

LESSON 3

From fragmented
to shared histories:
Sepak takraw

Integrated essay

As a region exposed to influences from the outside, Southeast Asia has adopted and localized foreign influences. It also underwent both fragmentation and integration in the process of regional identity-formation. The assimilation of influences, say, from India, the Islamic world, China and Europe has provided the basis for both shared and fragmented histories. This is evident in various spheres such as politics, economic systems, social relations, cultural practices, and religion, as well as in everyday living manifested in sports and popular culture. This lesson focuses on the role of sport in the formation of identities in Southeast Asia, using the sport *sepak takraw* as a case study of how its fragmented origins and histories as a popular local sport in Southeast Asia became a shared prism and vehicle of exporting a vision of Southeast Asia to the rest of the world. Just as national histories in Southeast Asia are case studies of the impact of global forces on the region, *sepak takraw* as an indigenous sport has, in return, made an impact on different parts of the world.

Sepak takraw is a sport native to Southeast Asia. It is a game played on a court (about the size of a badminton double court) by teams of between two to four players whose mission is to spike the ball into the opponent's side of the court. The name of the game is actually made up of words from two different languages, with *sepak* being Malay for 'kick' and *takraw* being the Thai word for a woven, rattan ball. Taken together, it literally means 'to kick a ball'.

Being indigenous to Southeast Asia means that *sepak takraw* is known by different names throughout the region. For instance, it is known as *sepak takraw* in Indonesia, *sepak raga* in Malaysia; *takraw* in Thailand, *sipa* in the Philippines, *cầu mây* in Viet Nam, *kator* in Lao PDR and *chinlone* in Myanmar. The different names given to a game that is largely based on the same gameplay suggests that throughout the region, *sepak takraw* may have been adapted to suit local or national contexts and as such, there are also differing opinions as to the origins of the game.

It is thought that *sepak takraw* was first introduced to Southeast Asia by the Chinese who had a similar game of kicking a ball or shuttlecocks and keeping them airborne with just the players' feet. One of the earliest records of *sepak takraw* being played as a game in Southeast Asia can be found in the *Sejarah Melayu* or the Malay Annals. The text describes a game of *sepak raga* being played in the Sultanate of Melaka between Raja Muhammad, a son of Sultan Mansur Shah, and Tun Besar, the son of Tun Perak, which ended in the death of Tun Besar at the hands of Raja Muhammad. While the ultimate focus of this story was not about *sepak raga*, but rather the origins of Malay rule in Pahang, as Sultan Mansur Shah had to order his son out of Melaka to Pahang as punishment, nonetheless, it is indicative that as early as the fifteenth century, *sepak takraw* was already being played, and by aristocrats no less (Brown, 2009, pp. 97–98). From Melaka, *sepak takraw* spread across the straits to Sumatra in the sixteenth century. From there, it was introduced to the Bugis in Sulawesi where it developed into a traditional game known as '*Raga*' and remained popular into the nineteenth century.

The history of *sepak takraw* in Thailand is equally interesting. According to Shawn Kelley, Thai historical accounts mention the game being played during the reign of King Naresuan (1590–1605) of the Kingdom of Ayutthaya. Murals located in Wat Phra Kaew (Temple of the Emerald Buddha) in Bangkok, which was constructed in 1785, depicted the Hindu god Hanuman playing *sepak takraw* with monkeys. While the game was apparently played with the players in a circular formation, passing the ball from one to another, it was

in the eighteenth century that the current formation of *sepak takraw* began to take shape. The first rules for competitive play were drawn up only in 1929 by the Siam Sports Association, which also introduced the volleyball-style net in 1933. By the late 1930s, *sepak takraw* was part of the curriculum in Thai schools, thus becoming something akin to a national sport.

Bearing in mind that most of Southeast Asia was colonized by Europeans beginning in the sixteenth century, it should be appreciated that *sepak takraw* as an indigenous game, albeit with its many localized names and forms, actually survived colonial rule and even thrived in the post-colonial period. For instance, *sepak takraw*, or *sipa* as it was known in the Philippines, survived Spanish and American colonial rule. Not only was *sipa* a popular children's sport, it was the national sport of the Philippines, incorporated into elementary and high school curricula until 2009 when it was replaced by *arnis* or traditional martial arts.

By the 1940s, *sepak takraw* had evolved from being a cooperative display of dexterous skills into a competitive sport with the introduction of the net version of the game (what we commonly see now) and formal rules. In 1960, a meeting was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and attended by representatives from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Laos and Thailand to standardize rules and regulations for the game. With the resulting standardization of rules, the sport became officially known as *sepak takraw*, and the Asian Sepaktakraw Federation (ASTAF) was formed. Once the rules were translated into English, it paved the way for *sepak takraw* to become an international sport, with the first international competition held at the SEAP Games hosted by Malaysia in 1965 (Lim and Mohd Salleh, 2016, p. 551). Today, as an international sport with more than twenty national *sepak takraw* associations, *sepak takraw* is governed by the International Sepaktakraw Federation (ISTAF) with major competitions such as the ISTAF SuperSeries, the ISTAF World Cup and the King's Cup World Championships that are held annually. *Sepak takraw* is also a regular competitive sport in the Asian Games (since 1990) and the Southeast Asian Games (SEA Games) and now played by both men and women, with the first women's championship hosted by Thailand in 1997.

The spread of *sepak takraw* as an international sport began largely in the 1980s. In Japan, *sepak takraw* is played largely by university students with teams established at Chiba University, Keio University and Waseda University. In the USA, *sepak takraw* was already being played by the Lao, Hmong and Thai communities as well as Malaysian students in the universities in the early 1980s and eventually found a home base in Northrop University, California by the middle of the decade. The game eventually took off with the founding of the United States Takraw Association in the late 1980s.

However it was really in Canada that *sepak takraw* established a firm foothold overseas and in the northern hemisphere. Just as politics played a part in the evolution of the SEAP Games into SEA Games, political events and their impact on the people in Southeast Asia played a part in the establishment of *sepak takraw* in Canada. Refugees and migrants from Laos were the first to introduce *sepak takraw* to Canada in the 1970s as they fled from the political chaos at home. The internationalization of the game received a bigger boost from a Canadian teacher, Rick Engel, who encountered the sport in Southeast Asia and popularized it in Canadian schools through the Asian Sport, Education & Culture (ASEC) International's School Presentation Programme. The sport became so popular that the first Canadian inter-provincial tournament was organized in 1998 and in December of the same year, the Sepak Takraw Association of Canada (STAC) was established and accepted as a member of ISTAF. Today the Canadian Open Sepak Takraw Championships (operating since 1999) attracts international teams from across Canada, the USA, Japan, Malaysia and China.

