



TUG OF WAR ASSOCIATION MEDIA INFORMATION PACK



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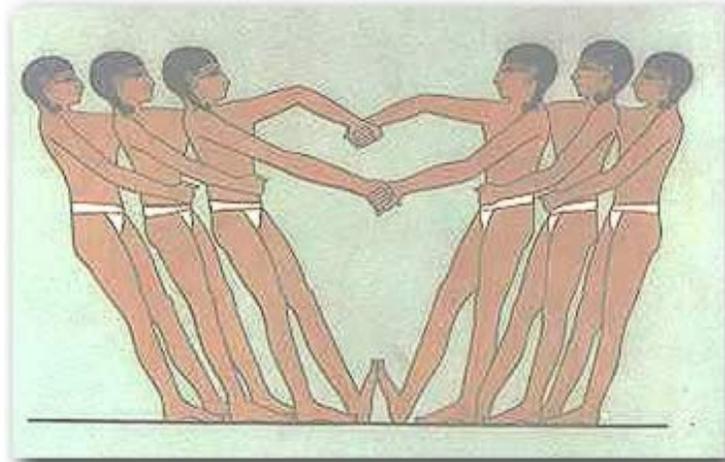
www.tugofwar.co.uk

History of Tug of War

Ancient Origins

There is no specific time and place to pinpoint the origin of tug of war. The contest of pulling a rope originates from ancient ceremonies and cults, which are found all over the world, such as in Egypt, Burma, India, Borneo, Japan, Korea, Hawaii and South America.

The ancient tug of war was performed in various styles. In Afghanistan, teams used a wooden stake instead of a rope to pull. In Korea, children clasped their arms around each other's waists to form a living tug of war chain.



Tug of War was not only a team sport. In several countries a man to man version of tug of war existed. The Canadian Eskimos still have a tug of war contest known as 'arsaaraq'. It's a tug of war contest with the pullers sitting on the ground, using a short rope. The one who pulls his opponent over from his seated position is the winner.

The Tug of War Sport as a Contest

Later tug of war became a pure contest of physical strength. In Greece, the cradle of the ancient Olympic Games, tug of war sport around 500 BC was practised by athletes either as a competitive sport or as an exercise in the physical training for other sports. In Western Europe evidence of tug of war is found in the year 1000 AD, in the stories of the heroic champions of Scandinavia and Germany, who participated in the so called 'kräftige spiele' (power games). The tug of war sport featured at the courts of the Chinese Emperors, as well as in Mongolia and Turkey. In the 15th Century tug of war was a popular contest in tournaments in the French Chateaux and in Competitions in the UK.

Olympic Period

Tug of war featured in the Olympic Games from 1900 to 1920. The gold medal winners during that period were;

Year	Venue	Gold	Silver	Bronze
1900	Paris	Sweden	USA	France
1904	St Louis	USA	USA	USA
1908	London	Great Britain	Great Britain	Great Britain
1912	Stockholm	Sweden	Great Britain	
1920	Antwerp	Great Britain	Netherlands	Belgium



In 1920 the IOC (International Olympic Committee) took a decision to reduce the number of participants of the Olympic Games and for that reason deleted a number of team sports from the programme, including tug of war. In 1999 the

Tug of War International Federation (TWIF) of which the Tug of War Association is a member, received provisional IOC recognition again, which was confirmed in 2002 into formal recognition in accordance with rule 29 of the Olympic Charter.

Tug of War Sport as an Organised Sport

Fortunately tug of war was still practised in many countries and resulted in national organisations being formed, the first being Sweden in 1933, then The Tug of War Association of England in 1958, and soon after many other countries followed suit.

After tug of war was no longer on the programme of the Olympic Games, the opportunity to participate in international competitions had disappeared. With the foundation of national tug of war associations, the need for international competition developed simultaneously. The decision to form an international federation was taken in 1960 by George Hutton of The Tug of War Association of England. In co-operation with representatives from the Swedish association, the idea was brought into reality.



The first international competition was staged at the Baltic Games in Malmö, Sweden. The Tug of War International Federation (TWIF), participated with four countries; Great Britain, Sweden, Netherlands and Denmark. After the first international competition in the Baltic Games, TWIF organised in 1965 its first European championships in Crystal Palace, London. From that year on, with regular intervals, European Championships were staged until 1975, when



countries from outside Europe affiliated to TWIF, resulting in the first World Championships in the Netherlands. Currently TWIF organises World

Championships every 2 years. European Championships are organised in the intervening years.

About The Tug Of War Association

Did you know that Tug of War is a properly organised sport in England?

