

KORFBALL



... ONLY HIGH FLYERS NEED APPLY ...

PLAN OF PRESENTATION

- ✘ Explanation of korfball
- ✘ The broader study
- ✘ Is korfball really egalitarian?
- ✘ Diffusion and international developments
- ✘ Media/Commercialisation/Olympic status
 - + Including negative implications & resistance
- ✘ Final thoughts



WHAT IS KORFBALL?

- ✘ Goals
- ✘ It consists of 4 girls and 4 boys in each team
- ✘ Boys mark boys, girls mark girls
- ✘ Passing, quick movement, losing your opponent





- ✘ Players either attack or defend then swap
- ✘ Defended shots – no goal
- ✘ No solo play
- ✘ Co-operation is essential for success



THE INVENTION OF KORFBALL



- ✘ Invented in 1902, by a Dutch school teacher, Nico Broekhuysen (Crum, 2005)
- ✘ Non-contact for girls and boys to play (Crum, 2005)
- ✘ Broekhuysen was inspired to develop korfball after seeing 'ringboll' in Sweden (Renson, 2003)
- ✘ Number of disparities regarding the specific origins of korfball
 - + Basketball (1891), women's basketball (1893)
 - + Sandra Berrenson attended Nääs, Sweden (1897)
 - + Broekhuysen attended in 1902 and took a version back to Amsterdam, making it a mixed sport



- ✘ Mixed education and cooperation to achieve a collective goal (Summerfield & White, 1989)
- ✘ No violence and non-contact, and rules to promote egalitarianism (Summerfield & White, 1989)
- ✘ Equality, teamwork and cooperation
- ✘ Progressive educators course in Sweden (Crum, Renson, 2003)
 - + Low cost, open-air game for both sexes (Crum, 2005)

OVERVIEW OF MY PROJECT



- ✘ The gendered attitudes and experiences of children that play korfbal
- ✘ Whether a non-mainstream sport, that was created to promote gender egalitarianism between children, is impacting on children's developing gender identities.
- ✘ Ethnographic visits