It should also be noted that while *sepak takraw* originated in Southeast Asia, the spread of the game was not uni-directional. Rick Engel became a *sepak takraw* coach and expert in high demand, writing three instructional *sepak takraw* books and producing DVDs on the sport, all published by STAC. Of his books,

Takraw 101: The Complete Instructional / Coaching Manual for Sepak Takraw (Kick Volleyball) was translated into Indonesian and released in Indonesia as part of a government education project. This, by itself, speaks volumes about the flow of exchanges between Southeast Asia and the world. As much as *sepak takraw* is a sport originating in Southeast Asia and an export to the world, thus creating a sporting identity that is native to Southeast Asia, it has also benefited much from the interest and contributions to the sport by people beyond Southeast Asia.

References

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- International Sepak Takraw Federation. n.d. *An Introduction to sepak takraw: Part 1 What is Sepaktakraw?* youtu.be/Dw7Z9oASHeE (3 m 35 s) (Accessed 17 September 2019).
- Lim, P. H. and Salleh Aman, M. 2016. 'The History of the South East Asian Peninsular Games, 1959–1975', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, Vol. 33, No. 5, pp. 545–568.
- Reid, A. 1988. *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450–1680; Volume One: The Lands below the Winds*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Sepak Takraw Association of Canada. n.d. *International Sepak Takraw History*. takrawcanada.com/?q=node/7 (Accessed 17 September 2019).

Supplementary resources

Books and Articles

- Avineshwaran, T. 2013. 'The Legacy of *Sepak Takraw*'. *The Star Online*, 8 March 2013. www.thestar.com.my/lifestyle/archive/2013/03/08/the-legacy-of-sepak-takraw (Accessed 20 June 2016).
- Kelley, Shawn. n.d. '*Takraw*: A Traditional Southeast Asian Sport', *Tourism Authority of Thailand e-Magazine*. web.archive.org/web/20070710234948/www.tatnews.org/emagazine/2813.asp (Accessed 20 June 2016).
- International Sepaktakraw Federation (ISTAF). n.d. *History and Heritage*. www.sepaktakraw.org/about-istaf (Accessed 20 June 2016).

Videos and Video Clips

- International Sepak Takraw Federation. n.d. *An Introduction to Sepak takraw: Part 1 What is Sepaktakraw?*. youtu.be/Dw7Z9oASHeE (3 m 35 s) (Accessed 17 September 2019).
- Philippines, Department of Education. 2013. *Indigenous Games in the ASEAN*. youtu.be/WAeJNj8EvzM (first 1m 38s)

Websites

- International Sepaktakraw Federation (ISTAF). www.sepaktakraw.org

Subject	History/Social Studies/Physical Education
Topic	From fragmented to shared histories: <i>Sepak takraw</i>
Key idea	Regional identity in Southeast Asia can and has been created out of diversities and commonalities by regional organizations and through regional events as well as everyday activities such as popular sports, art, and culture. This identity is continuously evolving and contributes toward the envisioning of Southeast Asia as a region for the future. Sports such as <i>sepak takraw</i> reflect both the diversity and commonalities within Southeast Asia. The popularity of <i>sepak takraw</i> as a sport has a part in contributing towards a global understanding and interest in Southeast Asia as a region.
Key concepts	Identity Popularity Pride Sport
Level	Lower secondary
No. of periods/lessons	2 to 3 periods (1 period is approximately 50 minutes)
Facilities needed	A/V equipment and Internet access to play the video clips (or hard copy with similar content) Sources and handouts for distribution
Prerequisite knowledge	Some familiarity with sports and the SEA Games Completion of Unit 4, Lesson 2 on SEA Games preferred

Learning objectives

By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to:

KNOWLEDGE	SKILLS	ATTITUDES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand the role of popular sports in building national and regional identities. 2. Understand and discuss the historical origins, development and popularization of <i>sepak takraw</i> in Southeast Asia. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Practice source reading skills through use of primary and secondary documents. 2. Practice listening and note-taking skills through watching videos. 3. Experience collaborative group discussion and research. 4. Practice writing and oral communication skills. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Value sports, popular culture and other supposedly 'non-serious' aspects of human endeavour as worthy areas of historical exploration. 2. Appreciate the importance of sports in the development of shared histories within Southeast Asia and the region's interaction with the world.

Note: This lesson focuses on the popular sport of *sepak takraw* that originated in Southeast Asia and is now widely played around the world. The popularity of *sepak takraw* within Southeast Asia, where it is known by different names, reflects the diversity within the region and at the same time showcases its ability to unite as the sport is now a mainstay in the SEA Games. Just as *sepak takraw* has the ability to unite Southeast Asians within the region, it also plays a part in projecting the image and vision of Southeast Asia as a region to other parts of the world. Due to the popularity of *sepak takraw* in Europe, North America and East Asia, it has become a sport associated with Southeast Asia and has impacted how the world views the region.

