

The Featherball

A Handy Game Around the World



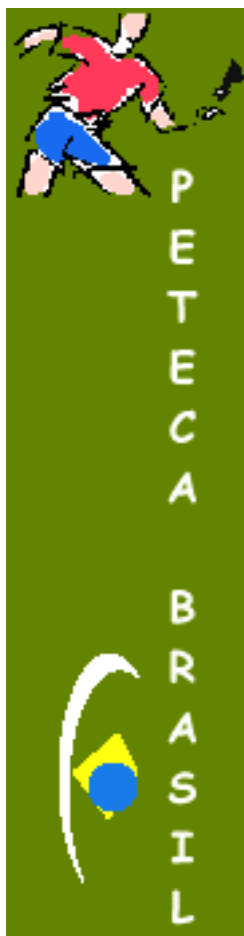
Illustration from Brazilian Website,
attributed to Heliana Brandão from
The Book of Games and Tricks for all Ages

I first enjoyed playing with a hand featherball when Bill Henderson introduced them to me in 1985. Bill called his version of this fascinating toy a ‘Funderbird’ and I’ve continued to use that name as well. In the past decade, I’ve shared more than a thousand of these ‘birds’ with the summer camps, schools, outdoor education centers and teambuilding programs I’ve had the opportunity to visit. More recently, I went looking for additional ideas and activities for these valuable props. In the past year, I searched the internet and found a wealth of information about this game, and am pleased to report that it has become an internationally enjoyed sport, known as either Peteca (primarily in South America) or as Indiacca (in Europe and Japan). There was even an international ‘world cup’ championship in Europe this past year celebrating this sport. Featherballs have also been common in China, Korea and Japan for generations.

Don’t let the playful illustration above fool you. Indiacca and Peteca have become a serious sport and fitness phenomenon in several countries around the world.



I hope you enjoy this overview of interesting ways that you can make a hand featherball part of your social recreation, fitness or sports program. I'll use the title 'Funderbird' when discussing the more playful games associated with a featherball. Peteca will be used to describe the South American version of the activity, which is generally credited with being the original version as well. Indiacca will be used for the most recent incarnation of the game, from a strongly European viewpoint. Some additional versions of this game are also presented at the end of this document.



Not surprisingly, Brazil hosts many of the dedicated Peteca websites, but the UK is a close second. Germany, Portugal and Japan host most of the Indiacca websites. Try a Google search using each of these words. A summary of some of the more interesting websites is included at the end of each section of this article.



Much of the information presented here (text and images) has been borrowed from the internet, with the appropriate websites noted when available. I hope you enjoy this collection of facts, games, history, rules and ideas for enjoying and making the hand featherball a part of your recreational play.



Section I

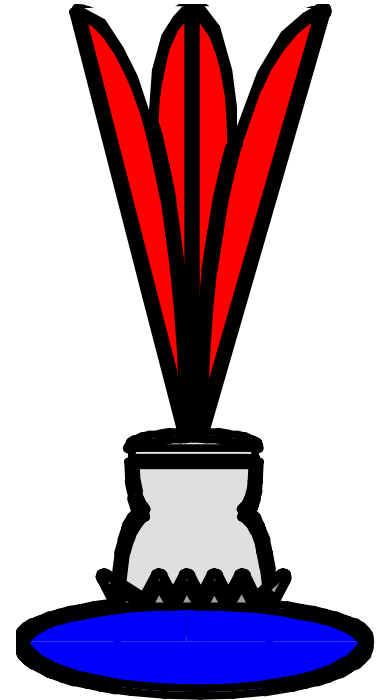
The Featherball in North America

A Brief History

In North America, the Zuni Natives of New Mexico played with shuttlecocks made of corn husks, stuck with feathers and batted with the hand, calling this game Pokeif. The Piman Natives of Arizona have a similar game. The Kwakiutl game of Quemal is similar to the Funderbird games listed in this section, and was played by a group standing in a circle.

Bill Henderson of Lima, Ohio in the United States first introduced me to his version of the featherball, which he called a Funderbird. Bill is an excellent woodworker, and made his Funderbirds by hand-turning a wooden base, attaching it to a leather fabric-filled pouch with a strong cord, and completing the job with several brightly colored feathers.

Bill says that Funderbirds are a ‘magnetic’ toy. They are fascinating and ‘attract’ participants with their flight and energetic play.



Games for Fun

I like to enjoy Funderbirds in circles of six to twelve people. Demonstrate the basic, palms-up hitting technique, and encourage the group to try to reach 21 consecutive hits without allowing the Funderbirds to hit the floor. In Mexico this past year, children ‘counted’ using the letters of the alphabet from A to Z, instead of numbers from 1 to 21.

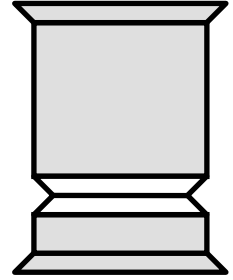
After the group has mastered the basics, here are a few variations that you can include:

- Use your non-dominant hand only to hit the Funderbird.
- Use both hands, while balancing only on one foot.
- Using both hands and with both feet touching the floor, clap three times after each hit, before being allowed to hit the Funderbird again.
- After hitting the Funderbird, each player must spin 360 degrees before hitting it again. This variation promotes eye-hand coordination and is useful with athletes.
- After hitting the Funderbird, each player says their own name loudly.
- After hitting the Funderbird, each player must ‘high five’ another player before hitting it again.
- After hitting the Funderbird, each player must move to a new location before hitting it again.

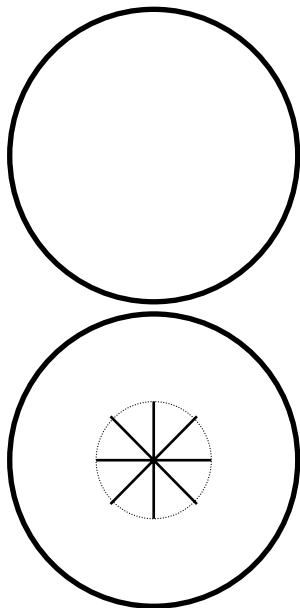


How to Make a Funderbird

To begin, you'll need a large wooden spool, several small pieces of foam or carpet padding, two 4 inch (102 mm) disks made from thin leather, suede or synthetic vinyl to make the pouch, three long turkey wing feathers, sewing thread and about 12 inches (305 mm) of artificial sinew (found at many leather craft stores).



