Lin Maak Vue / Bottle Cap Spinner

Site of Documentation
Ban Nayang Tai, Luang Prabang, Lao PDR

Description
Lin Maak Vue is played by Tai Lue children, particularly boys in the village of Ban Nayang Tai, Luang Prabang. In the game, players compete to see who can construct the most effective spinning toy from a bottle cap and a piece of thread. The 'spinning cap' that spins the longest wins the game.

Who Plays?
The game requires two players. Both boys and girls aged 10 years or under can play.

Accessories/Equipment
The game requires each player to have a metal cap from a glass bottle and a metre of cotton thread. If a bottle cap is not available, it can be substituted for a flat, round piece of wood. A hammer or large stone is needed to flatten the cap and a nail or other sharp object is needed to pierce it.
Time and Place

This game can be played indoors or outdoors at any time no matter what the weather is. The game is relatively quick to play. One the ‘spinning cap’ has been constructed (which can take up to 10 minutes), the game can take as little as 1 minute per round, making it ideal for playing both in and out of school.

Skills, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player

Most of the skill required for the game is in the construction of the spinning cap. With practice many children will form a better understanding of how flat the cap needs to be and where the holes should be best positioned, for the optimum ‘spin’. How long the cap can spin for will depend on how tight the players can wind the thread and how carefully they pull the thread. All of these skills can be gained through frequent experience of the game.

Popularity

This game is most popular with boys under the age of 10 years, who play at least once a month for fun. Most children learned this game from both their friends and parents.

History of the Game

Lin Maak Vue has been played by generations of children in the local community, although nowadays it takes on a very different form from the original game. Many years ago, the game was only played when the Lin Maak Vue fruit was in season (from which the game found its name). The fruit is shaped like a flat, hollow disk and was found in abundance in the surrounding countryside. Children would gather the fruit and drive two thin sticks through the fruit diagonally, dividing its hollow centre into 4 compartments. Next, they would pass a string in through one of these compartments, back out through the opposite side, and then tie both ends together. They would then hold the line with both hands and spin the fruit round and round to create tension in the thread. Finally when they pulled the thread from both ends, the fruit would spin quickly in the opposite direction.
Players would spin their fruits against each other, with the aim of breaking their opponent’s fruit into pieces. As Lin Maak Vue is very soft with a fragile skin, it would break apart easily and the game would be over within minutes. Nowadays the fruit has been replaced with a bottle cap. Since bottle caps cannot be easily broken, children now only compete to see who can spin their bottle cap the longest.

### Preparation

1. First, each player must flatten a metal bottle cap using a hammer or stone.

2. The player must then pierce two small holes in the flattened cap, using a nail hit by a hammer (or stone).
3. Next, the players need to pass a long piece cotton thread (approximately 1 metre) through one of the holes, back through the other and tie both ends together. The thread should form a long loop, which can be held at either end, with the cap in the middle.
How is the Game Played?

Step 1. Next the players wind the thread by spinning the bottle cap in one direction, until it’s tight with tension and can’t be wound up any more. When the players both have their thread tightly wound, they pull on either end of their threads. The bottle cap will then start spinning quickly in the opposite direction.
Step 2. The players compete to see how long they can keep their bottle cap spinning. The player with the cap that spins the longest wins the game. The players can repeat the game as many times as they like.