

Peru wins first ever Balloon World Cup

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via Jennifer Smith on flickr.com

A new sporting fixture was added to the calendar of world sports events this week - the Balloon World Cup. The "sport" of keepy-uppy ballooning is probably a familiar one. We have all, at one time or another, partaken in the decades-old pastime of keeping a balloon up in the air without letting it touch the floor. Spanish soccer legend and Barcelona star Gerard Pique loved this sport so much he decided to develop it into an international event. The inaugural Balloon World Cup was held in Tarragona, Spain, on Thursday. Peru's Francesco de la Cruz was crowned as the very first world champion. His athleticism and deftness saw him fend off a challenge from Germany's Jan Spiess in the final with a 6-2 victory.

Gerard Pique got his inspiration for establishing the annual tournament from videos that went viral on the social media site TikTok. He loved watching clips of the Arrendondo family from the USA playing the game during the COVID-19 lockdown. It developed from the family's living room into a "Keep-Up Balloon League". Pique then intervened and made the game global. The World Cup contests took place on an 8m x 8m court, which contained living room furniture as obstacles. Teams from 32 countries participated. Pique said: "It's been amazing. It's something totally different. Sometimes you have to get out of your comfort zone and try new things." There are hopes it could become an Olympics event.

Sources: bbc.com / espn.com / sportbible.com

Writing

The sport of keepy-uppy ballooning should be in the Olympics. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

fixture / calendar / sport / balloon / pastime / air / legend / international / event / inspiration / tournament / clips / living room / global / furniture / obstacles / hope

True / False

- 1) A new sporting calendar has been made with balloons on it. T / F
- 2) The article says everyone has played keepy-uppy ballooning. T / F
- 3) The first Balloon World Cup was held in Peru. T / F
- 4) The final of the Balloon World Cup was between Peru and Germany. T / F
- 5) The idea for the Balloon World Cup came from TikTok. T / F
- 6) Before the Balloon World Cup, there was a Keep-Up Balloon League. T / F
- 7) The Balloon World Cup games took part in a 8m x 8m court. T / F
- 8) Keepy-uppy ballooning will become an Olympics event. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

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|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. fixture | a. nimbleness |
| 2. familiar | b. first |
| 3. pastime | c. stepped in |
| 4. inaugural | d. well-known |
| 5. deftness | e. area |
| 6. inspiration | f. stumbling blocks |
| 7. clips | g. motivation |
| 8. intervened | h. contest |
| 9. obstacles | i. excerpts |
| 10. zone | j. hobby |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What do you think of TikTok?
- c) What did you do during the COVID-19 lockdowns?
- d) Do you think the Balloon World Cup will become more popular?
- e) What obstacles are needed for keepy-uppy ballooning?
- f) What variations of keepy-uppy ballooning could there be?
- g) Should keepy-uppy ballooning become an Olympics sport?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the tournament winner?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. A new sporting | a. obstacles |
| 2. partaken in the decades- | b. off a challenge |
| 3. without letting | c. intervened |
| 4. His athleticism | d. old pastime |
| 5. fend | e. zone |
| 6. videos that went | f. and deftness |
| 7. Pique then | g. 8m x 8m court |
| 8. took place on an | h. viral |
| 9. furniture as | i. fixture |
| 10. get out of your comfort | j. it touch the floor |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you know about Peru?
- What do you know about balloons?
- What do you think of the Balloon World Cup?
- Have you played balloon keepy-uppy?
- Is balloon keepy-uppy a real sport?
- How exciting do you think the Balloon World Cup is?
- How athletic and deft must you be for keepy-uppy ballooning?
- Would you be good at keepy-uppy ballooning?

Spelling

- A new sporting xftirue
- partaken in the decades-old imsetap
- Spanish soccer gleden
- The iauuigran Balloon World Cup
- His athleticism and dtesfsne
- a 6-2 ricityvo
- Pique got his nripintsioa
- establishing the annual tnnaemrtou
- went rivla on the social media site
- Pique then iedveerntn
- living room furniture as lstasbeco
- 32 countries eirpcdpttaia

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. d	3. j	4. b	5. a
6. g	7. i	8. c	9. f	10. e

Role Play

Role A – Balloon World Cup

You think the Balloon World Cup is the best sporting event. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their events. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): heavyweight boxing, the Tour de France or Formula One.

Role B – Heavyweight Boxing

You think heavyweight boxing is the best sporting event. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their events. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): Balloon World Cup, the Tour de France or Formula One.

Role C – Tour de France

You think the Tour de France is the best sporting event. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their events. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): heavyweight boxing, Balloon World Cup or Formula One.

Role D – Formula One

You think Formula One is the best sporting event. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their events. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): heavyweight boxing, the Tour de France or Balloon World Cup.

Speaking – Sports Events

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| • Formula One | • Balloon World Cup |
| • Horse racing | • Heavyweight boxing |
| • Winter Olympics | • FIFA World Cup |
| • Ski jumping | • Tour de France |

Answers – True False

1 F	2 T	3 F	4 T	5 T	6 T	7 T	8 F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.