Starting with the wooden spool, you'll need to create a groove around the base. A V-shaped tool on the lathe works well for this operation. You'll also need to drill a 3/8 inch (9 mm) hole 2 inches (51 mm) deep into the top end of the spool for the feathers.

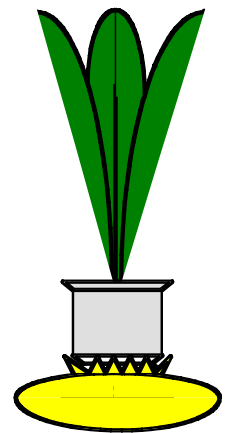


Next, cut out two 4 inch (102 mm) diameter disks from the leather, suede or vinyl. One disk will remain solid, while the other has a series of 4 diagonal cuts near the center of this disk. See the illustration below. These four cuts can be made with a razor knife or sharp scissors. Sew the perimeter of the two disks together with the best side of the leather, suede or vinyl facing inward. After sewing a circle around these disks, turn this assembly inside out by inverting the disks through the region with the diagonal cuts.

Stuff the interior of this pouch with foam or carpet padding. Now use the artificial sinew to stitch through each of the 8 triangular shaped tabs near the bottom of each tab. Insert the spool into the pouch and tightly pull the sinew into the groove. Tie several knots to secure the pouch to the spool. Cut off any excessive sinew.



Now insert the feathers into the top hole of the spool. Save the feather with the sharpest point for last. These feathers may be glued in place, but friction is sufficient, so that they can be pulled out easily for transportation. Feathers come in both right and left sided version (depending on which side of the bird they came from)! If you use feathers from the same side of the bird, the Funderbird will spin in the air.



Paper Funderbirds

You can also play a version of Funderbirds by wadding up a piece of paper and keeping it flying. My favorite educational version of this activity is to write a key word, concept, quotation or phrase on the paper before crumbling it. Then, after the group has played for a while, have them unfold the paper, discover the words written there, and discuss their importance and meaning.

Another example of a Funderbirds made from paper is shown in the illustration below. These 'birds can be filled with fabric or leather scraps and then tied with string or masking tape. Paint can be applied to add a bit of color.



From South America come the following instructions. See the photo at left for examples. Things you will need: Two large sheets of newspaper, string or adhesive tape, a sock or scrap of fabric. Begin by kneading the sock into one sheet of paper, to make a flattened ball. Place this ball in the center of the other sheet of paper and wrap the corners upward. Twist the outer paper around the ball and tie securely with string or adhesive tape. Paint with bright colors.

For more information, see the book, *Toys – Challenge and Discovery* by Nylse Helena Da Silva Cunha, Published for the Foundation of Assistance to the Student (FAE), South America.

Playful Ideas for Funderbirds

Using Funderbirds as Part of a Field Day

Prepare a day so that all students fall in love with physical activity, not just the athletes in the group. Create opportunities so that each person has multiple turns at an event. *Once and done is not fun!* Focus on learning new skills, rather than whether players succeeded or failed. Sportsmanship and acquiring new skills should be the biggest part of the day. Use activities that demonstrate that participating as an individual is easy, while being an integral part of a team is hard. Use team events to bring students and teachers together in playful ways. Include a mix of individual, small group and large team events to add variety to your field day experience.

Source: <http://www.pecentral.org/lessonideas/fielddays/fielddaysindex.asp>

Also: <http://www.play.cloh.org/hot/field-day-games.html>

Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, is known as Shuttlecock Day in the County of Leicester, England. The Leicester Chronical for February 12th, 1842 reports that:

"Shrove Tuesday is celebrated in Hinckley [Leicestershire] by a general game of shuttlecock and battledore, which is a very novel and amusing sight to a stranger. If however that stranger had come from the West Riding region of Yorkshire, the spectacle, though it might have amused him, would not have been new to him because he would probably have seen it at home many times before on the same anniversary, in the villages of the West Riding.

- wrote the journalist William Henderson."

Editors note: This custom is thought to have died out in Leicester at the end of the 19th century. But even more fascinating, is that the name of the journalist writing the account, and the name of the person that first introduced me to such things as Funderbirds, is exactly the same, William Henderson!

My shuttlecock

Text and Drawing by Qiau-Hong Sun

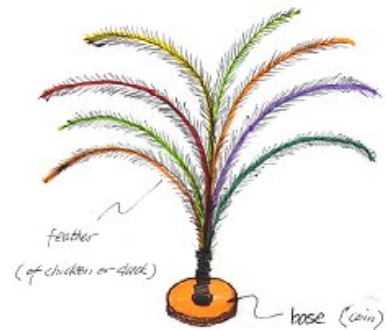
In my memory, playing the shuttlecock game was one of my favorite things during my childhood. The shuttlecocks I played were not used for playing badminton game; they were just used for playing by themselves.

My hometown is in northeast China where the winter is very long—almost six months. Playing the shuttlecock outside was the main game in the winter.

Because I liked to play this kind of game very much, the shuttlecock became my good friend who always accompanied me in the long winter.

The game is very simple. It is played by a person who kicks the shuttlecock with either foot and keeps it from hitting the ground for as long as possible. Players can kick the shuttlecock with different parts of their feet. Sometimes we divided into teams to see which team could keep playing for a long time.

Shuttlecocks are easy to make by hand. I typically used chicken feathers. The cock feathers are the most colorful. I also used rough thread made from hemp or flax. For the base, I usually chose two or three ancient Chinese coins, which have a hole in the middle. I wrapped thread around the coins, and then placed the feathers into the hole. Finish by wrapping even more thread around the coins and the feathers. Thus, a simple shuttlecock is now ready. That was very easy, wasn't it?



From the Chinese Shuttlecock (Chien-Tsu) Game

Two levels of the game are called “Lesser Accomplishments,” which calls for kicking with one foot, and “Greater Accomplishments,” which requires both feet at the same time. Tricks require the use of other parts of the body as well. “Ivory Chopsticks” calls for catching the kicked shuttlecock between two fingers.