Section	Lesson Development	Resources	Rationale
Introduction [5 minutes]	<p>1. Teacher talk: Introduce the topic and scope of the lesson. The key questions of the lesson could be phrased as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do sports contribute to our identity? • How has the development of indigenous sports contributed to the development of regional identity? • Emphasize the concept of identity and shared histories, focusing on the idea that sports play a role in formation of identity. Where possible also highlight the fact that there is also an economic/business element behind the popularity of certain sports. <p>2. Hook activity: Identifying different sports</p> <p>2.1 Show the class pictures or video clips of different sports and ask the students to identify them.</p> <p>2.2 Alternative option: Print and distribute Handout 1 to the students for them to discuss and identify the sports using think-pair-share.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout 1: What sport is this? 	<p>The teacher talk puts the lesson in context – where does it stand in relation to the curriculum the students are following?</p> <p>The hook activity helps to activate the students’ prior knowledge of different forms of sporting activities.</p>
Development I [45 minutes]	<p>3. Think-pair-share: Popular sports in Southeast Asia</p> <p>3.1 Distribute Source 1: ‘7 Sports That Are Unique to Southeast Asia’.</p> <p>3.2 Alternative option: Show video ‘Indigenous games in the ASEAN’.</p> <p>3.3 Students read the source and turn to a classmate seated nearby to share which of the seven sports they are familiar with or have played.</p> <p>3.4 Wrap up the activity by getting selected students to share which of the sports they may have played, making sure to try and guide the discussion towards <i>sepak takraw</i>.</p> <p>4. Introductory discussion on <i>sepak takraw</i></p> <p>4.1 Show a video (or flash a picture) of a <i>sepak takraw</i> match in progress and ask the students to identify the sport.</p> <p>4.2 Students share observations about the game (this is especially relevant for the video because students will be able to see the actions of the players).</p> <p>4.3 Students respond to the questions: What can you observe about the gameplay of <i>sepak takraw</i>? How is it different from other games that the students know of?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source 1: ‘7 Sports That Are Unique to Southeast Asia’ • Video ‘Indigenous games in the ASEAN’ youtu.be/WAeJNi8EvzM • Suggested video: ‘An introduction to <i>sepak takraw</i>’ youtu.be/Dw7Z9oASHeE • Alternatively, teacher could select videos showcasing national teams in <i>sepak takraw</i> tournaments for the students 	<p>The activity ‘Popular sports in Southeast Asia’ shifts the focus from general sports to sports unique to Southeast Asia. By asking the students to read and share about which of the sports listed in Source 1 they are familiar with or have played, students are prepared for the discussion on <i>sepak takraw</i> that follows.</p> <p>Source 1 is an online newspaper article that is generally easy to read. Students are likely to have less trouble with the article.</p> <p>In a two period lesson, teacher could end the first period with the group work, or with the video ‘An introduction to <i>sepak takraw</i>’ as a teaser.</p>

Section	Lesson Development	Resources	Rationale
	<p>5. Group work: Find out more about <i>sepak takraw</i></p> <p>5.1 Divide the class into groups and distribute Handout 2 ‘What is <i>sepak takraw</i>’ for group reading and discussion.</p> <p>5.2 Students complete the exercise and then share their answers. (Alternative: provide the text for students to read and then ask for the answers in a general Q&A).</p> <p>5.3 Provide some background on the history of <i>sepak takraw</i>, drawing attention to historical sources such as the <i>Sejarah Melayu</i> and the mural in Wat Phra Kaew in Bangkok, Thailand.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handout 2: What is <i>sepak takraw</i>? 	<p>One suggested lesson-ending is for the teacher to provide additional background on the history of <i>sepak takraw</i> (refer to integrated essay, Sources 6 and 7) and perhaps to assign the historical sources as homework for students to read in preparation for the next period.</p> <p>The next period will then carry on from Development II.</p>
Development II [40 minutes]	<p>6. Group work: Historical sources on <i>sepak takraw</i></p> <p>6.1 If this is a new period, recap what was discussed in the previous lesson – sports unique to Southeast Asia and the focus on <i>sepak takraw</i>.</p> <p>6.2 Follow up on discussion on origins of <i>sepak takraw</i>, highlighting the different countries in which <i>sepak takraw</i> was played as early as the fifteenth century, through Sources 2, 3, and 4.</p> <p>6.3 Divide the class into groups and give each group one of the sources (Sources 2, 3 or 4). Groups read the sources, discuss the questions as suggested (or any other relevant questions teacher may choose to add) and share with the class through an oral presentation.</p> <p>6.4 During the group presentations, the other students should ideally have the source used by the presenters so that everyone can follow the presentation.</p> <p>6.5 Alternatively, flash Sources 2, 3 and 4 on the PowerPoint and guide the students in reading and discussion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source 2: A mural depicting <i>sepak takraw</i> at Wat Phra Kaew Source 3: An excerpt from the <i>Sejarah Melayu</i> – the Malay Annals Source 4: The sport of <i>takraw</i> <p>For teacher’s reference:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Source 6: ‘<i>Sepak Takraw: History and Heritage</i>’ Source 7: ‘<i>Takraw: A Traditional Southeast Asian Sport</i>’ 	<p>This activity follows upon the activity 5 (Find out more about <i>sepak takraw</i>). It takes a more historical approach through the use of two historical sources (a mural painting and a text) as well as a short descriptive piece by a historian. This exercise enables students to practice their reading skills, and to try their hand at ‘reading’ a picture. The oral presentations to end the activity also give the students the opportunity to practice their oral communication skills.</p>

Section	Lesson Development	Resources	Rationale
	<p>7. Teacher talk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight the long history of <i>sepak takraw</i> in different countries in Southeast Asia (using Melaka in Malaysia and Thailand as examples or any other countries where appropriate) and how <i>sepak takraw</i> can be considered indigenous or native to Southeast Asia. • Then highlight the spread of <i>sepak takraw</i> in the world and ask the students to guess the rank of the non-Asian countries in the world that play <i>sepak takraw</i> using Handout 3. • Answer Key for Teachers: USA – 10 Germany – 14 France – 18 Australia – 23 Canada – Unranked/Not ranked Switzerland – 21 • Point out that in the past, the sport was mostly practised by men but that in the last decades, women have developed a strong interest in it and compete at the highest level in regional and world competition. <p>8. Class discussion</p> <p>8.1 Focus the attention of the students on the key question of the link between the sports we play and our identity.</p> <p>8.2 Ask the students to consider <i>sepak takraw</i> as a sport that is native to Southeast Asia and how it has now been exported to other countries in the world.</p> <p>8.3 Students think about how the playing of <i>sepak takraw</i> in different parts of the world might contribute to their self-image as Southeast Asians. Possible guiding questions could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel a sense of pride when the game is played in an international tournament? • Do you feel different when you see players from other countries playing a game that you are familiar with? <p>8.4 Highlight the interconnections of Southeast Asia to the world and how within Southeast Asia, <i>sepak takraw</i> has different origins and histories but to the world, it is seen as a Southeast Asian sport. Ask the students to consider, and draw upon the lesson on SEA Games (where applicable) on how sport can unify a region and create something in common.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handout 3: Guess the rank For teacher reference: • Source 5 for 2015 World Rankings by country • Source 8 for Women in <i>sepak takraw</i>. 	<p>By opening the discussion to a question of how the sports played by the students contributed to their self-image as Southeast Asians, the teacher has to be able to facilitate different kinds of responses from the students.</p>

Sources and handouts

Source 1: '7 Sports That Are Unique to Southeast Asia'

Whether we want to admit it or not, most of the popular sports played around the world are the products of Western civilisation. But what did we do to break some sweat before the Europeans brought football and badminton to Southeast Asia? Pretty sure it wasn't just *congkak* (mancala games) and *wau* (kite-flying).

