



SCA Buzkashi

Approved by the SEO - 3 Sep 2013



DESCRIPTION and ORIGIN:

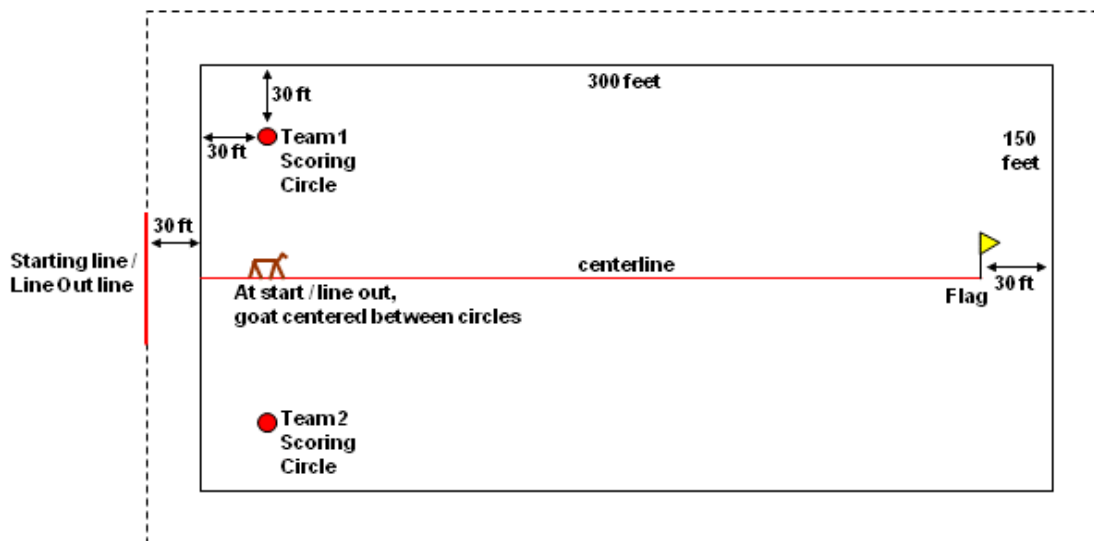
Buzkashi is a mounted game originating in the Steppes of central Asia where it has been played for centuries. The name “*Buzkashi*” is of Persian origin. Among the Turkic peoples it is called “*Kokboru*”. The goal is for a player to grab the carcass of a headless goat or calf, and then get it clear of the other players or pitch it across a goal line. It is considered a test of strength and horsemanship, both very important qualities in a Steppes warrior. Normally, it is a game of individuals, with every man for himself, although sometimes it is played in teams. The game consists of two main forms: Tudabarai and Qarajai. Tudabarai is considered to be the simpler form of the game. In this version, the goal is simply to grab the goat and move in any direction until clear of the other players. In Qarajai, players must carry the carcass around a flag or marker at one end of the field, then carry the goat to the other end and throw it into a scoring circle (the “Circle of Justice”).

Conventions

In order to keep the game as authentic as possible while still having safety as the primary concern, the following conventions should be used (to cover two forms of the game).

QARAJAI TEAM GAME

This is a team game consisting of at least two players per team, with an equal number on each side. (There is a recommended maximum of 6 players per side when using the recommended full size pitch, but the number of players should be based on the size of the pitch that is being used.) The goal is for the team of players to carry the goat around the end flag and then drop it in the scoring circle for their team. From the pickup, the goat **must be passed three times** from one player to another player on the team before it can be dropped into the scoring circle. If the goat is dropped/lost, the “pass count” is reset to zero. Successfully dropping the goat in the scoring circle counts as one point, and ends a round of play. The first team to score three points wins. There are no time limits.



**Suggested Buzkashi Pitch
(with 30 ft recommended safety boundary)**

BUZKASHI PITCH

The recommended pitch (playing field) size for Qarajai should be 300 feet long by 150 feet wide (100 yards x 50 yards), although it can be made larger or smaller depending on the number of players. The borders should be marked in such a way as to be clearly visible but not interfere

with a horse passing over it. Surveyor's flags or tape secured to the ground work well. The pitch should have a 30 ft safety boundary around the outside of the pitch. This safety boundary is intended to provide a space that keeps spectators separate from horses that are forced out or step outside the pitch. The pitch centerline should be marked at either end. The centerline divides the pitch into halves, one for each team. At the scoring end of the pitch are two scoring circles, one for each team. They are 6 feet in diameter and are centered 30 feet from their respective corners of the pitch. At the other end of the pitch is a flag or other easily visible marker on the centerline 30 feet from the end of the pitch (see diagram above). At the start of each round of play the goat will be placed on the ground centered between the scoring circles. **Once players have entered the pitch at the start of play, any player who leaves the pitch is out of play until the next line out (round of play).**