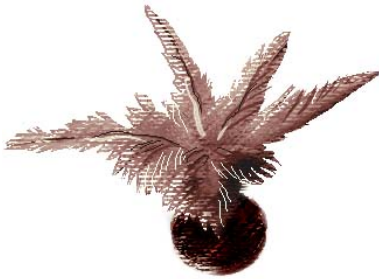
This was a cold-weather game, since the vigorous exercise warms the body. In 1975, the Taiwanese government included shuttlecock in the elementary school physical education program, which revived its popularity.

Badminton

The Meau tribe in the northwest of Thailand call their version of the game Ndi, and use a primitively carded wooden bat (battledore) to hit a shuttlecock made from a short piece of bamboo with three feathers wedged into one end. For a thorough description of this game, see the 1947 book by anthropologist Hugo Adolf Bernatzik, entitled *The Akha and Meau*.

Shuttlecock games traveled to Germany when Peter von Rüdén brought them back from China. Teacher Jordan Stavridis, an instructor in the Chinese martial arts, used a featherball as a basic exercise in Greece, and later helped them join the International Shuttlecock Federation. In Malaysia, Sepak Bulu Ayam is the original name of the shuttlecock game. The Portuguese colony Macau commemorated their version of the game, known as Chiquia, with a 1989 postage stamp. Indonesia boasts a version of the game, known since the 10th century as Bola Bulu Tangkis.

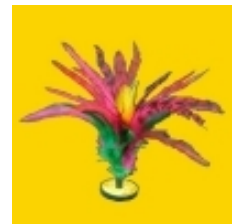
In the Singapore version of the game, known as Chaptah, no net is used. Players begin in a circle and play until the featherball hits the ground. The player who misses the ball must leave the circle. The final rounds until a final winner occurs.



One variation of the origin of the Brazilian Peteca suggests that it was a popular game of the children of the Xavante tribe, and that the shape of the Peteca was based upon a species of grass, like garlic, complete with bulb, roots and leaves. This would be very similar to a foxtail or modern day rocketball (a rubber ball with colorful streamers).

From the book *British Folk Customs* by Christina Hore, 1976, comes this interesting account:

"The Shuttlecock or Shuttlefeather, is a very old game, which was sometimes used by young people as a form of divination. A question concerning the number of months before marriage, or years before death, or the initials of the future wife's husband was asked at the beginning and answered by the number of successful strokes made before the player missed, and the shuttlecock fell to the ground."



Like the songs which accompany rope skipping in many countries around the world, featherball, shuttlecocks and the like also have their own rhymes, including:

*Grandmother, grandmother.
Tell me no lie,
How many children before I die?
One, two, three, four ... and so on.*

*Shuttlecock, shuttlecock, tell me true,
How many years have I to go through?
One, two, three, four ... and so on.*

How to Make a Korean Chegi Shuttlecock

Begin with two or three large coins. Placed these at the center of a square piece of vinyl. Wrap the coins in the sheet and tie with a string. Cut the upward tail in strips to make a tassel. That's all! In the photo at right, a Korean student shows us a shuttlecock he made himself.



A Charming Coincidence

In Korea, outdoor merchants play a version of Peteca to keep warm during the cold winter months. And from the Tudor Dynasty of England comes this refrain, replacing the word Battledore with Peteca:

*Peteca, Peteca, tell me true
How many years have I to go through?
One, two, three...*

English Refrain
Dynasty of the Tudor

Translating Peteca

From the Google search engine comes several uniquely translations about the Peteca. Shown here exactly as translated from Portuguese:



Peteca sport that is "machine of making friends!"

*Used as recreation it is very useful as pastime,
glad, pleasant and relaxed.*

Many publications like books, magazines, information and news articles exist that emphasize in the advantages of the practice of this sport. It can be practiced by children and adult without it limits of age. He is recommendable, specially to the adults, like heating system before the practice of any other type of physical activity. (Or, in other words, Peteca is a great game for all ages, and a practical warm-up activity).



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Making an Aboriginal (Maize) Peteca

"stones wrapped in leaves tied inside an ear of corn"

To make a Peteca like the ones played by aboriginal children more than 500 years ago, you will need, several small stones, a cornhusk, a l

Make a pocket by placing a dozen cornhusk leaves (placed like the hours on a clock, with the tips facing outward) onto the large tree leaf, and then placing several small stones into the center and folding the edges of the leaf over them. Twist the place where the leaf pocket and cornhusks join and tie this location with a string or slide a metal ring over the cornhusk tips to the location of twist. Your Peteca is now ready. Invite your friends to play.



Sources: <http://jangadabrasil.com.br/setembro13/ca13090a.htm>
<http://www.sinodal.com.br/projetos/hpindio/osndios.html>
<http://www.educacaofisica.com.br/esportes/peteca.htm>

Alternative names for Featherball Games and Shuttlecocks

(hand, foot and racquet varieties)



<i>Batinton</i>	<i>Badminton</i>	<i>Bola Bula Tangkis</i>	<i>Battledore</i>	<i>Breiche</i>	<i>Chiquia</i>
<i>Cau Tuyen</i>	<i>Chapteh</i>	<i>Courtship Shuttlecock</i>	<i>Chegi</i>	<i>Chien Tsu</i>	<i>Da Cau</i>
<i>Funderbirds</i>	<i>Fjaderboll</i>	<i>Federballspiel</i>	<i>Hanetsuki</i>	<i>Indiaca</i>	<i>Jeigi-chagi</i>
<i>Jianzi</i>	<i>Jeu de Volantis</i>	<i>Hand Shuttlecocks</i>	<i>Kemari</i>	<i>Larong Sipa</i>	<i>Le Coguentin</i>
<i>Le Volant</i>	<i>Mangá</i>	<i>Jeu de la Comete</i>	<i>Kwaitusiwikut</i>	<i>Ndi</i>	<i>Peikra</i>
<i>Peteca</i>	<i>Picandea</i>	<i>Pilvotiau</i>	<i>Pluimbal</i>	<i>Podopterisi</i>	<i>Pokeif</i>
<i>Poona</i>	<i>Quemal</i>	<i>Sepak Bulu Ayan</i>	<i>Volleybirds</i>	<i>Featherball</i>	<i>Shuttlecock</i>
<i>Foxtail</i>	<i>Rocketball</i>	<i>Pluimbal</i>	<i>Picandea</i>	<i>Greiche</i>	<i>Pilvotiau</i>
<i>Shoujian</i>	<i>Jianqui</i>	<i>Kinja</i>	<i>Ti Jian Zi</i>	<i>Yumaoqui</i>	<i>Shuttlefeather</i>



A Poll from the UK Peteca Association Website

What does the word "PETECA" mean...?

