

Dr. Hermann Brandt

**CRITICAL SCIENTIFIC
REVIEW
OF TEAM SPORTS**

Thulin Award by FIEP, Year 1970

TCHOUKBALL

**TCHOUKBALL:
The Sport of Tomorrow!**

Foreword and Drawing by Michel Favre

ROULET Publications, Geneva

FOREWORD

In this beginning of the XXIst Century, the sports phenomenon remains a key activity.

The term “sport” is a borrowing (1828) from the English word “sport” (XVth Century), which was itself borrowed from the Old French ((XIIth Century) “*desport*,” which meant “amusement” or “entertainment.” The word “sport” applied to bodily activities performed out of pleasure, often in a spirit of competition. Later on, it came to designate any physical activity practiced in the spirit of play, struggle, and effort, the practice of which presupposes training and the observance of certain rules.

In the XXth Century, sport became an essential domain of information and of entertainment, on account of which it took on considerable economic importance.

Its important image in society enables everyone to let his/her imagination run free regarding the possibility of acquiring an ideal physical condition, or to dream of the sports exploit that brings fame. Competition is no longer only related to sports, but it becomes financial as well. The effects of this phenomenon open the doors to all sorts of envies and engender the worst excesses.

In such a context, the fundamental question of safeguarding the identity of sport and of its educative value is raised in an even more relevant fashion.

Tchoukball was conceived with the intention of defending, protecting, and developing the first and fundamental values of sport. Thanks to its comprehensive concept, it is a tool with a definite effectiveness from the physiological, psychological, pedagogical, and sociological points of view.

In 1970 Tchoukball was above all a theory, and there were but a few of us to seek the means necessary for the practical realization of this sport in society. Its philosophy emphasizes above all two points: on one hand, the individual aspect in its totality (psychic and somatic)

approached through bodily and sports activity, and on the other hand, the team aspect in the sense of relationship, collaboration, and construction in common.

The rather disturbed climate of our current society has perhaps a favorable effect upon the desire and the need to look for satisfaction in the area of relationships. In this sense, the playing of Tchoukball supports well the relational dimension and promotes interpersonal exchanges and mutual respect. This sport encourages the idea of an encounter with the idea of going to a refreshing source rather than looking for a confrontation in order to fell the adversary.

The tournaments and the matches must be festivals that not only leave the space necessary for each sports prowess but also encourage the encounter in the broad sense, with its entire enriching relational universe. The sports exploit of a player should be lived by the others as the sign of a personal achievement, of which everyone can feel himself an actor.

This first English translation of Dr. Hermann Brandt’s work, *Critical Scientific Review of Team Sports: Tchoukball, the Sport of Tomorrow!*, is an important event. It is being published thirty-three years after the first edition in French and thus reflects indeed the expansion of Tchoukball. The publication of the English text is taking place at a propitious moment, and will consolidate, we hope, the worldwide diffusion of this sport.

While writing this preface, many memories, connected with the first French edition of 1971, come back to me. I had the great luck to meet and to collaborate with Hermann Brandt for several years, and to be at his side at the time of the awarding of the Thulin Prize in Lisbon. At his request, I participated in the execution of the drawings inside his work, as well as in the cover design and the photo of the Thulin Prize medal at the back of the book.

At the time of the Munich Olympic Games in 1972, I myself presented the game and the philosophy of Tchoukball in the framework of the workshops attached to the Olympic Games: 8th World YMCA Consultation on Health and Physical Education, Munich, August 28–September 1, 1972.

In 1970, Hermann and I wrote a charter* in order to bring an indispensable complementary text to the rules of the game.

In the first draft of this charter, we had written this sentence (which at the time only committed me):

“We banish the modern Olympic spirit because of its hypocrisies and because of its extreme nationalisms.”

In the year 2000, at the time of the creation of the Internet site of the International Federation and of the careful rereading of the text of the charter, I agreed to the elimination of this sentence. It seemed to me to be wiser to moderate this wording in order to avoid any polemical attitude within the federation and to protect ourselves against a position that was too judgmental with regard to the Olympic movement.

