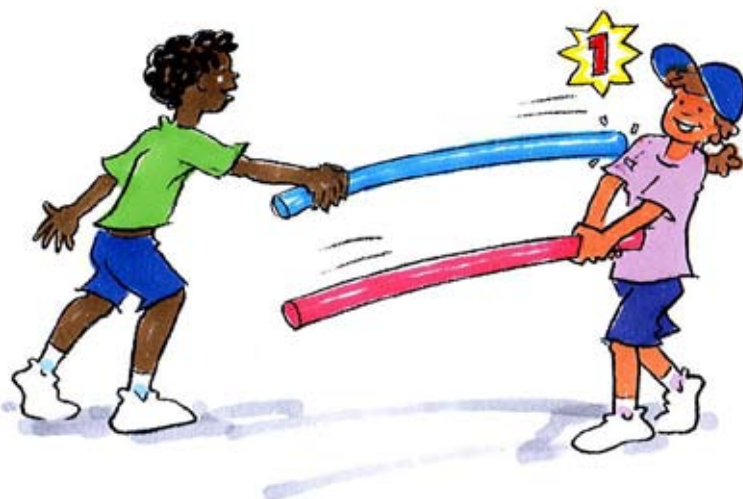




Australian Government
Australian Sports Commission

the pan
'the-pan'



SCHOOL
YEARS
4-6

SCHOOL
YEARS
7-9

SCHOOL
YEARS
10-12

Post-school age

Background

Large, heavy wooden swords were used by males in the rainforest areas of north Queensland, around Tully and neighbouring areas. These swords would be straight or slightly curved in shape. Swordplay was a popular ceremonial and recreational activity, and two contestants with a wooden sword and shield would compete.

Each would give and take blow after blow in strict rules of battle. After attempting to hit his opponent, the contestant would await his opponent's stroke, fending it off with his shield.

Finally, one would surrender. Sometimes one competitor would be slow with his shield and would receive a heavy blow on the head.

Language

Thepan means 'to hit' in the Wik-Mungkan language spoken in parts of north Queensland.

Short description

Players use foam 'swords' to attempt to hit each other on the body.

Players

- Form groups of two to eight players. Players in the group compete against each other in pairs.

Playing area

- A designated area suitable for the activity

Equipment

- Use foam *thepans* or inflatable toys (such as baseball bats) as a substitute for the wooden *thepans*. Swimming pool 'noodles' cut to a length of about 1 to 1.5 metres or so work very well.
- Plastic rubbish-bin lids or similar could be used as the shields.

Game play and basic rules

- Players with a *thepan* each face each other and on the signal to start attempt to contact each other on the body from the shoulder down. The *thepan* may be held in one or both hands.
- The flat side of the *thepan* is used for contact rather than using the end in a 'poking' action. The soft *thepans* usually mean that they do not hurt at all.
- Players take it in turns to attempt to make a hit. If a player misses with his or her attempt to make contact it becomes the turn of the other player. (The game may also be played in a 'free-for-all' manner with no turn taking.)

Scoring

Play the game for a certain time (such as two minutes) or for a nominated number of contacts (such as best of five). Two other players then begin another contest.

Variations

- Players hit the other player on the top of the head. Helmets are worn in this traditional form of the contest. The contest continues until one player 'yields', the designated time (such as 60 seconds) has expired or a player is hit on the head.
- A number of players in a mock battle, which may be rehearsed.
- One player with a shield and the other with a *thepan*. When an oval shield is used it is held sideways (horizontally) rather than vertically.
- Both players with a *thepan* and a shield.
- One player with a *thepan* and the other with a plastic stick as the shield.
- Players attempt to hit each other on the legs when they can. No turn taking.

Safety

Although the foam swords are very light and cause few problems, players who participate may choose to wear a helmet (cricket or baseball) or boxing head gear. Strict control of the game is necessary.

Suggestion

As a practical art activity students can make small *thepans* out of wood or cardboard. Copy a design.

Teaching points

- Face each other. Ready — go.
- Hold on tight.
- Take it in turns.
- Your turn, now your turn.
- Duck and move.
- Keep going.
- Good hit.
- Change — next players.