

THE WRESTLING AT THE END OF THE WORLD: CHILE/ARGENTINA

INTRODUCTION

The research process aims at finding a physical activity that demonstrates that, in this place known as "THE END OF THE WORLD", traditional WRESTLING matches were held by our originating towns. We were able to document that in two of them, wrestling matches were held as a means to solve their problems and / or prove who was the strongest and able to lead the warriors in battles against the invaders.

One of these towns were originally known as SELK'NAM ONAS or more known as ONAS, of which we only have some references and photographic records from the salesian Father Alberto de Agostini, because this native people is extinct because they were part of a genocide. Of the 4,000 that approximately existed in 1880, only 500 survived by 1905. By then the genocide had almost ceased. The few that remained were succumbed by introduced diseases. In 1980 there were nine pure descendants and the last one died in 1997.

The MAPUCHES are the other original group that count among its traditions with the WRESTLING as an instance to define a difference. In contrast with the Onas, the Mapuches are a group of people in search of growth and empowerment with all their culture and traditions alive.

SELK'NAM or ONAS:

The body to body wrestling was a very important fun among men. They practiced with the naked bodies, which, in the case of formal events, were painted red. Because of their interest and desire to excel, they were prepared since young. The way to wrestler was to take each other's body and try to topple, being prohibited tripping and this procedure lasted until one is declared defeated. Another use was when trying to resolve problems or arguments between components from different groups or bands, in this case also wrestler in pairs, although more violent, reaching knocking, sometimes, to cause the death of a contestant.





ⁱAlberto De Agostini (1924: 289), illustrating the sport with a photograph states that: *"The wrestling is always celebrated with great solemnity and interest, attending the women sitting in a semicircle around the fighters. This occurs between the strongest and robust men of two distant tribes, it means between two individuals alone, to make known the superiority of one's own forces. "*



In the photo above we see Alberto De Agostini, Salesian missionary, in the "Tierra de Fuego" with his camera, one of the greatest patagonian explorers, with his works and left photographs documentary evidence of the Wrestling in the end of the world.

MAPUCHES:

The **mapuches** (of the mapudungún *mapuche*, the name given to themselves, in turn a compound of *mapu*, 'land' and *che* 'people', that is to say 'people of the land', 'native'), also called **Araucanos** by the spanish at the time of the arrival of europeans to Chile. They are a South American original people living in southern Chile and southwestern Argentina. Generically, "mapuches" covers all groups who speak or spoke the language mapuche or mapudungún, and particularly the term refers to the mapuches in La Araucanía and their descendants.



The Mapuche nation and its people have historically been characterized as a warlike people which was never conquered by the spanish forces who came to this part of America, that they were preparing for a training system by promoting a military caste, which was directed by some **CACIQUES** (lonkos or bosses), and where we found the **CONAS** (young mapuche`s warriors) and his elite who were the **WEICHAFES** (warriors), the high level of preparedness strategies, with both physical and mental training of the weichafes allowed the resistance to the spanish empire. This training was called **KOLLELLAULLIN** (waist of power of ant), which consisted of a variety of physical activities and where two types of wrestling integrated.

LONKOTUN: Wrestling taking the hair and drag the opponent to the ground with his forehead, were common in Palin games (Ritual Game) made in the past to settle regulatory issues. The most common challenge among the boys was: *"Come to have my hair if you're not afraid."* Such a challenge was never in vain. Stripped of their *ponchos*, combatants are placed face to face. Each one took the hair of the other and started the wrestling. The object was unlike twisting the head to make him lose his balance and leave it on the floor, which was a victory. When one contestant is knocked they separated and were put back on its feet to start the wrestling. They continued in this way until one of the two would give up.

Metratun: Wrestling taking arms.

ii PALIN:

Two teams with the same number of participants, from 5-15 each, located in two rows facing each other, distributed over a rectangular play area, 200 mts. long and 12 meters. wide, bordered with small trenches, each representing a reduction (community), competing for a wooden ball, pali or füngül, also with wooden batons, weño, to carry, to their goals, or tripalwe which are the short lines of the rectangular, one for each team. Whoever manages get a point, tripal or line. Formerly all levo (community) had their own equipment and play space.

In Chile, Palin played a part, generally, of a program of social activities, so that a game could be the answer to one of the following reasons, in which the game would have a ritual meaning whose has been lost largely:

- Palin as mock war.
- Palin as a means to elucidate the ethnic disputes. The winning team of a game acquired the right to make the final decision.
- Palin as ethnic group convening to discuss and reach agreement after the game.
- Recreational Palin, called small Palin or pichipalin or palikatun when it was for preparing for a game.



Print colored made about the year 1840, owned Sports Museum of Basel, Switzerland (Schweizerisches Sportmuseum) shows the game of Chueca [Palin].

CONCLUSION:

This research has led to cultural traditions and customs rescue forgotten, lost in time, which were common practices for the ancestors of our native peoples and filled them with courage and warrior pride.

Pursue through conversations with the older *caciques* to carry the TRADITIONAL WRESTLING or LONKOTUN practice among young Mapuche's, as an integrating activity and sport-cultural development for them, this research is the beginning for later foster greater knowledge and growth of traditional wrestling in the end of the world.

ⁱ Photographs Salesian Father Alberto de Agostini

ⁱⁱ Book "EL PALIN: Juego Tradicional de La Cultura Mapuche", Author: Carlos López von Vriessen