

Hacky Sack:

It's a whole new ballgame

By Carla Sutter
Battalion Reporter

The West Coast has done it again: first it was skateboards, then roller skates. Now hacky sack has made its way to Texas.

This novel game is a take-off on soccer, but there's no running after its small, leather-covered ball, which is filled with tiny pieces of cork.

One or more people can play hacky sack; when playing alone the object of the game is to see how many times the ball (about the size of a golf ball) can be kicked without letting it fall to

the ground. Ken Shults, 14, of Portland, Ore. holds the record for the most consecutive kicks: 4,850.

There are two ways to play with more than one person. It can be played like ping-pong on a tennis court using the serving courts as the playing area, or it can be played in a circle with an unlimited amount of people.

There are two rules in hacky sack: the server never serves it to himself and any part of the body can be used to maneuver the ball but the hands. The object — whether playing with one or 50

people — is to keep the ball off the ground. However, when played for recreation only, this is not a factor for scoring, since points are only tabulated in match play.

The game has become popular at Texas A&M University, with the help of Steve Gasall, a petroleum engineering major, and many of his Aston Hall friends who are avid players of hacky sack. Gasall said he likes the game because he can play it anywhere, inside or outside. His favorite place to play is on the Corps Quad.

He said that everybody who sees the game wants to play, much the way people like to join in on throwing a frisbee — there is no required skill to the game, and it's just plain fun.

No hacky sack club has been formed yet at Texas A&M, but player Steve Vogel said if interest in the game continues to grow, one will be formed in the future.

Hacky sack has a unique terminology that includes the "hacky sin," when hands are used; "in-the-circle," which is called when the ball goes out of playing distance and "vertical," which is a method of kicking the ball up and down in succession.

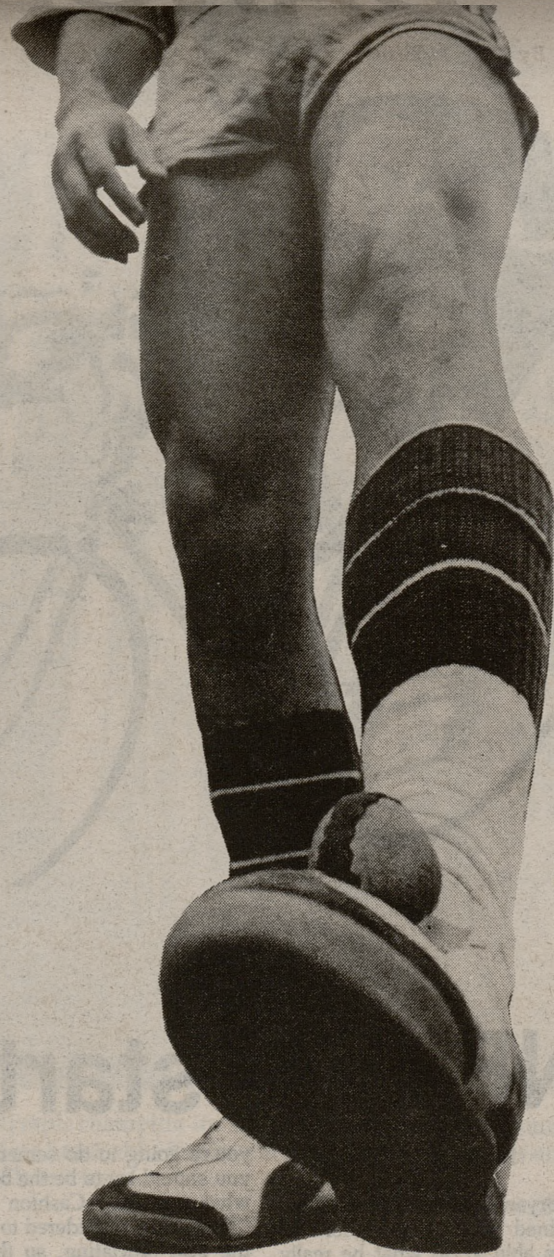
"When you're playing you usually don't talk, since the game calls for total concentration," Gasall said. "You learn that your coordination is best when you're relaxed and you learn how much control you have over your body."

There are three basic kicks that are used: side kick, toe kick and the inside kick.

"When the ball is coming at you, you want it to fall almost to your knees before hitting it so you don't raise your foot so high that you lose your balance," said Gasall. "Your knee acts as a pivot with your foot acting as the club. You want the ball to go up straight so it's easier to kick the next time."

He said that a player may kick the ball up and down by himself for as long as he chooses before kicking it to someone else in the circle or court.

Vogel said he enjoys the game so much that he made his own ball, since the unusual hacky sack balls are not yet available in College Station, and ordering bulk quantities from the manufacturer is costly and time consuming. He said he isn't that



Hacky Sack is played with a small leather ball resembling a cork-filled bean bag.

Photo by Becky Swanson.



Richard Walden, a biomedical science sophomore from Austin, demonstrates the standard hacky sack volley. This is the first "kick" a new player learns, he said.

Photo by Becky Swanson.

THE MOP SHOP
Hairstyling for Men & Women

Cut, Blow Dry & Style **only \$12.00**

Open: M-F 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Appointments or walk-ins welcome
Thurs. 8 a.m.-7 p.m. 696-8637
Sat. 8 a.m.-4 p.m.

"We Sell Markham Products"

3707 E. 29TH
(TOWN & COUNTRY CENTER)

SARITAS SMOKE SHOP

PIPES
SNUFF
SPITTONS
PIPE RACKS
ROLLING PAPER
CIGARS - IMPORTED AND DOMESTIC
LIGHTERS/FLUID
IMPORTED CIGARETTES
CUSTOM BLENDED TOBACCO
CANDLES THAT KILL TOBACCO ODOR