Tu / Tag

Site of Documentation
Balik Pulau, Penang, Malaysia

Description
Tu is a fast paced team game that is played by ethnic Chinese children from rural communities in Penang, Malaysia. In the game, players have to enter their opponent's territory, catch another player and make it back to their own territory safely, while continuously making a “Tu” noise. The “Tu” sound that the players make while they are ‘attacking’ their opponents is from where the game finds its name.

Who Plays?
The game requires at least 8 players, although groups can be 20 players in size. Both boys and girls aged 7 to 12 years old can play.

Time and Place
On average, this game takes around 15 to 20 minutes to play. It can be played at any time of the day when the weather is cool and the children have free time. As the game requires a lot of running, a large space should be located that has a smooth, even ground. Basketball courts, playing fields and school yards all make ideal game areas.
Skills, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player

Players have to be quick and agile if they are to catch an opponent and return to safety while still saying, “Tu". Fast runners or those who are skilled at dodging opponents often make the best players. Physical strength is also very important if a player wants to prevent their opponent from reaching their own territory after they have been caught. Those that can hold their breath for a long time will always have the advantage over other players, as the longer they can, “Tu", the longer they have to complete their task.

Popularity

This game has retained its popularity over the years and is played regularly for fun and to pass free time. Typically the game was taught to the children by teachers at school or older peers.

History of the Game

Although the origins of the game are not easily traced, it is known to have been played by many older members of the community when they were young. The game has evolved over time from a simple game of ‘Catch’ to a more complex one where players have to say, ‘Tu’ while they try to catch their opponents.

Preparation

1. To prepare, lines for the game area need to be drawn on the ground. The size of the square will depend on the number of players in each team.

2. Players can draw on the ground with chalk, use a stick or stone to drag a line in the sand to define the square.
How is the Game Played?

**Step 1.** Two players must volunteer to be Team Leaders. The Team Leaders play a round of *Scissors, Stone and Cloth* to determine who gets the first pick of the players. The winner will get to select their first team member, followed by the loser. The Team Leaders take turns selecting their teams until they have divided up the players into two even sized groups.

The Team Leaders then compete in another round of *Scissors, Stone and Cloth* to determine which team plays **decide which roles the teams will play.** The winners become the ‘Runners’ while the losers take on the role of ‘Catchers’.
Step 2. The Catchers need to all stand outside the game area, at one side of the square.

The Runners all position themselves in different positions inside the game area.

Step 3. The Catchers then send their first player into the game area to chase the Runners.
Step 4. As soon as the first Catcher crosses into the game area they must take a deep breath and start making a “Tu” sound. The player must, “Tuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu” continuously while chasing the Runners.

The Catcher can only stay in the game area for as long as they can say, “Tu”, once they are running out of breath, they must exit the game area. If they get out while still saying “Tu”, then they are safe and can stay in the game. However, if they run out of breath and cannot “Tu” any longer, they fail their mission and are eliminated from the game. The Catchers then send in their next player.
Step 5. Any Runners caught by Catchers are eliminated from the game. Runners must not exit the
game area at any point; if they do they are also eliminated from the game. The game continues
until either all the Runners or all the Catchers are eliminated.

Rules

1. If the Catchers manage to eliminate all the Runners, they win the game.

2. However, if all the Catchers are eliminated before catching every Runner, the Runners win.