



BASQUE PELOTA (THEME 2) (April 5, 2021)

Basque Pelota is one of the most popular sports in Basque Country (autonomous community in Spain) and is played by hitting a ball against a wall, called a fronton. Basque Pelota can be played using a racquet, your hands, or a wooden bat. The main types of Pelota include Hand, Zesta Punta, Pala, and Remonte. The Basques claim that zesta punta, in which a rubber ball is caught inside a basket (chistera) and hurled into the wall, is the fastest game on earth.

Hand pelota most closely resembles the form of handball in which North American and Irish handballers are most familiar, in which players try to hit the ball with their hands out of their opponent's reach.

Much like Jeu de Palme, the origins of Basque Pelota are thought to have originated in Ancient Greece, and is played today in Spain, France, North America, South America, and the Philippines. Also like Jeu de Palme, Basque Pelota was an official Olympic Sport in the 1900 Olympic Games, contested between France and Spain

In the Province of Quebec, some players from the Basque country have left their mark on our sport. Jean Pesenti in Quebec City was one of the pioneers of handball. He has helped several newcomers to develop their talent. Many players remember Jean at Laval University performing with bare chest and feet on the PEPS new courts in the early 70s and accompanying his successes with thunderous laughs. He was also playing pala with Denis Laberge on the now defunct 3-walls grounds of the University. In Montreal, some players have also made their mark recently in the 1-wall version of the sport. (Eric Van Rasbourg, Beñat Urrutia, Noël Fagoaga, Peio Clarisse among others)

The city of Trois-Pistoles (see photo) has built a basque fronton a few years ago and an international tournament has been held on its grounds in 2014. The next World Championships will be held in 2023 in Biarritz (France).

Next theme: Ireland and UK

VIDEOS AND PICTURES

Main - Hand

<https://youtu.be/Ua7bLwN97nl>

Zesta Punta (Jai-Alai)

<https://youtu.be/FOiT9S80jQo>

Pala

<https://youtu.be/w2WsT8gPXdY>



Fronton Trois-Pistoles



Bruno Berrouet, Beñat Urrutia and Olivier Hirigoyen in action



Manon Tremblay and Eric Van Rasbourg
Members of the Canadian team - 2014



Top picture: Kathleen Bédard, Donald Côté, Jean-Louis Perez, Jean Pesenti
Bottom picture: Jean-Louis Perez, Jean and Annie Pesenti, Lise Bernadet