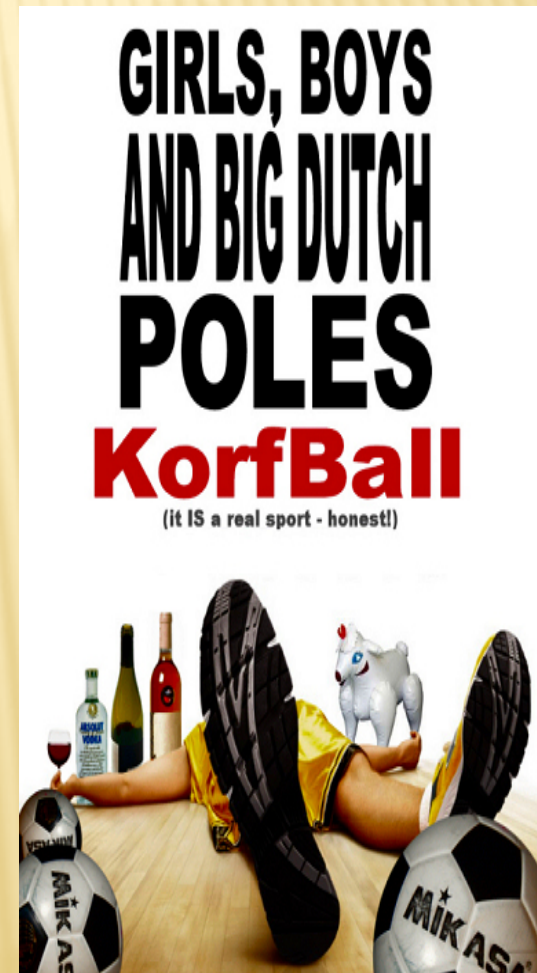
KORFBALL

SPORT IN THE MIXED ZONE

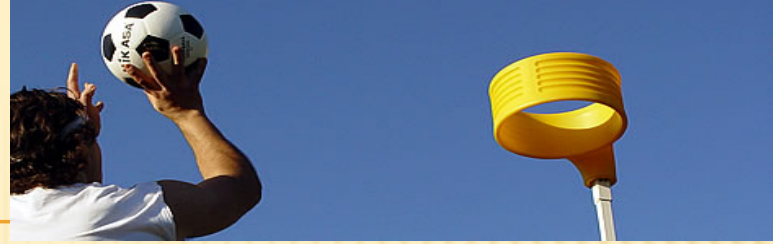
- ✘ ‘the world’s only mixed sport’ (IKF, 2006: 1), with men and women playing in unison on a level playing field (Crum, 2003; 1988)
- ✘ The IKF ‘sells korfball as “the coed sport” and as “a passport to coeducation”
- ✘ ‘the answer’ for coeducation, ‘the solution’ for a sporting world where gender inequalities are a continual controversy, and the ‘proof’ that integrated sport can indeed serve the interests of men and women equally well’ (Thompson and Finnigan, 1990: 7)
- ✘ “truly egalitarian sport” (Summerfield and White, 1989: 146)

RULE ENFORCEMENT OF EQUALITY

- ✘ Players are only playing directly opposite their own sex
 - + Height, muscular strength and speed
 - + encourages self-control and discipline
- ✘ Protected possession
- ✘ Solo play is forbidden (IKF, 2006)
- ✘ Playing together is key (Crum, 2003)
 - + the rules make teamwork obligatory (Emmerik, et al., undated).
- ✘ The 'defended' rule



CRUM (1988)



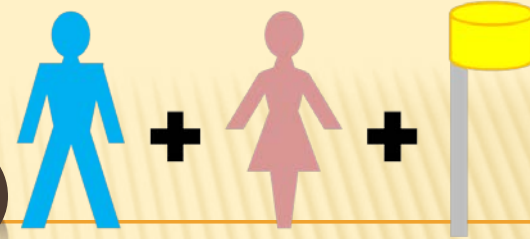
- ✘ Dutch Association had **96%** of men in the high status positions and **61%** of women in secretarial roles
- ✘ Men dominated and women often played the supporting roles to aid the male attack
- ✘ This domination was not true of two of the strongest teams
- ✘ Female players ‘tend to reject the idea of male superiority’ whereas all male players ‘tend to agree with the idea’ (Crum, 1988: 238)
- ✘ Both male and female korfball players are disapproving towards the notion of instrumental aggression
- ✘ Male korfball players were not as susceptible or such strong advocates for men being superior to women in sport

CRUM'S (1988) CONCLUSION



- ✘ All in all, when trying to promote the status and equality of women in sport, coeducational sports likened to korfball stand a better chance than sports where men and women are isolated, or more traditional male dominated sports
- ✘ Women simply cannot contend with the height and strength of men when scoring or rebounding... it remains a coach's dream that this will one day be the case (Crum, 2003)

THOMPSON & FINNIGAN (1990)



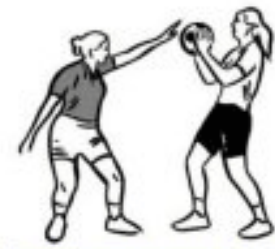
- ✘ Men were engaged in passes more often, **45%** of passes in the second game were between two men, and happened twice as much as any other patterns of passing
- ✘ Summerfield and White (1989) discovered that irrespective of the gender of the person passing the ball, they were more prone to passing to men
- ✘ Moreover, men took more shots at the korf, shot from further away, and threw longer passes
- ✘ **82%** of the total goals in a number of analysed matches came from male shots, as well as **70%** of failed goal attempts and every penalty taken (Summerfield and White, 1989)
- ✘ ‘The men drew attention to themselves verbally, constantly calling for the ball or directing play by telling the person in possession of the ball who to pass to’
- ✘ Women were more successful when intercepting passes