The tug of war governing body in England is the Tug Of War Association (TOWA). The other UK countries have their own associations. The TOWA was founded in 1958; prior to that the sport was organised within the Amateur Athletic Association. The TOWA and the other UK associations are members of The Tug of War International Federation (TWIF). The Tug of War Association is the delegated authority for Tug of War in England by Sport England (formerly The Sports Council).



Competitions

The TOWA organises men's, women's and youth competitions. Mixed teams and men's teams pulling against women's teams are not allowed in championship events, but mixed gender pulling is allowed (and quite common) in open competitions. Competitions under TOWA laws are held every weekend. Outdoor Tug of War (on grass) from March to September, and Indoor Tug of War (on mats) from October to February. All member clubs can compete at these meetings.



A Tug of War team consists of eight pullers (six for some youth competitions) plus a coach and a trainer. The coach is the only person in the arena (apart from the judge) who may address remarks to the team during a pull. All pulls are conducted under the control of a TOWA judge. Pulls are best of three, the choice of first end being decided by the

toss of a coin. The object is to pull the opposing team a distance of four metres. Teams can be disqualified for persistently infringing the rules. The rules are clearly stated in the TOWA Handbook, but if you stay in a proper pulling position, i.e. facing forwards with both hands on the rope, do not sit down and do not lock the rope across your body you should be OK. Teams are allowed to use a tacky resin or chalk to help grip the rope.



Tug of War competitions are organised in weight classes where each team of eight pullers must not exceed the stated weight. Weight classes start at 560 kilos for men and 480 kilos for women. Teams are weighed on 8-person

scales. Teams must not exceed the weight limit. When the judges are satisfied that the team is within the weight limit, then each team member will receive a stamp. Most Tug of War meetings have 3 to 6 weight classes. There is 40 kilos difference between each weight category, the heaviest being 720 kilos (average of 90 kilos per team member) and catchweight, where teams can be as heavy as they like.



Each weight class is run as a points competition (where each team pulls every other team, getting 3 points for a 2 - nil win, 2 points for a 2 - 1 win and 1 point for losing 1 - 2, the team ending up with most points being the winner), or as a knockout competition (where two teams end up in a final).

There are rules regarding footwear (very important) and clothing.

There are two disciplines of tug of war – Outdoor pulled on grass, and indoor pulled on lanes of rubber mats. The type of ropes used are made from manila hemp and are between 33.5m and 36m in length and 10cm to 12.5cm in circumference.

For outdoor tug of war special boots are made with a metal plate attached to the base of the heel to cut into the ground. Many of the boots used now are plastic skate type boots, with a hard sole and metal heel plate, which gives a cutting edge across the whole side of the boot, as well as just on the heel. For indoor tug of war, flat, rubber soled shoes are used as they are better at gripping the mat than standard shop bought trainers.



A team consists of 8 members. The lead person is in the front most position and the anchor man is at the far end. The anchor may wrap the rope around his body once. There is no time limit for tug of war. The team which pulls the rope 4 metres off the centre line is the winner. A match consists of the best out of three ends. Teams can also win through



disqualification. Teams can be disqualified from a pull for receiving three cautions. Cautions are received for locking the rope, deliberately sitting on the ground, rowing (sitting on the ground and pulling the rope through the hands) and even swearing or un-gentlemanly conduct whilst in competition! The sport is conducted in a gentlemanly manner, with team members shaking hands with their opponents after their best of three ends with that team.

It is often thought that the biggest and strongest team, and those that pull hardest will win, but it is not always the case. Weight is of course a factor, so competitions are in weight classes. If weights are ideally matched, tactics come into play. If the opponents look weak, you pull with all your strength, but if they look fairly strong it becomes a game of endurance with each side judging how tired their opponents are and pulling gradually inch by inch.



Training

Many teams engage in a serious training regimen, even though the sport is still amateur. Teams all do daily fitness training as individuals, and come together as teams to do rope training. Rope training predominantly consists of teams of 8 training on a rig. A training rig is normally approximately 6 metres high and consists of a large weight on a pulley system, which teams move up and down in order to develop teamwork. Other forms of training such as pulls against each other, and pulling on different types of ground, such as sandy ground, hard ground or soft



muddy ground is also common. Pulling up individual weights for individual strength and technique training is also common with some teams. Teams are trained by a coach, who also coaches the team at the side of the rope in competitions.

Tug of War Association organised events



The tug of war association organises many major events on both the indoor and outdoor circuits for men, ladies and youth. The national championships are organised on both the indoor and outdoor circuit, and the winners of the various weight categories at the national championships will be invited to represent England at the international championships for that year. Those clubs

who miss out on this opportunity, however, still get the opportunity to compete at open international club competitions. The Tug of War Association also runs competitions in conjunction with the Amateur Athletic Association of England. The AAA's tug of war championships are organised by the Tug of War Association, and are held on both the indoor and outdoor circuits. There is



also a national league,

that runs on the outdoor circuit at division 1 and 2, and there is also an inter counties championships. UK



championships also take place, which is similar to rugby union's 6 nations championships, where England competes



against Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Guernsey and Jersey.

