

Lot Kaosou / Jumping with Rubber-band Rope



Site of Documentation

Phnom Penh, Cambodia

Description

Lot Kaosou is a simple yet lively game that has been enjoyed by generations of children living throughout Cambodia. The game requires players to complete a sequence of jumps over a long rope made of rubber bands, which is held by their opponents. Each jump in the sequence is more challenging than the next and only the most agile win.

Who Plays?

This game can be played by both boys and girls, aged between 9 and 14 years old. A minimum of three players is required, but it can also be played in larger groups divided into teams of at least two players.

Accessories/Equipment

This game requires a large number of rubber bands that are tied together to make a long rubber band rope. Children typically buy rubber bands at school stationary stores or from local shops and construct the rope themselves, prior to playing the game.

Time and Place

On average, a game of *Lot Kaosou* takes about 15 minutes to play, which makes it ideal for playing during school break times. When children are out of school and have more free time, each game can last longer than 15 minutes, depending on the speed, skill and fitness of players. The environment the game is played in can affect the game's duration, as children can become exhausted quickly. As a result, children usually play this game where they can find a large space with smooth ground (such as a concrete floor or grass lawn) and shade. Ideally, children need to find a space that is 4x10 meters, giving them plenty of room to run and jump.

Skills, Strategies and Qualities of a Good Player

The most important skill that this game requires is the ability to jump very high in the air. Often taller children with longer legs have an advantage, although each version of this game has different features and provides children with the opportunity to use different skills. For example, some types of *Lot Kaosou* require great acting skills, so children that can mime well will excel, while others require exceptional concentration and balance. All players have to be able to keep quiet and still, so to not interrupt those who are jumping.

Popularity

Cambodian children play this game for fun and enjoy testing their skill at jumping the rope, against that of their friends. With its many mimes and action sequences, the game allows the children to practice forms of self expression and provide their peers with plenty of entertainment. As the game can be easily played anywhere, it is played frequently, particularly by girls

History of the game

Lot Kaosou has been enjoyed by generations of Cambodian children, although over the ages many features of the game have changed. In the days before the widespread use of rubber bands, some older members of communities remember using strong vines collected from nearby forests to make their jump ropes. Back then, children jumped the rope either individually or in small groups simply for exercise, whereas nowadays, children have created complex rules and action sequences to make the game more exciting.

How is the Game Played?

Step 1. First of all the rubber band rope must be constructed. It is made by tying numerous rubber bands together and is usually prepared well in advance of the game. Next, players play *Rock, Paper and Scissors* to determine who will be the first to jump. The losers both stand at either end of the rope and hold it for the jumper.

For larger groups that want to play in teams, children will often divide themselves into teams by playing either *Oulampe* or *Rock, Paper and Scissors*. When playing *Rock, Paper and Scissors*, two team leaders are elected to play against each other. The winner is allowed to select their own team of players, while the loser makes do with the remaining players. *Oulampe* is slightly different as it allows all the players to participate in dividing the teams. In the case that there are odd numbers of players (e.g. five children that

want to participate), it is usual for one team to be given three players while the other has two, plus one 'ghost' player. The ghost player can be played by any member selected by the team, including the team leader.

Step 2. Once the teams are chosen, the team leaders compete again in a game of *Rock, Paper and Scissors* to determine which team will start first.



Step 3. The winner of *Rock, Paper and Scissors* will jump first, while the losing team holds the rope.

Step 4. There are three different types of *Lot Kaosou*. Each type utilizes a different sequence of jumps and movements. Children can decide which they want to play, choosing one or more, depending on how much time they have available.

TYPE 1

Normal Jump

1. This is the most basic form of *Lot Kaosou*. In this game, two players will sit or stand far apart from each other, holding the rope at a specific height. As the game progresses the rope will be held higher and higher, making each jump more difficult than the last.
2. Taking turns, each player must run and jump over the rope at each height, without touching it.
3. If any part of a player's body brushes the rope, they are immediately out of the game and will take turns being a rope holder. If the game is played with teams, a member of the disqualified player's team (usually the team leader), can bring the player back to the game by successfully jumping on their behalf. The winner of the game is the player (or team) that can complete the highest level of jump without touching the rope.
4. Typically there are 11 different heights that the jumper will have to master. They are as follows:

Level 1: Knee Height

Level 2: Hip Height

Level 3: Waist Height

Level 4: Chest Height

Level 5: Neck Height

Level 6: Ear Height

Level 7: Head Height

Level 8: Head plus a Fist Height (*Mouy Angkouk*)

Level 9: Head plus an Open Palm Height (*Mouy Cham-Am*)