THOMPSON & FINNIGAN CONCLUSIONS

- ✘ Korfball is not successful in facilitating gender equality and promoting egalitarianism at this moment in time
- ✘ The lack of success in this respect has been attributed to the players rather than the structure, tactics or ideals of the game (Thompson and Finnigan, 1990)
- ✘ Korfball should be commended for its conscientious efforts to negotiate traditional gender norms in a sporting environment



SUMMERFIELD & WHITE (1989)



DEFENDING

- ✘ Both sexes appeared together on the cover fore-ground of **68%** of magazines, but where only one sex was displayed in the fore-ground men took centre stage over **two-times** as much as women
- ✘ Centrefolds pictured either mixed-sex groups or men only, with men appearing frequently in attacking positions whilst women emerged defending
- ✘ Articles were twice as often written by men as women, whilst a number were also co-authored
- ✘ The rulebook held prejudice and endorsed ‘male authority and officialdom’
- ✘ the International Korfball Federation (IKF) and the British Korfball Association (BKA) both refer to linesmen and referees as “he” in their official rule books



- ✘ 75% of registered British referees were male
- ✘ Male positions in the Associations supersede female positions in a ratio of 2:1
- ✘ Presidents and Chairpersons always male and female positions revolved mainly around secretarial roles
- ✘ Men are twice as likely to score as women (on average, men scored from 1:6 of their attempts while women scored from only 1:12)
- ✘ Centre passes were dominated by men
- ✘ All teams studied had both male captains and coaches

- ✘ Men were prone to lobbing long, hard passes, whilst women looked for the shorter passes to assist and link,
- ✘ Men also loitered around the post in order to possess the strongest scoring positions, and ultimately took control of dead ball situations
- ✘ Men being better skilled, having physical advantages such as height, speed and strength, and also having played korfbal for extended periods of time



AMENDMENTS



- ✘ Restricting verbal commands during the match
- ✘ Put all female players in one end and male players in the other (Thompson and Finnigan, 1990)
- ✘ Alternation of male and female conducted penalties, centre passes and other dead-ball situations
- ✘ A compulsory appointment of one male and one female captain
- ✘ Encourage women to become coaches and referees, providing training programmes and courses to improve their skills and confidence in these areas (Summerfield & White, 1989)
- ✘ Reaffirmation of gender difference and separation?

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- ✘ First Dutch korfbal association in 1903
- ✘ 1920 Antwerp Olympic Games – Belgian Korfbal Association in 1921
- ✘ IKF 1933, but real growth in the 1970s
- ✘ The IOC officially recognised korfbal in 1993
- ✘ 59 affiliations - Great Britain, Germany, Spain, France, Papua New Guinea, USA, Australia, Taiwan, India, Poland, Hungary, Japan, Hong Kong, New Zealand, China, Russia, South Africa



MEDIA/COMMERCIALISATION/OLYMPICS



- ✘ Combination of CKB and KNKB
- ✘ Coaches and specific training
- ✘ 1974 the penalty spot was moved
- ✘ International ‘clinics’
- ✘ Still lack of ‘exciting’ international competition

IMPORTANCE OF MEDIA ATTENTION

- ✘ Exciting international contests can attract media coverage, and this is what ultimately establishes the status of a specific sport (Fransoo, 2003)
- ✘ It also increases the scope to recruit new players, ‘without its attention, it is impossible to recruit new members outside of ‘the family’’ (Emmerik, Keizer, Troost, et al., undated: 176).



