



Loosely based on the traditional French sport, croquet, Gateball was developed as a recreational sport for children in Memuro Town, Hokkaido, in 1941, soon after the end of World War II. Later, Gateball Became Popular nationwide, especially among senior citizens, as a leisure activity. Today, it has become an internationally recognized sport with many enthusiasts worldwide.

### Key Points

**In Japan, Gateball has the reputation of being a sport for senior citizens.**

However, it began as a sport for youngsters. Gateball became popular in Japan as a recreational sport that anyone can play anywhere. Now Gateball enthusiasts have spread to more than thirteen countries of Asia and South America.

Basic Gateball rules are simple, but important techniques such as "touching" and "sparking" are not always understood correctly. Strategic combinations of such techniques can win the game. There will almost certainly be somewhere near you where you can find out how to play. Although it is well-known in Japan, it is also a world-wide sport.

## Competition Rules & Equipment

### Team

A team consists of a manager, five players and a maximum of three substitutes.

### Play

1. The game begins by deciding which team goes first. The first team (red ball) and the second team (white ball) take turns in playing.
2. Each player starts from the starting area, aiming at the first gate. When the player passes three gates and hits the ball against the goal pole, that player has finished.
3. Passing each gate scores one point, and hitting the goal pole scores two points.
4. Playing time is thirty minutes. If all members of a team finish the course within the time limit, the game is over. (a perfect game) If neither team finishes within the time, the team with the most points is the winner.

### Stick

- The shaft must be longer than 50 cm.
- The head must be 18 cm to 24 cm long.
- The face (where the player hits the ball) must be 3.5 cm to 5 cm in diameter.
- Previously, sticks were made of wood, but now, they are made of various materials (carbon, titanium, aluminum, stainless steel, etc.)

## **Ball**


- 7.5cm in diameter, red and white with engraved numbers (to show the hitting order.)
- Balls used to be made of wood, but now they are made of synthetic resin.

## **What is a "touch?" What is a "spark?"**

When a hitter's own ball hits another ball, it is a 'touch.' If your ball and the touched ball remain inside the court, you have the right to a 'spark'. The hitter steps on his/her own ball to securely hold it where it stopped, and places the touched ball in contact with his or her own ball in the desired direction. When the hitter hits his or her own ball, only the touched ball will move. This is called a 'spark.' If the spark is successful, the player is allowed to continue with another hit.

When the ball passes a gate, the player is allowed another hit. Good gateball strategy is a combination of clearing the course and making it difficult for the opponent. It is a great opportunity to watch the strategic battles of top players.

## **World Gateball**

 The World Gateball Union was established in September 1985, and thirteen nations are currently members. There are more than ten million Gateball enthusiasts around the world, mostly in North and South America and Asia as well as in Australia and New Zealand.

## **A New Generation**

In Japan, Gateball has the image of being a sport for senior citizens, but such an image is mistaken. Many young people have taken up Gateball. There are National Junior competitions for players below the age of 18. Schools teach Gateball in physical education classes and in club activities, and young Gateball players are always increasing in number. Will Gateball become a major sport with the increase of both young and elderly enthusiasts?