Practice simple addition as they keep track of points
3. Engage in friendly competition and practice sportsmanship

### MATERIALS

#### Primary Sources:

- Photographs from the Lake Placid Olympic Museum

#### Secondary Sources:

- The "Miracle on Ice, 35 Years Later" (2015) ABC News. 3:49. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyRVZX3J2uQ>
- Round Robin Graphic
- 1980 Ice Hockey Tournament Breakdown

# PROCEDURES

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- Introduce the activity by asking the students if any of them know what a “round-robin” tournament is. If they do, encourage them to share that definition with the class. If not, explain that a round-robin is a style of sports tournament in which every team plays each other at least once.
- Have students discuss in pairs or as a class if they have ever heard of the “Miracle On Ice.” Watch the three minute ABC news clip celebrating the 35-year anniversary of the Miracle On Ice to give some background on the game.
- The Miracle On Ice was a hockey game at the 1980 Olympics. That year, the US players were major underdogs going up against the Soviet ice hockey powerhouse. Against all odds, Team USA won the game. They went on to win the gold medal at that year’s Olympics.
- Show students the provided photographs of the match.
- Looking at the round-robin graphic, explain to students that despite winning this game, because of how a round-robin works, Team USA could have gotten silver and Team USSR could have gotten gold had the US lost to Finland. The way a round-robin works can be difficult to understand by looking at it. The best way to learn is by testing it yourself!
- Familiarize yourself and your students with the way the 1980 tournament worked by reading the provided “1980 Ice Hockey Tournament Breakdown.”
- Divide the class into two groups: the blue group and the red group. You can have the two groups go simultaneously with two different people keeping score, or have one group go while the other group is assigned the role of “spectators.” Their jobs are to cheer on the competition! → Note: Groups work best with 6-10 students in each. If your class size is bigger, adjust the number of groups accordingly. The red group and the blue group are just the designations used in the actual tournament in 1980.
- Line students up horizontally. On a whiteboard or large poster board, write their names in the order they are standing in a column. The first student in line plays rock-paper-scissors with the next student, and moves all the way down the line. When they reach the end, they sit down. The student who is now at the front of the line plays the next person in line, moving all the way down. The next student starts, and the cycle continues. By the end, each student will have played all the other students in the group. During each “match,” students must say their name and who won out loud (ie, “Julia won” or “Julia and Courtney tied”). This makes things easier for the scorekeeper, who uses tally marks to give 2 points to each winner, 1 point to each player in a tie, and 0 points to the loser. In rock-paper-scissors, a “tie” happens when both players play the same item (ie, both students play a rock).

- Have students interpret the tally marks and add up how many points each person scored. Students can create equations or count by fives to help them add everything together. The top 2 scorers in each group move on to the medal round.
- Students advancing to the medal round line up horizontally, just like they did for the initial round of the tournament. Write their names in a column in the same order they are lined up in.
- Students carry over points from their “division play.” The results of the game when the two students played each other determine the amount of points they carry over into the medal round. If the students tied when they played, then they each enter the medal round with one point. If the students played and one of them won, they enter the medal round with two points and the loser enters the round with zero points.
- Write their carryover points on the board.
- Students participating in the medal round can be standing up. All other students have a seat. They are the spectators. It can be fun to encourage cheering or drum rolls from the “crowd” as the medal round begins.
- The first student moves down the line and sits down. The next student plays the remaining students standing. Each student will play all of the others in the medal round. The same point system applies: each student who wins gets 2 points, a tie is 1 point, and a loss is 0 points.
- As a class, add up the tally marks and figure out who the champion is!

## **EXTENSION ACTIVITY: “WHAT IF” SCENARIOS**

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Students will be given a worksheet with “what if” scenarios from the 1980 ice hockey round-robin. Such as “what if the United States had lost to Finland in the last medal round match, would they have won the gold medal?” and ask students to use their understanding of the point system to solve the problem.

# NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS

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## *Social Studies*

- Elementary Standard 1.4: The skills of historical analysis include the ability to: explain the significance of historical evidence; weigh the importance, reliability, and validity of evidence; understand the concept of multiple causation; understand the importance of changing and competing interpretations of different historical developments.
- Elementary Standard 2.4: The skills of historical analysis include the ability to investigate differing and competing interpretations of the theories of history, hypothesize about why interpretations change over time, explain the importance of historical evidence, and understand the concepts of change and continuity over time.

## *Mathematics*

### Operations and Algebraic Thinking

- Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction.
- Understand and apply properties of operations and the relationship between addition and subtraction.
- Add and subtract within 20.
- Work with addition and subtraction equations.

### Number and Operations in Base Ten

- Extend the counting sequence.

### Measurement and Data

- Represent and interpret data.