LINE OUT

"Line Out" is when all the players line up, side-by-side, 30 feet outside the scoring circle end of the pitch, centered on the centerline. Line out happens at the start of the game, and at the beginning of each successive round of play. A round of play ends when one team successfully throws the goat into the scoring circle and scores a point.

STARTING THE GAME

Play for each round begins with the players in line out (see diagram and description above). At the starting signal the players may ride for the goat and attempt a pick up. Once the goat is picked up (at the beginning), it must go around the flag at the far end before an attempt to score can be made.

PLAYING THE GAME

When a player successfully gains possession of the goat (either by pick up or by seizing the goat from an opposing player), the team must carry the goat around the flag if the goat was taken on the opposing team's side of the pitch. If the goat was taken on the player's own side of the pitch, the team may proceed directly to the scoring circle (but must still pass the goat three times). In other words, if Team 1 gets the goat on Team 2's side of the pitch (either by seizing it from an opponent or picking it up off the ground), Team 1 must carry the goat around the flag before they can score. If, however, Team 1 gets the goat on Team 1's side of the pitch, they can head straight for the scoring circle (because the goat already went around the flag). An analogy is that the pitch is a long football field that has been folded. You have to get the goat to the right side to score (by going around the flag if you don't start on your side).

When the goat is passed back and forth between just two riders, each rider must carry the goat for 4 full strides before it can be passed back to the other rider.

PICKING UP THE GOAT

- a) Once any player has reached the goat and is attempting to pick it up, other players within 15 feet of the goat may not stop nor change direction, but must continue moving in a straight line away from the goat without slowing down until they are at least 15 feet from the goat. A player who stops, slows down, or makes any attempt to change direction within 15 feet of the goat will receive a warning.
- b) The goat must be **picked up without dismounting**. The goat may be picked up with the horse moving at any gait or stationary. Once the goat has been picked up the player must immediately return to a normal riding position.
- c) Players may not interfere with the player who has picked up the goat in any way until the player has resumed a normal riding position. Any interference before a normal riding position has been reached will result in a warning.
- d) The player picking up the goat must do so quickly. If the player fails to pick it up within 5 seconds, that player must move quickly away from the goat to a distance of at least 15 feet. At this point other players may move in and attempt a pick up.

- e) The 15 foot pick up “*safety zone*” must be avoided by the other players (i.e. those not involved in the pick up).
- f) If a player drops the goat, that player must move 15 feet away from the goat, as with an unsuccessful pick up.
- g) Right of way for a pick up goes to the player who is closest to the goat. If two players are at equal distance from the goat, the right of way goes to the player riding closest to a line from the goat to the flag end of the pitch.

It is forbidden to “tackle” or to intimidate in any way a player who is attempting to pick up the goat, including forcing the player to change direction. Such action will result in a warning.

CARRYING THE GOAT

Only one hand may be used to carry the goat.

TACKLING

There are three different types of activities in buzkashi that are all considered an aspect of “tackling”: a) physical tackling, b) marking, and c) seizing the goat.

a) Physical Tackling

- 1) This is the action of bringing one's horse into contact with the goat carrier's horse in order to slow it down or put it off course and to take the goat. A tackle can be effected by one or more players at the same time, but only one player can take the goat.
- 2) It is forbidden to tackle a player at an angle of greater than 45 degrees to that player's direction of movement. Such action will be penalized by a warning.
- 3) It is forbidden to tackle a player by pushing him anywhere or using the horse to hit the player.
- 4) It is forbidden to:
 - restrain a player;
 - push or restrain with the hands;
 - head butt or punch with a fist, the forearm, or the elbow

b) Marking

- 1) It is forbidden to tackle a player that is not carrying the goat. Such action will be penalized by a warning.
- 2) However, there are no restrictions on following the movements of a player not carrying the goat provided that the player's freedom of movement is not hindered. This following movement is “marking”. “Freedom of movement is not hindered” means that a player can ride alongside an opposing player in order to remain between the opposing player and the goat carrier (in an attempt to prevent the goat from being passed), but cannot ride in a way that prevents forward motion of the opposing player.

