



Australian Government  
Australian Sports Commission

**wulijini**  
'wuli-jin-i'



SCHOOL  
YEARS  
4-6

SCHOOL  
YEARS  
7-9

SCHOOL  
YEARS  
10-12

Post-school age

### Background

This hand-hitting or handball game was played with a zamia (*Cycas media*) seed by the people of Bathurst Island in northern Australia. In the Meda district of northwest Australia players hit flat pieces of wood.

### Language

The game is named *Wulijini* after the Tiwi (Bathurst Island) word for 'play'.

### Short description

This is a ball-hitting game.

### Players

- Play in singles games or in teams of two to three players

### Playing area

- A badminton court or similar sized area

### Equipment

- A small, inflated ball, *paketa* or a covered sponge ball as the zamia (*Cycas media*) seed

### Game play and basic rules

Different versions of this hitting game using the hands can be played:

- Singles or pairs
  - Practice/cooperative game: Players face each other and hit (volley) the ball back and forth with the palms of their hands, as in a game of tennis, as many times as possible.

- Competitive game: The lines (marked area) of a badminton court either side of the half-way line is out-of-bounds. One or two players make up each team. Players hit underhand, overarm or sidearm to each other in a game to 11 points (three serves each). Teams have one hit to return the ball. (Younger players have two hits for each team on each return — one to control the ball and one to hit.) A badminton net may be used, and a hand-paddle bat or similar may be used to play the game.
- Teams
  - Cooperative team game: Divide the players into two teams facing each other 3–5 metres apart and with a line in the middle to separate the teams. Players of both teams attempt to keep a rally going as long as possible — aim to set a record for the group. To make the game more of a team effort, allow each player up to two contacts (to control and then hit the ball) and each team at least two and no more than three player contacts (as in volleyball). When players become more confident, they can attempt to hit the ball higher and restrict each player to one contact and the team to three.
  - Competitive team game: Play in teams of two to three players. A net may be used — net height may be set to badminton height for older players. Serving is underhand, below the waist as in badminton. Volleyball serving rules (one point for each serve) and play to 11 points — best of three games.

The ball cannot be hit ('spiked' or 'smashed') from above net height from inside the front area — between the service line and half-way line — of the court. Only 'clean' volleys (not a 'carry') made with the fist or palms of the hands are legal hits. Overhead and underarm hits are allowed.

The game may be played with teams allowed two hits to return the ball over the net, but only one hit for each player.

### Variation

- Power *wulijini*: One to six players face each other about 7–10 metres apart and hit the ball back and forth to each other. They attempt to make the ball go through the player/s opposite or make them mis-hit the ball.

### Teaching points

- Players ready. Go.
- Watch the ball. Hit to make them move.
- Call if you have a partner. Anticipate the hit.
- Hit through the ball. Try different shots.