Level 10: Head plus a Fist and an Open Palm Height (*Mouy Angkou Mouy Cham-Am*)

Level 11: Stretched Arm Height (*Mouy Angtoun*)





TYPE 2

Sokola Meimei

1. Another version of *Lot Kaosou* is called *Sokola Meimei*. In this game at each height, the player will be expected complete a jump or movement twice, to complete each level.
2. Similar to *Normal Jump*, two players will hold the rope and over the course of the game place it at different heights, each one more difficult than the last.
3. In *Sokola Meimei*, the players must be able to complete 10 jumps or movements at different heights. They are as follows:

Level 1. Thigh Height: The player must jump back and forth over the rope without touching it. If they touch it they are disqualified, but can be saved by other members of their team.

Level 2. Waist Height: The player must balance one foot on the rope and while it is in this position, hop their other foot to the other side of the rope and back again. Remember that every movement needs to be done twice. Therefore, if the player accidentally hops on one side three times, they will have to also hop on the other side three times.

Level 3. Chest Height: The player jumps with both feet over the rope without touching the rope.



Level 4. Neck Height: The player must walk like a duck, underneath the rubber rope without touching it. They can bend their legs and move their head and neck backwards, but their body must remain straight at all times.



Level 5. Ear Height: The player must hop on one leg over the rope. At this level, it does not matter if the player touches the rope, but they are not allowed to land on the ground with both feet.



Level 6. Head Height: The player must pass under the rope without touching it. They can do this in way they like, as they do so they shout words to match the action. For example, the player can pretend to fly under the rope and shout, *Sokola hosheu!* (Flying jump!)



Level 7. Head plus a Fist Height (*Mouy Angkouk*): The player needs to act out an activity that makes their head touch the rope e.g. pretending to hit an invisible ball with their head by head butting the rope. At this level players are not allowed to touch the rope with their hands, if they do, they are disqualified.



Level 8. Head plus an Open Palm Height (*Mouy Cham-Am*): The player stands under the rope and throws their arms up, clapping their palms together over their head in an action known as 'hitting the mosquito'. They must complete this action without touching the rope.



Level 9. Head plus a Fist and an Open Palm Height (*Mouy Angkou Mouy Cham-Am*): The player has to jump and touch the rubber rope, this time with their neck. If the rubber rope touches the player's mouth or nose instead, the player is disqualified.



Level 10. Stretched Arm Height (*Mouy Angtoun*): The player must try to reach the rope with their hands and pull it down. They have to pretend that they are eating something by pulling the rope to their mouth and saying something like, *Si karem ke!* ('Eating chocolate ice-cream!')



4. The difficulty of *Sokola Meimei* is the variety of jumps and actions that have to be mastered at each level. Players who forget or confuse the sequence of actions are out of the game until they are saved by another member of their team.

5. If all members of the team complete all the steps successfully, they win the game. They can choose to either play again or swap sides, letting the team holding the rope have a chance to jump.

TYPE 3

Flying Jump (*Sokola Hosheu*):

1. In *Flying Jump*, the game is played a little differently. The two rope holders hold the rope firmly with both hands and as they do so, they also each place one foot on the rope to keep it flat on the ground.
2. The other players then have to jump over the rope before the holders release their feet and the rope springs up to the level that their hands are holding it at. If the player touches the rope, they are disqualified.
3. As each player jumps the rope, they must also do a specified action (or movement) which is unique to the height that the rope is held at.

Level 1. Knee Height: Players jump over the rope with both feet at the same time.

Level 2. Thigh Height: The holders tie the rope to make it into a circle and step inside it. The jumper must jump and land in the space that is between the two sides of the rope.



Level 3. Waist Height: Players must jump the rope while keeping their mouths closed.



Level 4. Chest Height: Players must jump the rope and laugh out loud or give a big smile.



Level 5. Neck Height: Players must jump the rope and pretend they are crying by rubbing their eyes.



Level 6. Ear Height: Players must jump the rope and put on an angry face.



Level 7. Head Height: Players must jump the rope and close their eyes.



Rules

1. After each jump, players must stand still and do the actions as required by each level. If they move before completing the action, they are disqualified and need to be saved by another team member.
2. After completing the action or jump required, the player must jump back to the other side of the rope to complete the level.
3. If any player is disqualified they can be saved by other team members. A team member can save them by jumping or doing the actions of that level, on their behalf. If a player successfully saves all disqualified players, the whole team can continue to next level. If they cannot save all the members of the team, the whole team is out and the players swap sides.
4. It is a very important that when a player is jumping, they do not touch the rope.
5. All players follow the requirements of each level in order to win the game.