Yes, we do have our own sports, games that are unique to the Southeast Asian region. The following Southeast Asian Games events all have a sizeable following in Southeast Asia, but only one is recognised as an Olympic sport.

1. *Arnis*

Arnis is a weapon-based martial art native to the Philippines. Unlike other martial arts, training in *arnis* begins with weapons and progresses to empty hands, although techniques with sticks or blades are still preferred. It is also a pragmatic martial art for combat with less emphasis on things like virtue and way of life. In other words: punch first, meditate later.

Philippines' national sport made its sole appearance at the 2005 Southeast Asian (SEA) Games Manila and has yet to make a comeback, but it is slated for a return in the 2019 edition of the games to be held in Manila, Clark, Subic and BLT (Batangas, La Union, and Tagaytay) in the Philippines.



Source: Chow, Olivia.

Also known as:

Philippines: *Eskrima, Kali*

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2. Muay

If you want to get people from Thailand, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar to argue, all you need to do is ask them who came up with the Southeast Asian-style kickboxing. A point of contention among the countries, the various kickboxing arts found throughout the region is believed to have developed over centuries as different tribes migrated from China before they settled down in mainland Southeast Asia.

Despite being a popular sport around the world, it was not until the 2005 SEA Games in Manila, that the sport got its full recognition as a medal sport, but not without its share of drama. As it has different iterations throughout mainland Southeast Asia, not everyone was happy to compete under the name *muay Thai*. Cambodia went as far as opting out of the sport in protest of the name used to refer to the sport. As a solution to this problem, the martial art is simply referred to as *muay* in recent SEA Games.



Source: Arlas, Mario.

The fact remains that *muay Thai*, the most popular amongst the various Southeast Asian kickboxing arts, is the only one on the list that has been granted provisional recognition as an Olympic sport.

Also known as:

Thailand:	<i>Muay Thai</i>
Lao PDR:	<i>Muay Lao</i>
Cambodia:	<i>Pradal serey</i>
Myanmar:	<i>Lethwei</i>
Malaysia:	<i>Tomoi</i>

3. Pencak silat

Now that you know how to ruffle the feathers in mainland Southeast Asia, let's continue to wreak havoc in maritime Southeast Asia. Casually mention '*silat*' when you have your Malaysian and Indonesian friends around, pour yourself a cup of *teh tarik* (pulled tea), and enjoy the show.

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Source: Barber, John Seb.

Silat is a blanket term for various martial arts developed in areas now known as south Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. In Indonesia, *silat* is combined with another martial art native to the country, *pencak*, for professional competition purposes. *Pencak silat* was first introduced as a medal sport at the 1987 SEA Games in Jakarta. Fortunately, Indonesia's neighbours didn't mind the name so much, they were just happy to know that they had a higher chance of winning medals with the inclusion of the sport.

Pencak silat is also an Asian Games sport. It was introduced by, you guessed it, Indonesia when the country hosted 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta and Palembang.

Although Viet Nam doesn't have a long *silat* tradition like its Southeast Asian brethren, it has been dominating in recent international competitions, giving countries like Malaysia and Indonesia a good run for their money.

Also known as:

Thailand:	<i>Dika, buedika, padik</i>
Malaysia/Indonesia:	<i>Gayong, gayung</i>
Indonesia:	<i>Silek, manca', maenpo</i>

4. *Vovinam*

Okay, we promise you this is the last martial art in this list. *Vovinam* is a popular martial art in Viet Nam which doesn't have that long of a history compared to the rest on this list, as it was founded as *Vovinam Viet Vo Dao* in 1938 by Nguyen Loc.

Vovinam was created to provide an efficient technique of self-defense which requires a short period of study. The martial art was introduced at the 2011 SEA Games in Jakarta and Palembang and made a return at 2013 SEA Games in Naypyidaw, Myanmar. *Vovinam* was slated for an appearance at 2019 SEA Games in Manila, Philippines, but was later dropped from the finalised list of sports.

Also known as:

Viet Nam:	<i>Vo Viet Nam, Viet vo dao</i>
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5. *Sepak takraw*

If there's one sport worth the title of a truly Southeast Asian sport, it would be *sepak takraw*, a traditional sport played most consistently around the region. Even the name is a combination of two languages: the Malay word *sepak*, which means 'kick' and the Thai word *takraw*, which refers to the woven ball used in the game.

Sepak takraw is held in a court similar to a volleyball or badminton with a net in the middle. Unlike volleyball, players are not allowed to use their hands to hit the ball. Instead, they need to use their feet, head, knees and chest

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Sounds easy, right? In reality, there's a lot of acrobatic skills and athleticism involved. It's like watching a football and volleyball rolled into one, with martial arts thrown in for good measure.

Each country in Southeast Asia has its own *sepak takraw* rules and traditions, but they had to agree on an official set of rules when it was introduced as a medal event at the 1965 South East Asian Peninsular Games (SEA Games' predecessor) in Kuala Lumpur.



Source: dbgg1979.

Sepak takraw had also been included as an Asian Games event since 1990 Asian Games in Beijing, China. Who knows, maybe someday we'll be able to have *sepak takraw* as an Olympic sport!

Sepak takraw is considered to be Malaysia's national sport but it's Thailand who has the title of the top medal-winning country in the history of both Southeast Asian Games and Asian Games.

Also known as:

Lao PDR:	<i>Kataw</i>
Malaysia/Indonesia:	<i>Sepak raga</i>
Indonesia:	<i>Rago tinggi, cepak, akraga</i>
Philippines:	<i>Sipa</i>
Viet Nam:	<i>Cầu mây</i>

6. Chinlone

Chinlone is basically a non-competitive *sepak takraw*, being part-sport, part-dance. First introduced at 2013 Southeast Asian Games in Naypyidaw, Myanmar, it was subsequently relegated to an event under *sepak takraw*.

