

Black Eye — Senegneq, Segneq

MAL'UGNEK SEGNENGQ'RTUA, KINAM TENGLUKIINGA! – I GOT TWO BLACK EYES, SOMEBODY HIT ME!



Photo: Boys spar at boxing match during Old Harbor's Independence Day celebration, 2005. Courtesy of Sven Haakanson.

There are many ways to get a black eye. Elders recall that men and boys working around swinging fishing gear were frequently bruised in the face. Others got shiners from fighting, particularly after school. Parents forbid such sparring and would punish them if they found out they were involved in a fight. Even those who were defending themselves were punished for fighting. Parents taught their children to walk away from fights. Similarly, if a woman got bruises from her husband, this behavior was whispered about and looked down upon by the whole village.

Although Alutiiq people discouraged fighting, they encouraged wrestling. Among the Chugach Alutiiq of Prince William Sound, wrestling matches occurred at community gatherings, where people tested their strength and agility. Players would grasp each other's hands, or wrap their arms around each other's waists, and try to knock their opponent off his feet. When a person fell, he lost. Other forms of wrestling included finger, arm, or leg wrestling, where participants hooked each other and pulled. Today, wrestling remains popular among Alutiiq people. Young men

participate in competitive high school and college wrestling with support from Alutiiq corporations.