- Volley Me
- Hit it
- Feathery ball
- Big Hit
- Flying Ball
- My dog ran away with the sausage

Official Rules



Playing Field – 5.50x15.00 meters (singles). 7.50x15.00 meters (doubles, the most common form of the sport).

Net – 2.43 meters for men, 2.24 meters for women, 2.00 meters for youth (8-12 yrs).

Peteca – A flat rubber base 50-52 mm in diameter, standard weight of 40-42 grams, 4 straight white feathers, total height 20 cm.

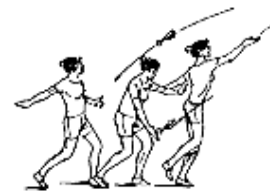
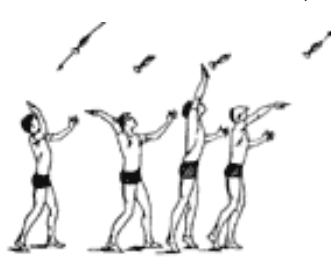
Initial Serve – Underhand ONLY!

Clothing – Court shoes. Fingerless gloves are permissible.

Scoring – Best of three matches. 12 points wins a match. 20 minutes max. per match. Only the serving side can score.

Play- One hit per side ONLY!

Common Errors – hitting the net, under the net, outside the limits of the court, two hits or touches on the same side, penetration to the other side of the net, touching the Peteca with two hands, 30 seconds to score per serve.



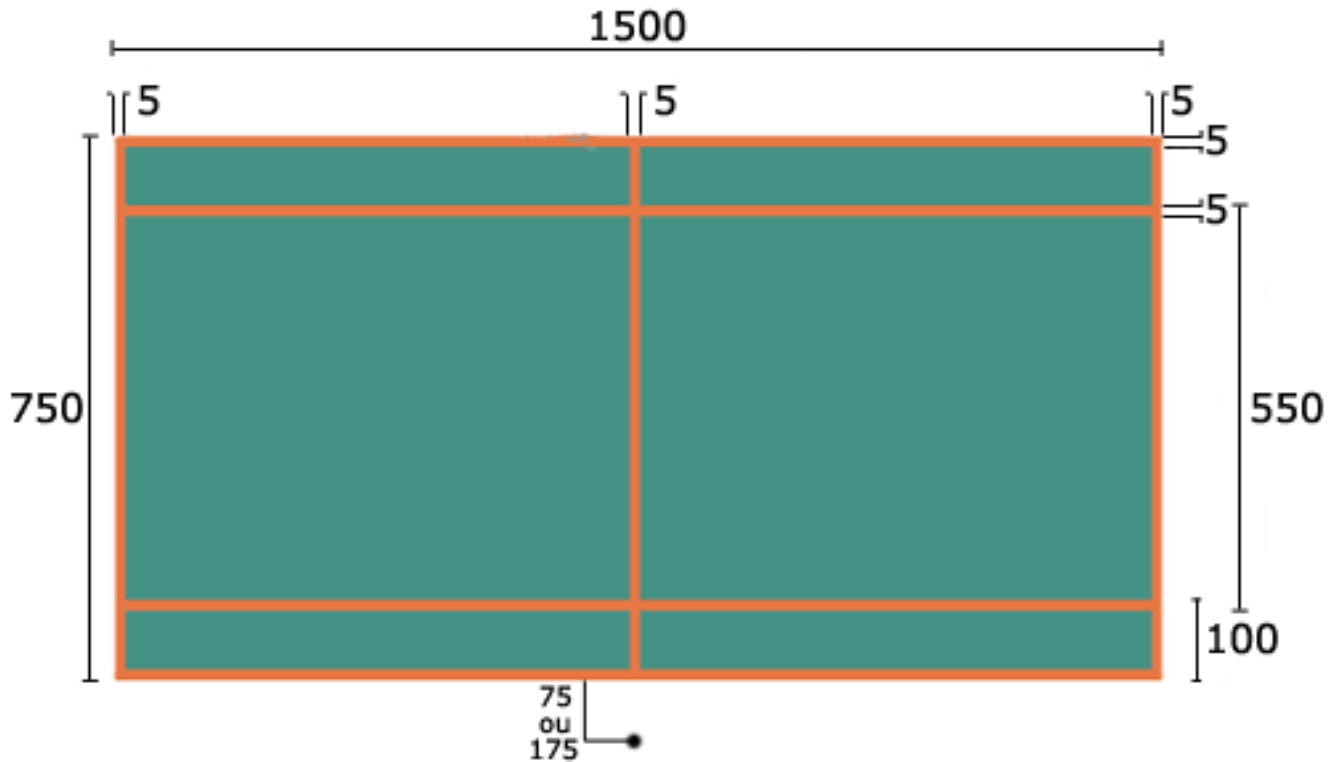
“Regulating the sport of Peteca goes a long way towards facilitating international competitions and the long-term plan to include Peteca in the Olympic Games.”