7. Shuttlecock

As you'd notice by now, there's a pattern among the hosts of SEA Games to introduce a new sport. This is because they are given the freedom to introduce a sport, no matter how obscure, or to drop one, no matter how popular it is. This is an important part of the strategy to help the host country to boost its medal tally.

The 2003 SEA Games saw the introduction of shuttlecock as a medal sport. The sport has made its sole return at the 2009 SEA Games in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Although it has its roots in China, the game is very popular in countries like Viet Nam and Cambodia.

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We find 'shuttlecock' to be confusing, as the word also refers to the projectile used in the sport of badminton, but that's the official name that was chosen for the sport. We prefer to call it foot badminton, because you will immediately be able to imagine how the game works. Just like in *sepak takraw*, players are allowed to use various parts of the body save for the hands to keep the shuttlecock from touching the ground.



Source: dbgg1979.

Also known as:

Viet Nam: *Đá cầu*

Malaysia: *Sepak bulu ayam*

Indonesia: *Sepak kenci*

Philippines: *Larong sipa*

Trivia and fun facts around the SEA Games:

- ASEAN Para Games is a multi-sport event involving Southeast Asian athletes with a range of disabilities, held after every SEA Games since 2001.
- There are no official limits to the number of sports which may be contested in SEA Games.
- Ice sports debuted at 2017 SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur. Among 10 ASEAN countries, only the Philippines and Thailand have participated in Winter Olympic Games.
- The athlete with the most number of SEA Games gold medals is Singapore's swim queen Joscelin Yeo who amassed 60 medals, including 40 golds.

Source:

Vanuaranu, Ari. 2019. '7 Sports That Are Unique to Southeast Asia'. *The ASEAN Post* (6 May 2019). theaseanpost.com/article/7-sports-are-unique-South-East-asia

Source 2: A mural depicting *sepak takraw* at Wat Phra Kaew



Source:

UNESCO/M.S.Kittipaisalsilp

Questions:

1. Do you know where this mural can be found?

2. What do you see in the picture? What do you think the mural is showing?

Source 3: An excerpt from the *Sejarah Melayu* – the Malay Annals

Here now is the story of Raja Muhammad and (Raja) Ahmad, sons of Sultan Mansur Shah [of Melaka]. When they had both grown up, it was the intention of Sultan Mansur Shah to put Raja Muhammad on the throne as his successor, for he was his favorite son. One day Raja Ahmad and Raja Muhammad were out riding; and it happened at that moment Tun Besar, son of Bendahara Paduka Raja, was playing football (*sepak raga*) in the street with some other youths. As Raja Ahmad and Raja Muhammad rode past, Tun Besar had the ball and he kicked it so that it hit Raja Muhammad's headcloth and knocked it off. And Raja Muhammad said, 'My headcloth has fallen.' Thereupon the man who carried the betel-bowl rushed up and stabbed Tun Besar through the heart and killed him.

Source:

Brown, C.C. (trans.). *The Malay Annals. Raffles MS No. 18*. 2009 reprint, pp. 97–98. Selangor: MBRA.

Notes:

- a. Sultan Mansur Shah (d. 1477) ruled Melaka from 1459 to 1477. It was during his reign that many territories in Peninsular Malaysia and eastern Sumatra came under Melakan control.
- b. Raja Muhammad (1455–1475) was the first Sultan of Pahang from 1470 to 1475. He was sent into exile as punishment for killing Tun Besar and later installed as the sultan of Pahang.
- c. Raja Ahmad (d. 1512), the elder brother of Raja Muhammad, was the second Sultan of Pahang who ruled from 1475 to 1495.
- d. Bendahara Paduka Raja Tun Perak (d. 1498) was the most famous *Bendahara* (or prime minister) of the Sultanate of Melaka. From 1456 to 1498, he served under four sultans (Sultan Mansur Shah was the second). He did not seek revenge for Tun Besar's murder but rather requested Raja Muhammad to be crowned as sultan elsewhere. His death is held to signify the beginning of the decline of the Melakan Empire.

Questions:

1. What does this excerpt suggest to you about *sepak takraw* (or *sepak raga*) during the fifteenth century?

2. What conclusions might you draw from the account above?

Source 4: The sport of *takraw*

The one sport which was never a matter of direct competition was the most distinctively Southeast Asian of them all – the type of foot-ball which in Malay was known as *sepak raga* ['kick basket'], in Luzon as *sipa*, in Burmese as *chin-lohn*. The Thai term, *takraw*, has now become accepted as the international name for the sport, today modernized into a competitive volleyball-like sport at the Southeast Asia Games. In the eighteenth century the game was played in Burma, Siam, and southern Viet Nam as well as in the Indonesian area. Since each of these countries regarded [it] as its own rather than borrowed, the sport can probably be assumed to have spread throughout the region much earlier. It was in the Malay world, however, that this game was first described, in exactly the same form it retained until recent times.

Although *takraw* was played in Cambodia and southern Viet Nam, there was also an interesting variation of it in the Mekong delta in the late eighteenth century. The rattan ball was replaced by a kind of shuttlecock made from a leather ball wrapped in string, weighted with Chinese coins and flighted by three long feathers. This object floated down slowly enough to encourage the leaping high kicks beloved of *takraw* players. In Sumatra, Java, and Sulawesi feathered shuttlecocks made by sticking chicken feathers in a small bamboo tube were also used; sometimes they were kept in the air by players armed with wooden bats. In this form, the game was analogous with the European predecessor of badminton, *battledore* and shuttlecock, and may help explain the enthusiastic Southeast Asian response to modern badminton.