- ✘ Topsports 'are played all over the world, are media involved and have exciting leagues, both national and international' (Crum, 2003: 2)
- ✘ Topsports need heroes
- ✘ Too 'gentle' and too 'nice'
- ✘ Topkorfball will only become a reality when the spectacle of stronger Dutch opposition comes into play (Emmerik, Keizer, Troost, et al., undated)



MEDIA AND SPECTATOR INTEREST

- ✘ No national media coverage
- ✘ Renovation
- ✘ Indoor korfbal
- ✘ 10,000 spectators filled the capacity of the stadium in which the Netherlands and Belgium competed in the final of the World Championships in 2003 (Crum, 2005)



BASKETBALL VS KORFBALL



- ✘ Influential worldwide media in America
- ✘ Commercialisation & professionalization
- ✘ Susceptible to change
- ✘ Delayed changes to Women's basketball
- ✘ Korfball's aversion to change
- ✘ Korfball is 'a game to which the modern luxury of sports has not yet penetrated' (Cottaar, 1963 cited in van Bottenburg, 2003: 98).

✘ Ball sport competition

- + Indoor rules
 - + 3-section court to 2-sections
- ## ✘ High performance at all costs
- ## ✘ Prospective changes on the cards
- + Wicker basket
 - + Defended rule
 - + No solo play
 - + Protected possession
 - + Physical contact
 - + Advantage rule
- ## ✘ Improved commercialisation and media attention
- ## ✘ Importance of an audience



OLYMPIC MEMBERSHIP



- ✘ To gain the opportunity to become a topsport, the IOC would have to recognise korfball as a topsport (Crum, 2003)
- ✘ Olympic membership is required in order to encourage media coverage and sponsor attention (Crum, 2003)
- ✘ Olympism and ‘korfballism’
- ✘ ‘with regard to the admission of women to the Games, I remain a fervent opponent. It was against my will that they were admitted to a growing number of competitions (De Coubertin, 1928: 105 cited in Crum, 2003: 123)
- ✘ Demonstration sport in 1920 and 1928

- ✘ ‘the mixed nature of korfball – the distinguishing feature that from the 1970s opened the doors to so many countries – must have been a thorn in the flesh of de Coubertin. And although his direct influence on the Games was on the wane, it did spoil korfball’s chances at the time’ (Crum, 2003: 124)
- ✘ Olympic commercialisation
- ✘ Olympic competition
- ✘ Korfballs disadvantage



IF KORFBALL HAD BEEN BASKETBALL...

- ✘ Sponsorship, professionalization and media encouragement
- ✘ Two forms: the single sex male version and the single sex female version.
- ✘ The male version - commercialisation, media and professionalization
- ✘ The female version - slower movement towards the male transformations
- ✘ The mixed version – stunted growth/termination
- ✘ Olympic privilege
- ✘ Basketball by another name...



NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF CHANGE



- ✘ Impacts on the korfbal culture
- ✘ ‘prams along the out-line, juniors lying in the sun, kids shooting korf all day are examples of the cast-iron korfbal culture’ (Rodenburg, 2003: 155)
- ✘ Changes are not necessary: korfbal has a USP
- ✘ Changes would undermine philosophies of korfbal
- ✘ Korfbal enthusiasts as ‘archconservatives’
- ✘ Mirror image of basketball?
 - + Losing traditionalists & failing to attract newbies
- ✘ Changes are not marketing orientated (Rodenburg, 2003; Van Bottenburg, 2003)

FINAL THOUGHTS...



- ✘ Would it be beneficial for current korfbal players and enthusiasts to enter a world where excesses are normal, and decisions are dictated by ‘politicisation, mediatisation, commercialisation, professionalism and scientification’ (Crum, 2003)?
- ✘ Emmerik, Keizer, Troost, et al. (undated) warn of these developments and stress that other sports that have entered professionalism, created super leagues and welcomed sponsorship willingly, have paid a price and lost control of their game.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS NOT HOMOGENOUS



- ✘ Cultural and religious limitations - the mixed character will only serve as more restrictive even in those countries that accept single sex female sports
- ✘ Where women are not viewed as equal in society, korfball will never have the opportunity to flourish
- ✘ The IKF is not in a position to fund countries with no financial backing of their own (Fransoo, 2003)