Lazarus Soares, President, Brazilian Confederation of Peteca



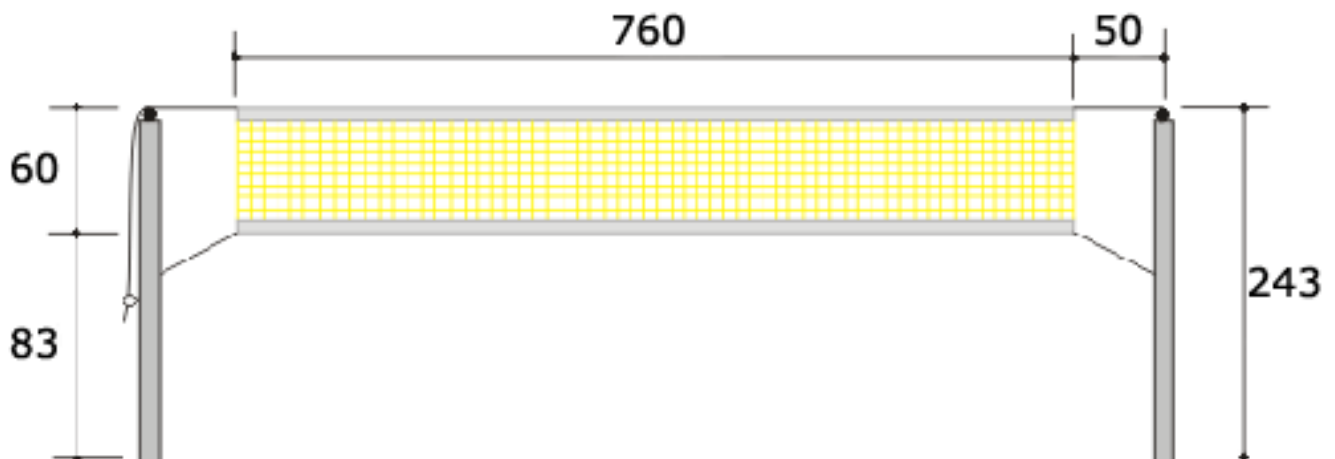
Mini-Peteca is played on a standard size badminton court with a standard badminton net and a slightly softer Peteca.

Quadra de Peteca



Escala de 1:100

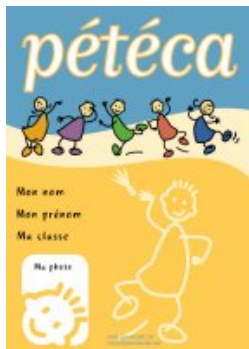
Dimensões da rede



Escala de 1:100

Where to Find More Information

Books



Infantial Games, Tizuko Morchida Hishimoto - Petrópolis, 1993, Voices, Rio De Janeiro, Brazil, SA.

Recreation for All (Manual Teórico-Prático) (Manual Theoretical and Practical), Mauro Soares Teixeira and Jarbas Sales De Figueiredo, 1970, Obelisco LTD Publishing Company, São Paulo, Brazil, SA

Book of Games and Tricks for all Ages, Heliana Brandão, Maria of Favours and V. G. Froeseler, 1997, Reading Publishing Company, Belo Horizonte, SA

Peteca – Sport or Recreation? Cícero Cerqueira

We Are Going to Play Peteca, Maria Luísa Goncalves, 1978, Brazilian Movement of Alphabetization, Ministry of Education and Culture.



Websites

United Kingdom Peteca Association (UKPA)

www.ukpeteca.co.uk

info@ukpeteca.co.uk

Federation Francaise de Peteca (FFP)

www.federationdepeteca.com

The Peteca Club of Doves email

peteca.colombes@neuf.fr

Peteca Brazil Website

www.petecadobrasil.com.br

Rules, regulations and a description of the game

www.peteca.com.br

Dictionary Answers

www.answers.com/topic/peteca

www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/bluepeter/content/articles/2006/03/06/dyk_peteca_feature.shtml

General Information

circuitodapeteca@yahoo.com.br

Peteca History Source

www.fempemg.hpg.ig.com.br





Section III The Indiaca

A Brief History

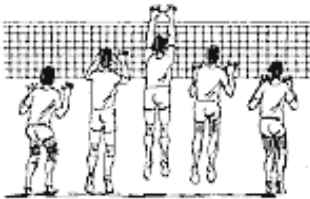
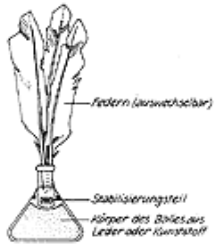
In 1936, Karl Hans Krohn, a German physical education teacher discovered a game known as Peteca in the mountain regions of Brazil. He learned that this popular game had been played for generations. A pouch filled with organic plant materials or sawdust formed the base while three or four feathers completed the ‘featherball.’ The game is played without racquets or boundary fencing (since the featherball does not roll away when dropped to the ground, even in the mountains). Krohn chose to name his version of the game as Indiaca, a combination of the words ‘Indian’ and ‘Peteca.’ This title is used today in Europe and Asia. Heinz Karl Kraus succeeded Krohn and organized numerous associations and clubs, integrating these into the German Turnerbund (DTB), with the playful insignia shown above. In May 2000 the International Indiaca Association (IIA) was formed. The IIA sponsors a world championship every four years.

Similar to volleyball, and weighing quite a bit lighter (typically less than 50 grams), the Indiaca requires agility, eye/hand coordination and stamina. In 1972 the German Sport Federation named the Indiaca the ‘fitness device of the year.’ More than a million Indiaca players live in Japan and Europe.

Indiaca is a registered trade name for a hand shuttlecock game distributed by the German Sporting Goods Manufacturer Bremshev Sport GmbH

Official Rules

You can download the official Indiacas rules, approved by the 1st Congress of the International Indiacas Association in Karlsruhe, Germany, in PDF format from the IIA website at www.indiacas.net. Two forms of regulations can be found there: The official Indiacas rules (OIR) valid for competitions, and the recreational or leisure sport version, found in the Extract of OIR.



Indiacas – 4 Feathers 18-20 cm long, 50-60 grams total weight, 7-8 cm diameter pad.

Playing Field – A flat rectangle, 6.10 x 16.00 meters (6.10 x 8.00 meters per side).

Net – 6.50 meters wide by 1.00 meters high with a 45mm x 45mm mesh. Height of the net should be 2.35 meters for men. For women, 2.15 meters. For youths, 2.00 meters.

Teams – 5 players and 2 substitutes for adults. 6 players and 2 substitutes for youth.