Source:

Reid, A. 1988. *Southeast Asia in the Age of Commerce 1450–1680; Volume One: The Lands below the Winds*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. pp. 199–201

Questions:

1. What is the writer's opinion of *sepak takraw* as a sport?

2. What is the link between *takraw* and modern badminton that the writer is suggesting? Do you agree?

Source 5: *Sepak takraw* world rankings in 2017

Rank	Men's Team	Women's Team
1	Thailand	Thailand
2	Malaysia	Viet Nam
3	Singapore	Malaysia
4	Indonesia	Japan
5	Korea	Korea
6	Myanmar	Indonesia
7	Japan	India
8	India	Myanmar
9	Brunei Darussalam	China
10	USA	Cambodia
11	China	Philippines
12	Iran	Pakistan
13	Philippines	
14	Germany	
15	Lao PDR	
16	Viet Nam	
17	Chinese Taipei	
18	France	
19	Cambodia	
20	Sri Lanka	
21	Switzerland	
22	Bangladesh	
23	Australia	
24	Pakistan	

Source:www.sportstrack.com/sepak-takraw-world-ranking-2015-indian-teams-7th-8th-positions/ (accessed 28 May 2019)

Source 6: 'Sepak Takraw: History and Heritage'

Sepak takraw has long remained one of Asia's best-kept secrets. Often described as a spectacular blend of volleyball, football, martial arts and gymnastics, *sepak takraw* is, in reality, a sport unlike any other. Astonishingly visceral and explosive, it is, at the elite level, one of the toughest games in the world. Demanding lightning reflexes, precise control and fearless, gravity-defying leaps, *sepak takraw* delivers some of the most intense sporting action.



Roots

Historical records point to early versions of the sport being played in 16th century Thailand, at the Malaysian royal court a century before that, and even across a wide swathe of the Philippines, Brunei, Myanmar, Indonesia and Laos as far back as the 11th century. The 'origin' debate may sometimes evoke strong passions, but it often obscures reality, namely that the values of the sport resonate right across national divides, and embrace a huge diaspora of Asian cultural traditions. These cultural threads were finally united in the early 60s, with the establishment of the first codified set of *sepak takraw* playing rules. A first appearance as a medal sport at the Southeast Asian Peninsular Games (the forerunner of the Southeast Asian Games or SEA Games) materialized in 1965, while the formation of the International *Sepaktakraw* Federation (ISTAF) in 1988 was quickly followed by an invitation to join the Olympic Movement at the 10th Asian Games in Beijing in 1990.

Playing styles

Over time, unique playing styles have evolved, with different countries developing distinct and fascinating approaches to the game. The sport encourages creativity and innovation, and the revolutionary **Horse-Kick** serve along with the deadly **Sunback Spike**, first developed in Thailand, have flourished in both the men's and the women's games. In Viet Nam, the equally balletic and graceful **Cartwheel** serve has been employed with lethal precision.

As the tentacles of the sport extend across Asia and Oceania, and make their inroads in the traditional football heartlands of Europe and the Americas, new styles, approaches and techniques, often drawn from different national sporting heritages, have emerged.

(continued ➔)

Beach *sepak takraw*

Its versatility and its early roots as an outdoor sport have also allowed *sepak takraw* to make a seamless transition to the beach, allowing a completely new form of the game to emerge, and leading to the inclusion of *sepak takraw* as a medal-sport in the inaugural Asian Beach Games 2008 in Bali.

International development

The King's Cup in Thailand and the Khir Johari Cup in Malaysia have, for over 25 years, served as the beacons of light for the international development of the game. Organised by the Takraw Association of Thailand, the King's Cup is today an annual celebration of the sport – the largest international *sepak takraw* festival and *de facto* point-of-entry for inductees into the sport.

Wherever it has taken root, *sepak takraw* enjoys cult status. Southeast Asia may be the birthplace of the sport and the stage for its greatest champions, but an enormous variety of regional tournaments and domestic events have sprung up around the globe. From the *sepak takraw* Swiss Open and the Chicken's Cup in Germany, to the Junior National *Sepak Takraw* Championship in India and the Thai Takraw League, the proliferation of competition has grown the talent pool substantially, which today boasts active international teams from more than 25 countries across five continents.



With the launch of the first-ever **ISTAF World Cup** and the **ISTAF Super Series**, *sepak takraw* is finally developing footholds in East and South Asia, the Americas, Europe, and Oceania.

Now, for the first time in its history, *sepak takraw* is poised to go global.

Source:

International Sepaktakraw Federation. sepaktakraw.org

Source 7: 'Takraw: A Traditional Southeast Asian Sport'



Cross soccer with volleyball and mix in a bit of gymnastics and *kung fu*, and you've got the ingredients for one of Southeast Asia's favourite and most spectacular pastimes: *sepak takraw*.

Countless variations of *takraw* are played throughout the region, but the basic objective of each is to keep the hollow, grapefruit-sized ball from touching the ground by keeping it airborne with the feet, knees, head, shoulders, elbows – or nearly every part of the body except the hands.

In Thailand, *takraw* is played by people of all ages in school yards, parks, fairgrounds, city streets, beaches, or anywhere with just a few feet of open space. All that is required is a rattan or plastic ball. The dazzling spectacle of the *sepak takraw* variety also features a net and requires a remarkable combination of flexibility, speed, power, mental alertness and acrobatic skill.

Whether it's *sipa* in the Philippines, *sepak raga* in Malaysia, *cầu mây* in Viet Nam, *kator* in Lao PDR or *takraw* in Thailand – the sport is distinctly a Southeast Asian tradition.

Origins and shared heritage

Where *takraw* originated is still a matter of intense dispute in Southeast Asia. Several countries proudly claim it as their own invention rather than as an activity borrowed from elsewhere. While it may never be satisfactorily determined where *takraw* began, there is some agreement that the sport was introduced to Southeast Asia through commercial contact with China.

In the Middle Kingdom some two thousand years ago, several variations of the game evolved from an ancient military exercise, where Chinese soldiers would try to keep a feathered shuttlecock airborne by kicking it back and forth between two people. As the sport developed throughout the region, the animal hide and chicken feathers used to make the original objects eventually gave way to balls made of woven strips of rattan, which grew abundantly in the jungles of Southeast Asia.

The first versions of *takraw* were not so much competitive contests but cooperative displays of skill designed to exercise the body, to improve dexterity and loosen the limbs after long periods of sitting, standing or working. (continued ➔)

Evolution of *takraw*

In Thailand, murals at Wat Phra Kaew, the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, in Bangkok depict the Hindu god Hanuman playing *takraw* in a ring with a troop of monkeys. Other historical accounts mention the game earlier during the reign of King Naresuan (1590-1605 AD) of Ayutthaya.

The modern version of *sepak takraw* (*sepak* means 'kick' in Malay and *takraw* means 'ball' or 'basket' in Thai), however, is fiercely competitive and began taking shape in Thailand almost 200 years ago.