It appears interesting to me to point out that in the rough draft of the first writing, we had written this paragraph:

“The game must be framed by a desire for human understanding that is not limited by any consideration of religion, any national pride (or two groups!)... We go so far as to expect that no team raises the national colors. The personalities who constitute a team remain valid

for themselves, and the country of origin is concerned only through the means that it offers to the players.”

By common agreement, Hermann Brandt did not print it, for we thought at the time that nationalism was in regression. The quotation of this paragraph in this preface appears relevant to me because its subject is likely to offer us topics for thought regarding the evolution of sports and their connection with nationalism in our society.

The expression of my dearest wish is that you, leaders and players, always encourage the development of this sport in the spirit sought by Hermann Brandt and myself, the spirit presented and developed in this work and in our charter.

By way of conclusion, I quote the geneticist Albert Jacquard:

“The true practice of a sport consists of a dialogue of each person with his own body, under the critical and possibly laudatory eyes of others. This dialogue may be harsh, the demands may be severe; what is important is that the body be respected and not relegated to the rank of a mere tool.”

“To live and to smile together, that could be our motto.”

Michel Favre

*See the Charter in the appendix

APPENDIX

THE TCHOUKBALL CHARTER

Tchoukball excludes any striving for prestige, whether individually or as a team; rather it is a sport in which players pursue excellence through personal training and collective effort.

Tchoukball is open to players of all degrees of ability (natural or acquired) and skill. Inevitably one will encounter players of every possible ability/skill level during play. Every player must adapt his own play and attitude (technical or tactical) to the circumstances of the moment because each player - teammate or opposing player - is due proper respect and consideration.

On an individual level: the attitude of a player is paramount for it implies respect for himself/herself, for his/her own teammates *and* for opposing team players regardless of whether any are stronger or weaker players than one's self.

On a team level: no outcome, whatever it might be, should never impact one's sense of importance, individually or as a team, and it should never lead to sectarian rivalry. From victory one can derive satisfaction and even joy, but never exaggerated pride. The joy of winning should provide encouragement. Arrogance in victory carries with it the struggle for prestige, which is a source of common conflict among humans and condemned within the sport of Tchoukball.

Tchoukball requires total dedication: one must keep constant watch on the movement of the ball and the other players - both objectively and with empathy. As one participates individually in the sport, one subjects oneself to the group's needs. The result is that in the course of a game, different personalities come together as one when they react collectively within the game.

Thus, in Tchoukball:

- there is a collective achievement within a team. This binds the players together, it teaches appreciation and esteem for the values of others, and it creates a feeling of oneness in the common effort of a small group.
- there is an acceptance of the attitudes of the opposing team with whom one must engage in opportunistic play while resisting any hostile undercurrents.
- each player's major concern is to strive for beauty of play. The universal experience of sport can be summed up by the expression: "elegant play begets elegant play."

This attitude is the basis for social interaction of Tchoukball: it encourages one to aim for perfection while always avoiding any negative conduct toward the adversary.

This basic premise is more than just the rule of a sport - it is a rule for conduct at all times, a psychological component of behavior, the basis of an individual's personality.

The aim of Tchoukball is therefore the avoidance of conflict, with one main goal in mind: fair play that does not compromise the level of play but rather links the two teams together in common activity. The beauty of one team's play makes possible - and reinforces - the beauty of play by the other team.

Tchoukball provides social exercise through physical activity. By pooling the resources of all, everyone participates, with the more adept players accepting responsibility for teaching the less adept; therefore, there is no real individual champion, but rather a collective striving for perfection. When one says, "let the best man win," it should mean that a person achieves his/her best through adequate preparation. This being so, it is appropriate that the results reward

the efforts which players have undertaken, individually and as a team.

Within these limits, a victory can and should bring satisfaction and meet with an adversary's respect. Victory should inspire in an adversary a desire to do as well, without any feeling of belittlement. Winners should not convey any feeling of arrogant domination. Rather, a sense of healthy satisfaction on the winner's side is like a handshake to encourage the adversary to continue to train properly.

For these reasons, the notion of "victor" should give way to the simpler more appropriate one of "winner." Play as a means of perfecting one's performance is a basic desire that every activity should include and develop. It is toward this goal that every Tchoukball team must work, whether it is in the smallest, friendliest match or the most important meeting "at the summit."

Remember, no set of rules can replace a player's respect for one another and the Spirit of the Game