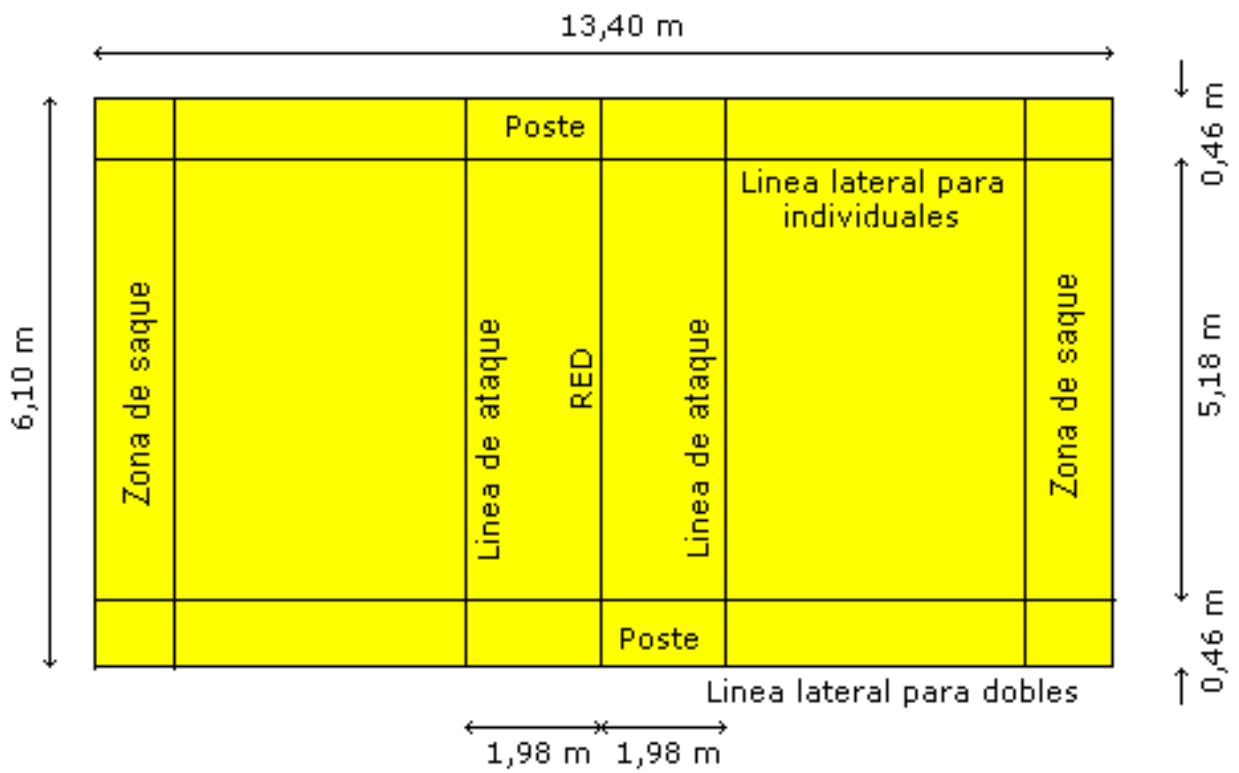
Initial Serve – Underhand only!

Scoring – 25 points per match. Teams then trade sides. Only the serving side can score.

Play – The Indiacas may be hit up to three times on the same side, but not twice in a row by the same player. A defensive block does not count as a 'hit.'

Common Errors – hitting the net, under the net, hitting more than three times on a side, holding the Indiacas, carrying the Indiacas, reaching over the net, touching the opposite field (ground), hitting the Indiacas twice in a row, hitting the Indiacas with any body part other than the hand, except as a defensive move, intentional delay of play, team rotation errors.





Where to Find More Information About Indiaca

International Indiaca Association	www.indiaca-iaa.net
Estonia	www.indiaca.ee
Germany	www.indiaca-dtb.de www.indiaca.de
Italy	www.indiaca.it
Japan (The Japanese Indiaca Assoc)	www.japan-indiaca.com
Luxembourg	www.indiaca.lu
Slovakia	www.indiaca.host.sk
Switzerland	www.indiaca.ch.vu
Portugal (plenty of images)	www.stv-fsg.c
France	www.circuitodapeteca.com www.federationdepeteca.com
2002 World Cup	www.indiaca-world-cup-2002.de
2006 World Cup	www.indiaca.ee/worldcup2006
High School Project	www.indiaca-untersuchung.foru.de



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The Story of a Sportsman

Ronei Machado, a 39 year-old computer science entrepreneur, played basketball until age 17. To say that he was a talented player is quite accurate. Then cancer changed his life, including the amputation of his right arm. As an accomplished sportsman, especially good with his hands, Ronei was devastated. At age 21, Ronei discovered Peteca. “Until then, I had not yet found a sport where I could be truly competitive,” he remembers. Last week, Ronei became vice-champion of the Brazilian Peteca Championships, sporting more than 220 athletes from throughout Brazil. Even more than earning the silver medal, Ronei was elected the most prominent player of the competition, receiving the trophy for best player of the match.

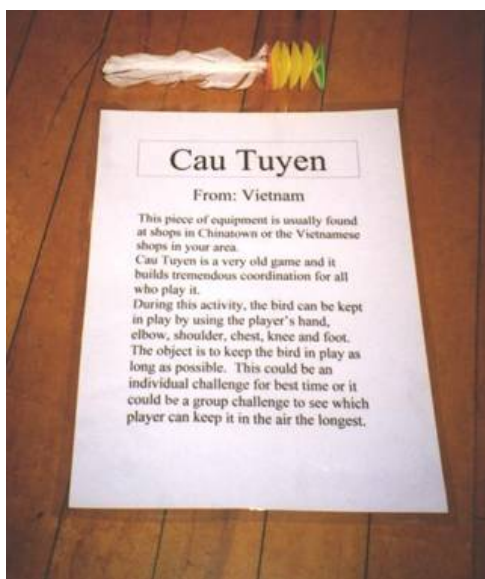
“What is most true of Peteca is that, as in any sport, to compete well requires training and good physical preparation (he trains four times per week, for two to three hours each session). But, if the intention alone is to have fun, any person, of any age, can play (Peteca).”

Ronei Machado

Other Varieties of Featherball Games

Hand Shuttlecock or Courtship Shuttlecock is the Chinese variation of the featherball. It has been a favorite of the Dong people for more than a thousand years, originating with the throwing and catching of rice seedlings as they were being planted in the fields. Shuttlecocks are typically made from easily accessible agricultural products, such as blades of grass, seeds and chicken feathers.

Because it would be considered impolite to refuse, everyone accepts an invitation to play this traditional sport. Because of this, young people use it as an excuse to get to know one another, and treat it as a form of courtship.