In 1829 (B.E. 2372), the Siam Sports Association drafted the first rules for *takraw* competition. Four years later, the association introduced the volleyball-style net and held the first public contest. Within just a few years, *takraw* was introduced to the curriculum in Siamese schools.

The game became such a cherished local custom that another exhibition of volleyball-style *takraw* was staged to celebrate the kingdom's first constitution in 1933, the year after Thailand abolished absolute monarchy.



Sepak takraw is today played on a modified badminton doubles court, with the net standing five feet above the ground. Each team, or *regu*, consists of three players: left inside, right inside and back server. To put the ball into play, the inside player lobs the ball to the server, or *takong*, who launches the ball over the net with a roundhouse windmill kick. Basic rules and scoring are similar to volleyball, with each team allowed a maximum of three touches of the ball to get it back over the net to the other side without letting it touch the ground. The first team to score either 15 or 21 points, depending on the rules in play, wins the set. The team that prevails in two sets wins the match.

Spectators marvel as players, and opposing blockers, hurl themselves parallel to the ground as they spike the ball over the net with high-flying scissor kicks – only to land on the same foot. The most breathtaking of these feats are known as the roll spike, where the player leaps in the air to kick the ball over the opposite shoulder, and the sunback or stingray spike, a similar scissors kick but over the same shoulder. Perhaps the most devastating kick of all, however, is the horse-kick serve, made famous by Thailand's Suebsak Phunsueb, who is widely regarded as the best *sepak takraw* player in the world. Suebsak has been confounding opponents for a decade by serving the ball to opponents at a blistering pace using the sole of his shoe. (*continued* ➔)

Less acrobatic but more impressively skillful variants of the game include circle *takraw*, where about five to seven players stand in a ring and try to keep the ball airborne as long as possible. Points are awarded according to the difficulty of the kicks.



Hoop *takraw*, known locally as *lawd buang* or *lawd huang*, is similar to circle *takraw*, especially in its ballet-like moves and the emphasis on creativity, but the goal is to put the ball into a basket-shaped net with three hoop openings in a triangular formation suspended some five to six metres above ground. Each team is given an allotted time, usually 20 or 30 minutes, to put the ball in the basket as many times and as gracefully as they can. Like circle *takraw*, points are awarded for difficulty, so players break out their full repertoires of such expert maneuvers as cross-legged jump kicks and other artistic kicks behind the back or with the sole of the foot as well as strikes with the elbows, shoulders and forehead.

In Thailand, *lawd huang* is a popular activity at festivals and temple fairs – the fancy footwork often distracting the attention of onlookers from other proceedings. Unlike *sepak takraw*, where youngsters dominate the sport, the true masters of hoop *takraw* and circle *takraw* are usually the elders.

Competing with modernity

In Thailand, interest in *takraw* has been eclipsed somewhat by the growing popularity of European football and other modern influences, but it retains its special place in Thai culture. Thai schools and universities continue to teach *takraw* in physical education classes, and it is still almost ubiquitous throughout the kingdom. As Thailand is the unrivalled innovator of the modern sport and its undisputed world champion over the past decade or two, there is good reason to believe that *takraw* will continue to be synonymous with Thailand in the years to come. (continued ➔)

Takraw in Southeast Asia today

In Malaysia, Thailand's chief *takraw* rival, *sepak raga* is its national game. The country also has a *takraw* history rich with characters and milestone events. Hamid Maidin, Malaysia's 'Father of Modern Takraw', is credited with introducing the volleyball-style net and rules during World War Two, about the same time as similar developments in Thailand.

The spiritual aspect to the game can perhaps best be seen in Myanmar (Burma). The annual Waso *Chinlon* Festival, or Cane-ball Festival is held near the revered Maha Myat Muni Pagoda in Mandalay every year. Hundreds of *chinlon* teams take part with the players making offerings of flowers, lights and robes to the temple's sacred Buddha image in a show of respect. The games are accompanied by a traditional orchestra, and the tempo and melody of the music change according to the pace of the action.

Takraw goes international

In 1960, representatives from Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Lao PDR and Thailand met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to standardize the rules and regulations for the game. They reached a compromise and officially named the sport *sepak takraw*. They also formed the Asian Sepak Takraw Federation, or ASTAF, and translated the rules into English, setting the stage for the first international competition, held in Malaysia in 1965, at the Southeast Asian Peninsular Games, or SEAP Games, the predecessor to today's Southeast Asian Games, or SEA Games.

This chain of events set the stage for the international growth of *takraw*. But it was the replacement of the natural rattan ball, which tended to splinter and warp, with the more standardized synthetic plastic ball that really kicked the game's popularity into high gear.

In 1990, *sepak takraw* was included a sport at the Asian Games in Beijing. Women got in on the action with the first women's championships in Thailand in 1997. At the SEA Games in Manila last December, medal sports also included hoop *takraw*, men's doubles and circle *takraw*.

Today, more than 20 countries have national *takraw* associations with representatives on the board of the global governing body, the International Sepaktakraw Federation, or ISTAF.

Asian takraw looks to the future

For most of the past decade, Thailand has dominated international competitions, winning nearly every major event. Malaysia turned the tide at the 2005 Manila SEA Games. Thailand and Malaysia will remain the teams to beat for the foreseeable future, but other *takraw* powerhouses such as Myanmar, South Korea, Singapore and Viet Nam are closing in quickly.

Takraw is one of the fastest growing sports in Asia and all over the globe among both men and women. The gravity-defying kicks, contorted aerial twists, turns of the body and the blinding speed of play will continue to astound spectators worldwide. Perhaps it is only a matter of time before Southeast Asia's beloved pastime takes its rightful place among other sports at the Olympic Games. (continued ➔)

Source 8: Women in *sepak takraw*

Women *sepak takraw* players in a final round at SEA Games 2017, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



Source:
sport.trueid.net/detail/99682

Bac Giang *sepak takraw* women's team practicing

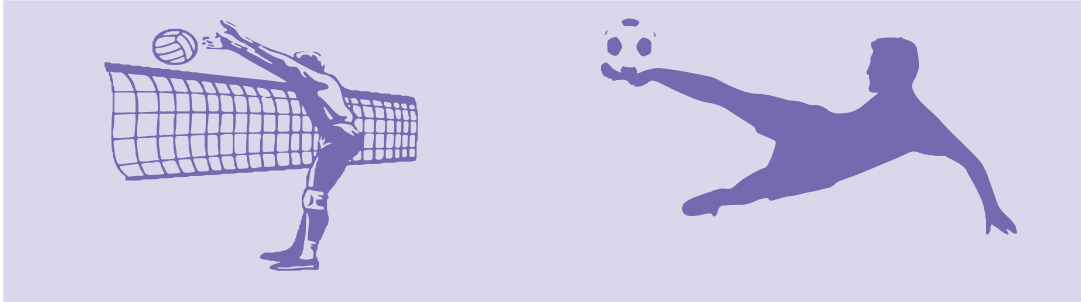


Source:
en.baobacgiang.com.vn/bg/sport/178040/bac-giang-sepak-takraw-women-s-team-pinshope-on-experience-youth.html

Handout 1: What sport is this?