c) Seizing the Goat from an Opponent

- 1) A player may attempt to seize the goat from the player who is carrying the goat, but may do so with one hand only. Once an opposing player has seized the goat, the goat carrier may not transfer the goat to his other hand or attempt to hold the goat with both hands. Having seized the goat, the player must regain his/her seat quickly. It is not permitted to hold the player, the horse, or the tack. A player is only allowed to hold the goat. If either player loses their seat in the saddle during the struggle he or she must release the goat immediately.
- 2) During the struggle for possession, no other player may interfere.
- 3) If any of the above rules is violated, a warning will be given against the offending player at the point where the offence occurred.

- 4) When a player successfully takes the goat, either by pick up or by tackling another player, the team must go around the flag if the goat was taken on the opposing team's side of the pitch. If the goat was taken on the player's own side of the pitch, the team may proceed directly to the scoring circle (but must still pass the goat three times).

FORCING A PLAYER OUT

- a) If the goat carrier's horse is forced out/steps out of the pitch (into the safety boundary), that player is out of play until the next round and that player's team forfeits the goat to the other team. One player from the other team starts with the goat in hand at the point where the offending team had the goat when their goat carrier was forced out (or stepped out).
Reminder: Any player who goes outside the pitch is out of play until the next round of play. When teams are only 2 or 3 players, it is more fun to impose a 30-second out-of-play penalty for stepping out of the pitch, rather than having a player be out until the next round.
- b) The pitch should have a 30 ft safety boundary around it which a player's horse can be forced into in order to make them forfeit the goat. This safety boundary is intended to provide a space that keep spectators separate from horses that are forced out or step outside the pitch.

MARSHALS

At least one Marshal, designated Marshal of the Field, will have complete authority over each game. The Marshal of the Field (MOF) should be mounted and should remain in reasonable proximity to the goat carrier during play. The MOF may designate additional marshals to help oversee the game should he/she so desire. Only the MOF may determine if a warning should be given.

HOLDS / SAFETY

Any rider on the pitch may call a hold at any time a problem or unsafe situation arises by calling out "HOLD!" When a hold is called, all riders must come to a halt as quickly as possible and remain in position until the signal is given to resume play. **The only word to use is "HOLD"**. Any calls of "Whoa", "Stop", or other yelling/screaming are not acceptable methods to stop play. Only "HOLD" will be used. Anything else will be ignored.

WARNINGS AND PENALTIES

Upon receiving two warnings, a player will be out of play until the next line out. Upon receiving three warnings, a player will be out of play for the remainder of the game.

EQUIPMENT (The Goat)

The goat may be made of any strong fabric or leather and may be filled with any material that gives it weight while maintaining flexibility. Beans, rice, deer corn or similar materials are suitable. Goats weighing more than twenty pounds are difficult to pick up and hold on to. Tests have shown a weight of fifteen pounds to be optimum. The goat body should be between 24 and 36 inches in length and should have at least four projections (legs) approx 24" long that are reinforced internally with stiff wire or flexible tubing for ease of pick up (garden hose with wire inside or pool noodles with PVC pipe and rope works well). The goat should have no sharp or pointed surfaces, and internal rigid components should be covered with tape or foam to prevent them from punching through.

QARAJAI INDIVIDUAL GAME

The rules for the Qarajai individual game are virtually the same as for the team game. The only differences are:

- 1) There must be a minimum of three players.
- 2) There is only one scoring circle located on the centerline of the pitch opposite the flag.

- 3) When the goat is taken during play either through tackling or by pick up, the player must always circle the flag before proceeding to the scoring circle. There is no passing of the goat in the individual game.
- 4) Any player who leaves the pitch is out of the game
- 5) The first player to score three points wins (as opposed to team scoring)

=====

NOTES

These rules borrow heavily from European horseball which, in turn, borrows heavily from polo. I have done my best not to include unnecessary or superfluous rules or restrictions and to cover only those which pertain directly to safety and reasonable ease of play. True Buzkashi is a very dangerous sport, replete with death and dismemberment. I hope these proposed rules will give us something of the exhilarating flavor of Buzkashi without the unpleasant aftertaste. I look forward to your commentary and suggestions.

Fergus Khan, Ansteorra