

GPS Games

There are lots of great games that can be played using GPS units. The games described here could be used to host a tournament, or they could be used in a smaller setting with a 4-H club. Feel free to adapt these games to fit your needs, some of these games could be easily modified to include teaching stations.

For each game there is a suggested number of players, but that can be adjusted as needed. When adjusting the number of players, realize that it will probably require more flags or caches as well as more time for the games.

To keep it fair, it is often best to have some way of verifying that players have visited the caches. Be creative and use something that goes along with the theme of the 4-H club project or event where the game is being played.

Ideas for verifying that youth have visited the caches

- Have the youth collect a code or password at each cache which will allow them to find a prize at the end of the game
- Provide the players with a “passport” that they must “stamp” at each station. The stamp could be a sticker, a rubber stamp with an ink pad, or a hole puncher.
- Have a simple activity at each cache for the youth to create and bring back to the base with them

Safety first

- Have a first aid kit on hand
- Use the buddy system
- Be familiar with the area before the players arrive
- Ensure that all players know how to use their GPS units before arriving
- Mark your base as a waypoint in all of the GPS units
- Give all players a written copy of the base coordinates
- Choose terrain appropriate for the age and ability of players
- Give each player or team a two-way radio when possible

Equipment needed

- Flags or caches to hide
- Air horn or some other way to signal the beginning and end of games
- Two way radios to keep in touch with teams and the base (optional, but very useful)

Seeker

2-4 players

One team places multiple flags or caches into the search area and returns to base. Upon returning to the base the other team hunts for them.

When using flags either:

- Give coordinates of all flags to the seekers
- Write the coordinates to another flag on each flag placed

When using caches:

- Each cache should contain the coordinates of another cache
- All caches must be referenced from at least one other cache
- Only one waypoint given the seeker at base camp

If played with three people in a round-robin fashion, there will always be one person out hiding flags or caches, one seeker, and one waiting their turn; which promotes fast games.

Cache Race

2-8 players

Setup

- Choose beginning and end locations and record their coordinates using your GPS unit
- Create two separate paths from the starting point to the end and place caches along the way
- Place coordinates for the next stop on the path in each cache

Gameplay

- Divide players into two teams
- Explain that their goal is to reach the end point before the other team
- Give each team the coordinates to their first stop on the way to the end point
- Each team then heads to their first waypoint where they will find coordinates to the next

Capture the Cache

2 or 4 players

Two teams start on opposite ends of the designated playing area. At the sounding of the horn, both teams rush to the cache of the opposing team and obtain the coordinates to the winning waypoint.

The winning waypoint should be marked low to the ground with a flag and may be located anywhere roughly centered between the caches.

Relay

2 players

Two players navigate from waypoint to waypoint in one direction. Upon reaching the end of their respective route, each player will follow the alternate route taken by the other player back to base.

Whoever makes it back to base first wins.

CacheMaster

2-3 players

This game is best played with a very small number of people.

- One person is designated the CacheMaster
- The CacheMaster scouts ahead 5 minutes armed with 12 small caches and a radio.
- At 5 minute intervals the CacheMaster hides a new cache and radios the position to the players also carrying radios.

After hiding the final cache the CacheMaster is to return to base. Players take turns acting as the CacheMaster.

Domination

2-8 players

- Divide players into two teams
- One member from each team draws a random waypoint and navigates to the waypoint
- When a player reaches a waypoint, they are to retrieve the flag and return to base
- When the player returns to base, another team member draws a waypoint and retrieves the next flag

Note: An even number of flags should be used for this game.

The game ends when a team first returns with their half of the total number of flags.

Tag Race

4-6 players

Each player on a team successively retrieves one of two flags at each waypoint.

The first player retrieves the flag from the first waypoint, player two from the second waypoint, etc. The first team to retrieve the final flag and return to the base wins.

All Out War

2 or 4 players

Setup

- Take the coordinates for two bases and a middle point
- Give each team one of the base locations and the middle point
- Each team places flags for the other team to find
- Teams swap coordinates and go to their bases

Note: This game should only be played with an odd number of flags.

Gameplay

- Once both teams are at their bases, signal the start of the round by sounding the horn
- Both teams try to collect as many flags as possible in the allotted time
- Sound the horn to signal the end of the round
- Both teams meet at the middle point with their flags for scoring

Around the World

2-4 players)

Setup

- Mark several waypoints in a circular shape

Gameplay

- One team will navigate to every point going clockwise, and the other counterclockwise
- The first team to have every member of the team navigate to all of the points and return to the base is the winner