In Vietnam, they play Da Cau or Cau Tuyen. It is a favorite activity for all ages, and can even be found in the United States within the Vietnamese section of many cities. Mike Spiller found a version of this game being avidly played by Vietnamese boys in Oklahoma City.

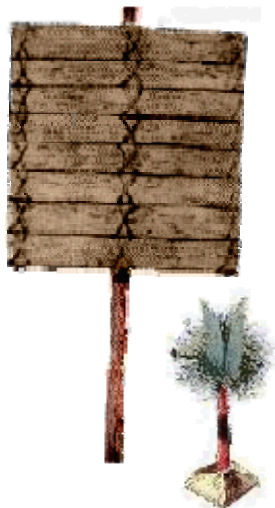
The Cau Tuyen, is played somewhat similar to hacky sack, and can be hit with any part of the body to keep it in flight. Keeping the Cau Tuyen in play for a long time requires grace, agility and composure, and is an amazing sight to watch.



The shuttlecocks and shoes specially made for kicking Da Cau are shown here. For more information about the game, see: <http://www.destinationvietnam.com:80/dvindx.htm>



Mike Spiller provided these photographs of a traditional game developed in Greece nearly 2000 years ago and then carried to Asia, called Battledore. This game can be played with just hands or with a small paddle of sorts. The Battledore is woven from cornhusk and a split feather (not unlike the aboriginal version of the Brazilian Peteca). It is a small, but very quick target to hit. A player must be ready to move at all time if they hope to be successful in this game. A very fun activity indeed! A more traditional and historical photo of Battledore equipment is provided below.

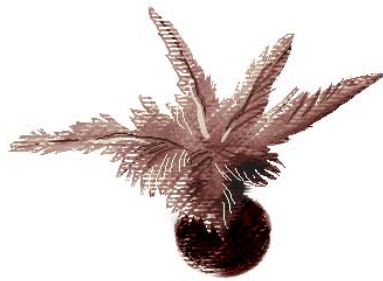


Zuni tribes of New Mexico call their version of the game Pokeif. Mural paintings in the Chelly canyon feature pictures of this sport. Hanetsuki, often played during the Chinese New Year celebration also resembles badminton or battledore. The first report of a shuttlecock (Ti Jian Zi) is from the 5th Century BC in China. Military leaders used the sport to keep their troops fit, and shuttlecock matches were popular during the Han and T'ang Dynasties (207-906 AD). The Hanetsuki shuttlecock is never hit with the hands, only the feet. Conversely, the hand shuttlecock (Jianqui) originated from the Song Dynasty, around 960 AD.

The Meau tribe in the northwest of Thailand call their version of the game Ndi, and use a primitively carded wooden bat (battledore) to hit a shuttlecock make from a short piece of bamboo with three feathers wedged into on end. For a thorough description of this game, see the 1947 book by anthropologist Hugo Adolf Bernatzik, entitled *The Akha and Meau*.

Shuttlecock games traveled to Germany when Peter von Rūden brought them back from China. Teacher Jordan Stavridis, an instructor in the Chinese martial arts, used a featherball as a basic exercise in Greece, and later helped them join the International Shuttlecock Federation. In Malaysia, Sepak Bulu Ayam is the original name of the shuttlecock game. The Portuguese colony Macau commemorated their version of the game, known as Chiquia, with a 1989 postage stamp. Indonesia boasts a version of the game, known since the 10th century as Bola Bulu Tangkis.

In the Singapore version of the game, known as Chaptah, no net is used. Players begin in a circle and play until the featherball hits the ground. The player who misses the ball must leave the circle. The final two players keep moving backwards until a final winner occurs.



One variation of the origin of the Brazilian Peteca suggests that it was a popular game of the children of the Xavante tribe, and that the shape of the Peteca was based upon a species of grass, like garlic, complete with bulb, roots and leaves. This would be very similar to a foxtail or modern day rocketball (a rubber ball with colorful streamers).

From the book *British Folk Customs* by Christina Hore, 1976, comes this interesting account:

"The Shuttlecock or Shuttlefeather, is a very old game, which was sometimes used by young people as a form of divination. A question concerning the number of months before marriage, or years before death, or the initials of the future wife's husband was asked at the beginning and answered by the number of successful strokes made before the player missed, and the shuttlecock fell to the ground."



Like the songs which accompany rope skipping in many countries around the world, featherball, shuttlecocks and the like also have their own rhymes, including:

*Grandmother, grandmother.
Tell me no lie,
How many children before I die?
One, two, three, four ... and so on.*

*Shuttlecock, shuttlecock, tell me true,
How many years have I to go through?
One, two, three, four ... and so on.*

How to Make a Korean Chegi Shuttlecock

Begin with two or three large coins. Placed these at the center of a square piece of vinyl. Wrap the coins in the sheet and tie with a string. Cut the upward tail in strips to make a tassel. That's all! In the photo at right, a Korean student shows us a shuttlecock he made himself.



A Charming Coincidence

Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday, is known as Shuttlecock Day in the County of Leicester, England. The Leicester Chronical for February 12th, 1842 reports that:

"Shrove Tuesday is celebrated in Hinckley [Leicestershire] by a general game of shuttlecock and battledore, which is a very novel and amusing sight to a stranger. If however that stranger had come from the West Riding region of Yorkshire, the spectacle, though it might have amused him, would not have been new to him because he would probably have seen it at home many times before on the same anniversary, in the villages of the West Riding.

- wrote the journalist William Henderson."

Editors note: This custom is thought to have died out in Leicester at the end of the 19th century. But even more fascinating, is that the name of the journalist writing the account, and the name of the person that first introduced me to such things as Funderbirds, is exactly the same, William Henderson!

My shuttlecock

Text and Drawing by Qiau-Hong Sun

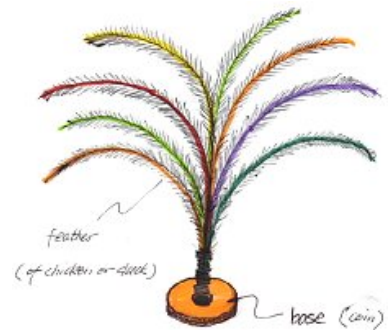
In my memory, playing the shuttlecock game was one of my favorite things during my childhood. The shuttlecocks I played were not used for playing badminton game; they were just used for playing by themselves.