England has been a successful tug of war nation over the years. England have been successful at World and European championships, UK Championships and World Games. The World Games are held every four years and are for IOC recognised sports, which are not yet a part of the full Olympic programme. England's records are shown on the next few pages, although it does not show the many silver and bronze medals



that have been won by England teams over the years.

United Kingdom Outdoor Championships

United Kingdom outdoor championships have been held at 600 kilos and 680 kilos since 1980. The 640 kilos has been held once in 1982. England has never lost the 680 kilos title.

- 600 kilos** 1980 (represented by Beech Hill Blues, Bedfordshire)
1981 (represented by Oxney Vines Cross, Sussex)
1982 (represented by Leek, Staffordshire)
1983 (represented by Oxney, Sussex)
1984 (represented by Oxney, Sussex)
1985 (represented by Oxney, Sussex)
1987 (represented by Oxney, Sussex)
1988 (represented by Oxney, Sussex)
1989 (represented by Oxney, Sussex)
1990 (represented by Oxney, Sussex)
1991 (represented by Oxney, Sussex)
1992 (represented by Harrow)
1994 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire)
1995 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)
1996 (represented by G&R, Cornwall)
1997 (represented by Sandhurst, Berkshire)
1998 (represented by G&R, Cornwall)
1999 (represented by Felton Eccles, Somerset)
2000 (represented by Sandhurst, Berkshire)
2001 (represented by Sandhurst, Berkshire)
2002 (represented by Sandhurst, Berkshire)
2003 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)
2005 (represented by Sandhurst, Berkshire)
2006 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)
2007 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)
2008 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)
2009 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)
- 640 kilos** 1982 (represented by Lincoln, Lincolnshire)
- 680 kilos** 1980 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
1981 (represented by Earl of Essex, Essex)
1982 (represented by Gateway, Kent)
1983 (represented by Gateway, Kent)
1984 (represented by Gateway, Kent)
1985 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
1986 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
1987 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
1988 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
1989 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
1990 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
1991 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
1992 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
1993 (represented by Oxney Vines Cross, Sussex)

- 1994 (represented by Oxney Vines Cross, Sussex)
- 1995 (represented by Oxney Vines Cross, Sussex)
- 1996 (represented by St Pats, Leicestershire)
- 1997 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 1998 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 1999 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 2000 (represented by Felton Eccles, Somerset)
- 2001 (represented by St Pats, Leicestershire)
- 2002 (represented by Congleton, Cheshire)
- 2003 (represented by Felton Eccles, Somerset)
- 2004 (represented by Felton Eccles, Somerset)
- 2005 (represented by Congleton, Cheshire)
- 2006 (represented by Felton Eccles, Somerset)
- 2007 (represented by Felton Eccles, Somerset)
- 2008 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 2009 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)

United Kingdom Indoor Championships

United Kingdom indoor championships were first held in 1988, and are likewise held at 600 kilos and 680 kilos. England dominated the indoor circuit for a long time, and were first defeated at a UK indoor championships in 2000, when both titles were lost to Scotland, but they were both regained in 2001. The competition between the home nations on the indoor circuit is now very close, and the home nations of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland are amongst the top 6 nations in the world at indoor tug of war.

- 600 kilos**
 - 1988 (represented by BAC, Surrey)
 - 1989 (represented by BAC, Surrey)
 - 1990 (represented by Leek, Staffordshire)
 - 1991 (represented by Leek, Staffordshire)
 - 1992 (represented by Uppertown, Derbyshire)
 - 1993 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)
 - 1994 (represented by BAC, Surrey)
 - 1995 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)
 - 1996 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)
 - 1997 (represented by Uppertown, Derbyshire)
 - 1998 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire)
 - 1999 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
 - 2001 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
 - 2002 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
 - 2003 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
 - 2004 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
- 680 kilos**
 - 1988 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire)
 - 1989 (represented by Beech Hill Blues, Bedfordshire)
 - 1990 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire)
 - 1991 (represented by Beech Hill Blues, Bedfordshire)
 - 1992 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
 - 1993 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire)
 - 1994 (represented by Raunds, Northamptonshire)

- 1995 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire)
- 1996 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
- 1997 (represented by Raunds, Northamptonshire)
- 1998 (represented by Raunds, Northamptonshire)
- 1999 (represented by BAC, Surrey)
- 2001 (represented by BAC, Surrey)
- 2002 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire)
- 2005 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire)
- 2009 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire)
- 2010 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire)

European Outdoor Championships

The European outdoor championships started in 1964 at 720 kilos, and consisted of a small number of countries as The Tug of War International Federation began to find its feet and consisted wholly of teams from Europe at the start. The championships have grown in stature over the years with the inclusion of the 560 kilos 640 kilos and 680 kilos, and England's most successful representative team has been Bosley Wood Treatment, who have won 12 European Championships. European championships are held every 2 years in the intervening years of the World Championships.