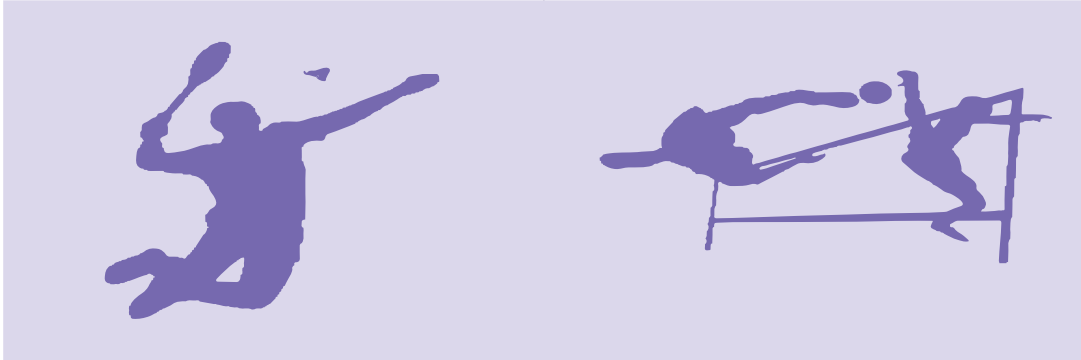
Name: _____

Identify each of the following sports. Write the name on the blank provided.



1

2



3

4



4

5

6

Handout 2: What is *sepak takraw*?

Read the following paragraph and answer the questions that follow.

Sepak takraw is a sport played throughout Southeast Asia. It is known by different names, such as *sepak raga* in Malay, *cầu mây* in Viet Nam, *sipa* in the Philippines, and *ka-taw* in Lao PDR. The equipment used in the sport [includes] a rattan ball and net. Players are only allowed to use their head, chest and feet to touch the ball. The game can be played indoors or outdoors.

A *sepak takraw* team is known as a *regu* and each *regu* has three members. The player at the back is known as the *tekong*. The gameplay begins when the *tekong* serves the ball and the players are allowed to move freely around the court. The use of hands in *sepak takraw* is not allowed and each player can touch the ball only once before it is hit over the net. The ball can be returned over the net by players using any body part except the part from the shoulder to the finger. Each game of *sepak takraw* has three sets with 21 points per set. The side that wins two sets is declared the winner.

Source:

Sportsmatik. n.d. sportsmatik.com/matik-sports-corner/sports-know-how/sepak-takraw (Accessed 20 June 2016)

1. By what name is *sepak takraw* known in:

Malaysia: _____

Viet Nam: _____

The Philippines: _____

Lao PDR: _____

2. What equipment do you need to play *sepak takraw*?

3. How many other people can you play *sepak takraw* with?

4. Which part of the body cannot be used in a *sepak takraw* game?

5. If you are the *tekong*, what is your role in the game?

Handout 3: Guess the rank

The following is a list of countries with official *sepak takraw* associations that are members of the International Sepaktakraw Federation (ISTAF) established in 1988. The ISTAF has been promoting *sepak takraw* in many countries in the world and once *sepak takraw* is played in at least 50 countries, it will be considered an international sport.

Country	Sepak Takraw Association formed in	Background	World Ranking in 2015
USA	1996	The USA Takraw Association was formed in California after the sport was highlighted in the media such as Sports Illustrated, MTV and CNN. The US is now one of the best non-Asian <i>takraw</i> teams. One famous player is Tony Ontam who led the men's doubles team to victory at the prestigious King's Cup (Division II) tournament in 2015.	
Germany	1990s	<i>Sepak takraw</i> started in Germany with a handful of players at the University of Cologne and today there are at least 7 <i>sepak takraw</i> clubs in Germany. In 2002, a tournament known as the Chicken's Cup was created and it gave a lot of publicity and exposure to the sport with teams from Malaysia, Iran and Europe taking part. Germany was a winner of the gold medal at the King's Cup for Men's Division II regu event.	
France	2003	The Association Française de Sepak Takraw in France was formed when some French nationals who had lived in Asia started it. It is now one of the more active <i>takraw</i> associations in Europe working with ISTAF to promote the sport in Europe. Its aim is to see <i>sepak takraw</i> accepted as a sport in the Olympics. The Open de France is one of Europe's biggest <i>sepak takraw</i> tournaments.	
Australia	1991	Since 1991, <i>sepak takraw</i> has been a competitive sport in Australia. The Australian team has also consistently competed in international events such as the King's Cup and ISTAF's World Cup. Many of the players travel to Malaysia and Thailand for training.	
Canada	1993	<i>Sepak takraw</i> is popular in Canada due to the work of Rick Engels who pioneered and promoted the sport in Canada. Rick Engels started promoting the sport in 1993 and in 1998, formed the Sepak Takraw Association of Canada (STAC). He also represented Canada in the sport for many years. Since 1999, STAC has organized 10 national championships and participated in more than a dozen international tournaments in Asia and Europe.	
Switzerland	2000	<i>Sepak takraw</i> was first introduced in Switzerland when Swiss travelers to Thailand brought home a few <i>takraw</i> balls after being fascinated by the sport. One of the early pioneers of <i>sepak takraw</i> in Switzerland was Reto Loeliger who founded the Sepak Takraw Club Switzerland. In 2000, Switzerland became the first European team to take part in the King's Cup where they came in last. In 2003, they started the Swiss Open, which is now a well-respected tournament.	