My hometown is in northeast China where the winter is very long—almost six months. Playing the shuttlecock outside was the main game in the winter.

Because I liked to play this kind of game very much, the shuttlecock became my good friend who always accompanied me in the long winter.

The game is very simple. It is played by a person who kicks the shuttlecock with either foot and keeps it from hitting the ground for as long as possible. Players can kick the shuttlecock with different parts of their feet. Sometimes we divided into teams to see which team could keep playing for a long time.

Shuttlecocks are easy to make by hand. I typically used chicken feathers. The cock feathers are the most colorful. I also used rough thread made from hemp or flax. For the base, I usually chose two or three ancient Chinese coins, which have a hole in the middle. I wrapped thread around the coins, and then placed the feathers into the hole. Finish by wrapping even more thread around the coins and the feathers. Thus, a simple shuttlecock is now ready. That was very easy, wasn't it?



From the Chinese Shuttlecock (Chien-Tsu) Game

Two levels of the game are called “Lesser Accomplishments,” which calls for kicking with one foot, and “Greater Accomplishments,” which requires both feet at the same time. Tricks require the use of other parts of the body as well. “Ivory Chopsticks” calls for catching the kicked shuttlecock between two fingers.

This was a cold-weather game, since the vigorous exercise warms the body. In 1975, the Taiwanese government included shuttlecock in the elementary school physical education program, which revived its popularity.

Badminton



Because of the similarity between badminton and many of the hand featherballs described here, it seems fitting to mention it as well. Of all the shuttlecock games, badminton remains internationally supported, and is (so far) the only Olympic level sport played with a shuttlecock. Badminton was admitted as a full medal sport at the games of the 25th Olympiad in Barcelona, Spain, in 1992.



For more information about Badminton, visit: www.usabadminton.org.
Or: www.shuttlecock-europe.org/history.php

Additional and Unusual Sources For More Information

Description of the traditional Native American shuttlecock game, including how it has been played by the Zuni: www.nativetech.org/games/shuttlecock.html



I have the somewhat unusual hobby of researching the history of "Shuttlecock Games" and the collection of relevant pictures and shuttlecocks with which to illustrate the subject.

Rex Haggett, Stratford-Upon-Avon, England Email: 106232.1631@compuserve.com

Website: <http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/Rexhaggett/handshut.htm>

The Shuttlecock Federation of Europe <http://featherballuk.com/>

Funderbirds and Other Non-Competitive Versions of Hand Featherball Games

Email: jimcain@teamworkandteamplay.com or www.teamworkandteamplay.com

Kicking Versions

While the hacky sack has become the North American version of foot bag sport, there are dozens of countries with some version of foot-and-shuttlecock games. Korea's game of Jegichagi (which is formed from coins wrapped in paper, with feathers attached) may have originated from Chinese martial arts, where athletes trained by kicking a small leather sack. To play Jegichagi, four players kick the jegi in the directions of North – East – South – West. The one dropping the Jegi loses that round.

Footbags became a popular fad in North America by the early 1980s. Though interest in footbags was concentrated in the United States, it soon became a worldwide phenomenon. Though faddish interest in footbags faded, a core constituency has remained. Those who use footbags value how it increases agility, endurance, coordination, balance, and concentration. Others enjoy footbags because they are not competitive in the same way most sports are: users have to cooperate with others to keep the footbag off the ground.



One way that footbags are used are in hack circles. The footbag is passed around a circle via foot, using one of the five basic kicks (the inside kick, knee kick, toe kick, outside kick, or back kick). Circles can be comprised of as few as two and as many as 25 or more players, and is often played on college campuses. Hack circles evolved into footbag freestyle. Footbaggers show off tricks like toestalls and clippers, linked together in routines, while keeping the footbag off the ground. Competitors are judged on difficulty of routines as well as artistic merit.



Freestyle is just one event in footbag competitions. Another is Footbag Consecutive, played in singles or pairs. The object is to keep the bag going as long as possible. A world record in pairs set in 1995 had two people completing 123,456 kicks in 19 hours, 19 minutes, and 20 seconds.

Some footbag games are individual while others involve teams. Net-sack was invented by Stalberger in the late 1970s. It is essentially volleyball with a footbag. Played on a badminton-sized court with a 5 ft (15.2 m) high net, net-sack features singles and doubles brackets and is scored like volleyball. Footbag golf is played and scored like golf on a course with holes and obstacles.

Design and Materials

Early paneled footbags were sometimes made of only two panels, but additional panels have become more common. Eight to 14-paneled footbags are very popular on the retail level. Footbags made of 32 panels also have a large following among accomplished foot-baggers. The more panels, the rounder the footbag.

Crocheted footbags are often made of double stranded heavy duty rayon. Most paneled footbags are made of ultrasuede, though they can also be made of split-grain cowhide, vinyl, pigskin, water buffalo skin, snake skin, kangaroo skin, facile, multifuzz polymer suede, or other artificial materials. Paneled footbags are sewn with a tough, durable synthetic thread, not unlike dental floss. Faceted styrene plastic beads the size of the BBs are most often used to stuff footbags. Sometimes footbags are filled with plastic regrind pellets, plastic polyresin filler pellets, pebbles, small stones, corn or sand.

For more information about footbag games, see:

The Hacky-Sack Book, John Cassidy, 1982, Klutz Press, Palo Alto, CA USA

Footbag: Kickin' Up a Storm, Scott Berg, Washington Post, August 6, 1999

Kicking It: For Simple Fun With Your Feet, Footbag is a Sport with Sole, Ara Najarian, Los Angeles Times (Orange County Edition, May 28, 1999

The World Footbag Association <http://www.worldfootbag.com>





Natives from the Xicrim tribe participate in the peikra competition, a type of hand shuttlecock game in which the player who allows the shuttlecock to hit the ground is punished with pushes and shoves from his team mates, on the second day of the third Traditional Indian Games of Para State taking place in Conceicao do Araguaia in the Brazilian Amazon region, August 21, 2006. [Reuters]

The End

www.teamworkandteamplay.com