



UNITED STATES (THEME #4) (April 19, 2021)

At the end of the 19th century Irish immigrants brought handball to America. San Francisco claimed for many years the construction of the first court in an alley near a bar during the California Gold Rush. In New York Phil Casey built the first court in Brooklyn in 1886. Handball was also played on the piers near the beaches. But the first real court could have been built in 1843 at St-Vincent College in Missouri (see picture). Just like elsewhere in the world, the Catholic priests have greatly contributed to the popularity of handball. Abraham Lincoln has been a handball player without demonstrating an exceptional talent but playing with intensity. In 1928 we witnessed the construction of the Maravilla Handball Court which is still used by the community of a neighborhood in Los Angeles (see video).

Around 1930, the prestigious Los Angeles Atlantic Club welcomed a crowd of players including actor Harold Lloyd who had his own court at home (see picture). In 1954 the LAAC claims to have built the first court with a glass wall on the West Coast. Catholic priests have continued to promote and develop this sport in many colleges and schools across the country.

In 1951, an enthusiast Robert W. Kendler created the United States Handball Association (USHA): he standardized court sizes and rules and raised funds to finance tournaments. As elite clubs like LAAC, New York Athletic Club, and Manhattan Beach Athletic Club were being built, public courts began to appear in places like the YMCAs. The 1955 and 1959 National Championships were presented at LAAC and for the first time in the history of the sport, both tournaments were on television. The first professional tour, the Spalding Pro Tour, took place in 1973.

Los Angeles fire stations have also become a hotbed for new courts. Firefighters then became an important group in the Southern California handball community and subsequently in other states. The sport was also seen to gain popularity in prisons, with so many walls available. In the 1980s the rise of racquetball, invented by two former Connecticut handball players, allowed for the construction of new courts that were also used by handball players. A new generation of players has emerged with coaches such as: Mike Dau (Lake Forest College, Illinois), Pete Tyson (University Of Texas, Austin), Charles Mazzone (Memphis State University, Tennessee), Tony Huante (Commerce, California) among others. In addition, since 2005 Dave Vincent and his WPH (World Players Of Handball) team have breathed new life into the handball world by relaunching the professional circuit and joining forces with ESPN to broadcast matches.

Next theme: Australia and Canada

VIDEOS AND PICTURES SECTION



College St-Vincent,
Handball court



Harold Lloyd



Street handball



Abraham Lincoln



Handball a long time ago

<https://youtu.be/wpsnAuhXLYQ> Maravilla Handball Court (1928), built in 1928 for the local community who still supports it.

Here are some matches involving handball legends:

https://youtu.be/hIFnZnB_Cds 1955 – 1st time US National on TV. We can see the black ball, no eyeguards et blocks being allowed.

<https://youtu.be/O3QdigTtizU> 1967 - Jimmy Jacobs vs Paul Haber (no sound but in color). Jacobs has been a great handball champion and also managing professional boxers including Mike Tyson. Haber even qualified for the golf PGA Tour.

<https://youtu.be/jp59N7t7VY8> 1975 - Anthology match close to 4 hours (Las Vegas) between Fred Lewis and Dennis Hofflander. Defense vs offense.

<https://youtu.be/2o1bqErRLyw> Naty Alvarado Sr. vs Jon Kendler. Very physical and brutal match.

Historic match having the ultimate live coverage on television: Paul Brady (Ireland) and Luis Moreno (US) playing the final of the World Championship in Dublin in 2012. The glass court was installed in a way to accommodate more than 4,000 spectators. This match was refereed by our national Danny Bell assisted by John Cammett as a linesman. Here is the link to enjoy the show: [HERE](#)

Return on past themes

IRELAND

The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) was founded in 1884 and operates 4 Irish sports including handball. The GAA initiated the deployment of handball in schools in Ireland by activating the construction of several hundreds 1-wall courts in 2009. Soon the new National Handball Center will be available at Corke Park near Dublin: five 4-wall 20'X40' courts (some with glass walls and 500 seats), one 30'X60' court with 200 seats and three 1-wall courts.



Handball National Center, Corke Park, Dublin

ENGLAND

UK Wallball oversees handball activities in UK and the Westway Sports Center provides access to handball courts in London. A national center project is underway and new courts construction in schools is very active.



Collège Eton 1850



Game of Fives 1744

https://youtu.be/chbMI30I_Ng

What is Eton Fives?

<https://youtu.be/sw7qlw5KI8Q>

Game Of Fives: finale Eton 2018

<https://youtu.be/yItdM9DtqEc>

Rugby Fives Final 2013

Many links on YouTube under UK Wallball

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