Kratai Ka Kuab / Hopping Rabbit

Site of Documentation
Tai Yuan in Oui Sorn Larn Group, Mae Wang district, Chiangmai Province, Thailand

Description

*Kra-Tai Kha Khuab* is a game of ‘Catch’ played by Tai Yuan children living in the Chiangmai province of Northern Thailand. In the game, a team of ‘Rabbits’ must one by one, enter into the game area, hopping on one leg and try to catch a ‘Wiggler’. If they succeed they must make it back to their team mates before their opponents can grab hold of their leg and pull it down to the floor. The first team to eliminate all the players wins the game.

Who Plays?

This game requires between 6 and 12 players. Both boys and girls can play aged from 8 to 12 years old. As players are split into two teams of equal size, it is important that there is an even number of players.

Time and Place

On average the game takes between 10 and 20 minutes to play, depending on the number of players and their level of skill. *Kra-Tai Kha Khuab* can be played either indoors or outdoors at any time of day, throughout the year (weather permitting). As each game is relatively short, it is ideal for playing during school break times. It is best played in large, open spaces that have a smooth, flat ground so that children have plenty of room to run about.
Skill, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player

Players have to be quick and agile if they are to make into the game area and back without being caught. Fast runners or those who are skilled at dodging opponents often make the best players. Physical strength is also very important if a player is to break free when caught by the other team. Like many games, team work can be the key to a successful win. Teams that can work together to form strategies, will always have the advantage over those that do not.

Popularity

This is game is only played in by Lanna children of Northern Thailand. It is most popular with girls, who enjoy playing with their peers at school where there is plenty of room and willing participants.

History of the game

The origins of this game are unknown. It was not played by members of the older generations, so is thought it has been adapted in recent decades from a simple game of ‘Catch’ or Khee Naed. Some of the rules and features of the game also resemble a traditional game called Teoi, so it is possible the game is a hybrid of the two.

Preparation

1. To prepare, lines for the game area need to be drawn on the ground. The size and shape of the area will depend on the number of players in each team. For small teams, a large square can be drawn measuring approximately 7 x 7 metres. Bigger teams can draw a rectangle measuring approximately 10 x 7 metres.

2. Players can draw on the ground with chalk, use a stick or stone to drag a line in the sand or use markers, such as shoes or bags to define the area.
How is the Game Played?

**Step 1.** First, all the players play *Lala* to split themselves into two equal sized teams.

**Step 2.** Next, both team play *To Chub* to determine which roles the teams play. The losing team takes the role of the *Kratai* (or ‘Rabbits’) while the winners play the ‘Wigglers’.
Step 3. The Rabbits have to think of a team name that has as many syllables as there are players. For example, if there are four players in each team, the team name must have four syllables such as “The Thai Tigers”. The name can be constructed of real or made up words and it doesn’t matter if it doesn’t have any meaning. Most children prefer to name their teams after popular movies or TV shows. Each of the players must then be assigned one syllable from the team name (such as “The”), which they will be called during the game.
Step 4. After they have finished naming the team and themselves, the Rabbits tell the Wigglers what their team name is. The Wigglers then pick one syllable from the name. The Rabbit with that name starts the game.

Step 3. All the Wigglers have to stand inside the game area, ready for the game to begin, while the Rabbits position themselves just outside of it.
Step 4. The first Rabbit has to enter the game area and while hopping on one leg, try to catch one of the Wigglers. The Wigglers have to run around and dodge the Rabbit’s advances.
Step 5. If the Rabbit catches a Wiggler, the caught Wiggler is eliminated from the game and the Rabbit must quickly (while still hopping) exit the game area. The rest of the Wigglers then chase after the Rabbit and if they catch them, they have to try to pull down the Rabbit's leg (that they are holding in the air), down to the ground. If they manage to do this the Rabbit is also eliminated from the game. The Wigglers then select the next Rabbit to play and the game continues.
Rules

1. If a Rabbit catches a Wiggler, then that Wiggler is eliminated from the game.

2. Rabbits that are caught by the Wigglers and made to stand on two feet are also eliminated from the game.

3. If the Rabbits manage to catch all the Wigglers, before their own team members are eliminated they win the game.

4. If the Wigglers manage to catch all the Rabbits, before their team is eliminated they win the game.

5. Wigglers always choose which Rabbit will chase them during the game.

6. The winning team always takes on the role of Wigglers in a new game.