- 560 kilos** 1979 (represented by Oxney Vines Cross, Sussex)
- 2003 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)
- 2007 (represented by Sandhurst, Berkshire)
- 600 kilos** 2009 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)
- 640 kilos** 1969 (represented by Felton Eccles, Somerset)
- 1974 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire)
- 720 kilos** 1964 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 1965 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 1968 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 1969 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 1970 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 1971 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 1972 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 1973 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 1974 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 1979 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire)
- 1981 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 1983 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 1987 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
- 1995 (represented by St Pats, Leicestershire)
- 1999 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire)
- 2007 (represented by Congleton, Cheshire)

World Outdoor Championships

World Outdoor Championships began in 1975, firstly at 640 kilos and 720 kilos, but later on 560 kilos and 680 kilos weight categories were added to the

championships. The catchweight championship has only been staged once and was won by England. World Championships are held every 2 years.

560 kilos	1984 (represented by Oxney Vines Cross, Sussex) 1988 (represented by Leek, Staffordshire) 2004 (represented by Sandhurst, Berkshire)
640 kilos	1975 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire) 1976 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire) 1978 (represented by Beech Hill Blues, Bedfordshire) 1980 (represented by Beech Hill Blues, Bedfordshire) 1986 (represented by Oxney Vines Cross, Sussex) 1988 (represented by Oxney Vines Cross, Sussex) 1998 (represented by Felton Eccles, Somerset)
720 kilos	1975 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire) 1976 (represented by Bosley Wood Treatment, Cheshire) 1977 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire) 1978 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire) 1980 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire) 1982 (represented by Gateway, Kent)
Catchweight	1984 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)

World Indoor Championships

The indoor sport developed much later as an international tug of war sport than the outdoor. The first international championships were held in 1991, and Indoor has been recently England's strongest discipline. England's only ladies title came in 1997 in the ladies 520 kilos, although England ladies teams have won silver and bronze medals on other occasions at indoor and outdoor championships. World Indoor championships are held every 2 years. Indoor tug of war has become a very popular sport in Asia.

560 kilos	1991 (represented by Leek, Staffordshire) 1993 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire) 1997 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire) 1999 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester) 2000 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester) 2002 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester) 2004 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester) 2006 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
600 kilos	2000 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)
640 kilos	1991 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire) 1993 (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire) 1997 (represented by Uppertown, Derbyshire) 2002 (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)
680 kilos	1991 (represented by Beech Hill Blues, Bedfordshire) 1993 (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester) 1997 (represented by Raunds, Northamptonshire) 1999 (represented by BAC, Surrey) 2000 (represented by BAC, Surrey) 2002 (represented by BAC, Surrey)

520 kilos (Women) 1997 (Represented by Leek Ladies, Staffordshire)

World Games

The World Games are held every 4 years and England have won the gold medal on three occasions before it was stipulated that only a Great Britain team could compete. Only the top 6 countries at each weight class at the time are invited to compete at the World Games, making it one of the most difficult tug of war competitions to win. The World Games are run under the patronage of the IOC for recognised sports not yet part of the full Olympic programme. British teams have won the gold medal on the following occasions.

1981 Santa Clara, USA 640 kilos (represented by Sheen, Staffordshire)
1989 Karlsruhe, Germany 720 kilos (represented by Kilroe, Greater Manchester)
2001 Akita, Japan 600 kilos indoor (represented by Norton, Staffordshire)

As of 2005, the home nations are no longer able to compete at the World Games. Instead, only a Great Britain team may compete. Great Britain were represented at the 2005 and 2009 World Games, the British teams being selected from the highest ranked home nation at the World Championships in the previous year. Great Britain won two bronze medals in the tug of war events at the 2009 World Games in Chinese Taipei in the men's and ladies competitions.





More Information

The Tug of War Association always welcomes media coverage in a variety of forms and any queries which you may have can be dealt with by the Tug of War Association press officer, who will only be too pleased to answer any questions you may have. Up to date information can be obtained via the Tug of War Association web site at www.tugofwar.co.uk.

