

# Buzkashi



By Abdullah Qazi (1997)

**Buzkashi, which literally translated means “goat grabbing” is the national sport of Afghanistan. Many historians believe that Buzkashi began with the Turkic-Mongol people, and it is indigenously shared by the people of Northern Afghanistan. There are two main types of Buzkashi, Tudabarai and Qarajai. Tudabarai is relatively simple compared with Qarajai, even though they share similar objectives.**

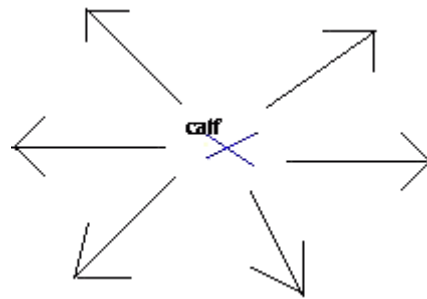
**In Buzkashi, a headless carcass is placed in the center of a circle and surrounded by the players of two opposing teams. The object of the game, is to get control of the carcass and bring it to the scoring area. Although it seems like a simple task, it is not. Only the most masterful players, (called chapandaz) ever even get close to the carcass. The competition is fierce, and the winner of a match receives prizes that have been donated by a sponsor. These prizes range from money, to fine turbans and clothes. In order for someone to become a chapandaz, one must undergo a**

tremendous amount of difficult training. In fact, the best chapandaz, are usually over the age of forty. Buzkashi, is definitely not a game for the weak.

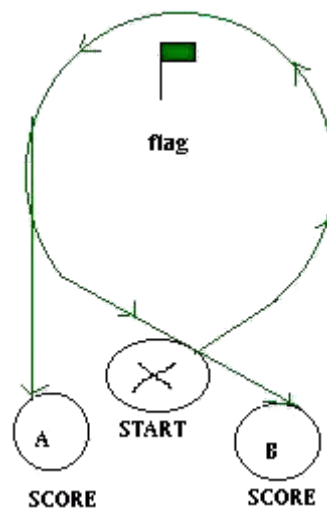
The players are not the only ones who undergo arduous training; the horses that participate in buzkashi must train for five years before ever making it to the playing field. Buzkashi, is indeed a dangerous sport, but intensive training and excellent communication between the horse and rider can help minimize the risk of injury.

### The different types of Buzkashi: Tudabarai & Qarajai

In Tudabarai, in order to score, the rider must obtain possession of the carcass and then carry it away from the starting circle in any direction. The rider must stay free and clear of the other riders.



In Qarajai, the task is much more complex. The player must carry the calf around a marker, and then return the carcass to the team's designated scoring circle.



**In each version of the game, points are awarded for successfully completing the task of getting control of the carcass, and getting it to the proper scoring area. The winner of each match receives prizes which have been put up by a sponsor. The top prizes are usually money, or fine clothes.**

**To many Afghans, Buzkashi is not just a game, it is a way of life; a way in which teamwork and communication are essential to being successful.**

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