

PANDOLO (speech)

Today is my turn, so I will introduce a game called pandolo which is becoming more and more popular in the Slovenian Istra.

This is pandolo and the game was named after it.

It's a bit like baseball. Some people call it »grandfather« of baseball.

However, the history of pandolo is not well known.

Researchers found out, that it was known even in Roman Antic. It was played by shepherds.

In the Middle Ages pandolo was played in towns. But it was prohibited since the windows were very expensive.

The town's in Istra were suitable for this game because pandolo could bounce well on stone pavement.

It was played in squares because they were spacious.

Archeologists from Koper found more than 200-year-old pandolo under Prešeren square.

In the 1950s game was revived again by the children under the rules stated by older inhabitants of Piran.

In 1993 the pandolo tournament was first organized in Strunjan.

A year later The Federation Of Pandolo Societies of Slovenia was established.

The dominating players are from Koper, Izola and Piran.

There are also players from Croatia, Italy and some other countries.

Each group has its own name, such as Mimoza, Baštardi, Paninari, Boškarini ...

Since 1993 tournament organizers have added new rules... the last one date 2006.

Let me represent the game in accordance to the newest rules.

The Playing Field

For regulation games, the length of the field should be 50 meters long. The important lines are the base line and the sidelines. The overall surface is compacted or paved but not necessarily completely flat. You can also play on grassy surface, but then you may need a moveable firm base to place the pandolo for hitting.

The Equipment

- **Base** - Originally it was a stony flat surface but for modern competitions they use a firm flat rectangle made from metal materials. It is placed on the baseline which is the line in the narrower part of the field.
- **Mazza** – is a 55 cm long piece of wood with rounded ends.
- **Pandolo** – it is made from wood. On both of the edges it is shaped into a cone.
- **Face protection** - a protective shield for the face, which is usually made of plastic. All defense players should use this protection.
- **Gloves** - for protection of the defense players hands;
- **Uniform** - players of each team have their own uniform, although it is not required.

Teams

The game is played between two competing teams. Each team plays with three players.

In a game of pandolo there is also a referee. He must not interfere, unless a team has something to object or the play is too slow. In that case he solves the conflict on the base of the rules or simply warns the players to speed up the game. There are even yellow and red cards to punish bad words or insulting other team players.

Playing the Game

Goal of the game

The goal of the game is to score as much points as possible by hitting the pandolo towards the end of the playfield. The team that has more points at the end of the game is the winner.

Game segments

The game is played in rounds. In each round, both teams take part in attacking and defending. The toss of a coin before the start decides which team will start first on the offensive side and which in the defence.

The attacking team has only player active on the playing field while the other team-mates are watching. On the other side the whole defending team is active on the field. When the first player completes his turn, he is replaced with the next player from the attacking team. When all the offensive players have finished, the teams switch places - the defending team becomes the offensive team and the offensive team goes in defence. The game then continues until all of the new offensive team's players have finished playing. Then it's the end of the first round.

In the second round everything repeats. The only difference is that the first attacking team now starts in defense.

Flow of the Game

Every active player completes his active role if not prematurely struck out, in the following phases of the game:

Phase One - Active game of the first player

The first step is to toss the *pandolo* into the game or “service”. The defense team spreads out in the wide area of the field. No defense player, however, can be closer than 12 *mazza* (stick) lengths from the base. The active player places himself maximum 1 *mazza* far from the base. He holds the *pandolo* in his hand. When the game starts, the active player:

- hits the base with the *mazza*.
- then he shouts “**Pandolo, pandolo zero**” so everyone on the field can hear
- with his hand, he throws the *pandolo* straight up into the air and he hits it with the *mazza* into the playing field
- if the *pandolo* doesn't land in the field he has two more attempts.

Phase Two - Catching the *Pandolo*

The defending players try to catch the *pandolo* in the air. If they succeed the active player has ended his turn. Otherwise the *pandolo* is stopped on the ground by defending players, or it stops somewhere in the field by itself.

Phase Three - Targeting the Base

From the point where the *pandolo* was stopped, one of the defense players tries to throw the *pandolo* to strike the base. The active player can defend the base only with the *mazza*. If the *pandolo* anyway hits the base the active player is struck out and he ends his turn. Otherwise the game continues.

Phase Four - Striking the *Pandolo*

The active player that has not been struck out continues the game. The active player places the *pandolo* near the base (1 *mazza*). The defense team players take their positions in the playing field and no closer than 12 *mazza* lengths from the base. When everyone is ready the active player places himself near the *pandolo*. With one hit, on the edge, the *pandolo* lifts in the air and with the second hit he sends the *pandolo* towards the end line. If the defending player doesn't catch the *pandolo* in the air, the active player repeats the last step two more times.

Phase Five - Counting Points

The points are counted only if the active player has finished everything without the *pandolo* being caught in the air by the defending players.

The attacking team measures, by eye, the distance between the base and the *pandolo*. One of the players then loudly says the distance in the unit of *mazza*.

If the defending team agrees with the distance the players scored as much points as the distance was. Otherwise they measure it *mazza* by *mazza* from the *pandolo* to the base. If the

attacking team said a bigger number than the measured, they lost all the points. If they said a correct or a smaller number, the points are doubled.

Second game and subsequent games of the first active player

Other players that follow the first, play in the same way as mentioned before. The only difference that is worth mentioning is:

- Before starting the game, when striking the base the active player must now yell "***Pandolo, pandolo 30***" (if his team made 30 points).

When everyone completes their turns, and the teams are changed, the second round starts. The rules are the same and each player has to attack once more. At the end of the second round is the end of the game. The team with more points wins.

In the case of draw each of team members has one chance to hit the pandolo from the base. The winning team is the one that strikes the *pandolo* further out than the other team. If both teams strike the *pandolo* beyond the end line, the *pandolo* striking continues until one team wins by striking the *pandolo* further out into the confines of the playing field.

Concluding the game

At a tournament, the game is normally played in two groups. The first and the second team of each group passes to the finals where the first team, plays with the second one of the other group. The winners then play the final game for the 1 place on the tournament.