

Culture: The Psionic Games

Of all the unusual aspects of Zhodani culture, perhaps the most mysterious, misunderstood, and mythologized is the famed **Teqozdievl** (ᑕᑦᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭᑭ), the so-called *Psionic Games*.

Though the Zhodani participate in a wide variety of athletic and academic contests, some competitive but most cooperative in nature, the **Teqozdievl** is the most important such competition. It is open only to **dlenchiepr** (ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭ), for whom it is a once in a lifetime opportunity to show their talents and skills in a very public setting. The **Teqozdievl** are also the only sporting event that recognizes and rewards individual achievement - the winners of the games are granted immediate promotion to the ranks of the **zdobrdievl** (ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭ) with all the rights, duties, and honors thereof.

History of the Games

It is widely accepted that the first **Teqozdievl** were held sometime after the end of the **Dzaqtlasqik** (ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭ), the *Time of Great Dying*, commonly known in modern times as the *Second Dark Age*, likely in celebration of the end of a thousand years of death and chaos to herald a new, civilized age. While the precise nature of those first games is now lost to history, the traditions of competition and elevating the winners lives on.

The **Teqozdievl** are played throughout the year on every Consulate world. Each **zdobritzi** (ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭ) *noble fief* sends representatives, always **dlenchiepr** of exceptional talent, to compete in the local, regional, and global levels. Contestants who do particularly well might even be sent to the **vlezhdivraji** (ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭ) *subsector* and eventually the **vlezhdivr** (ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭ) *sector level* competitions.



The Competitions

Few outsiders have ever witnessed the **Teqozdievl**, and those who do often come away more confused than enlightened. Because most of the action in many of the games is mental, relying on **shadievl** (±ℓ⊂×㐁) *telepathy* or **petlandievl** (㐁×±ℓ×⊂×㐁) *clairvoyance*, the games can be very hard to follow even for natives. Even the games with clear physical aspects involving **pradievl** (㐁ℓ⊂×㐁) *telekinesis*, **koetsdievl** (⊂ℓ×±⊂×㐁) *teleportation* or **chtekotldievl** (±×⊂ℓ±⊂×㐁) *awareness* can become chaotic and confusing as many of the competitors are likely to be skilled in multiple talents, and using them to their fullest ability.



Every Zhodani citizen follows the **Teqozdievl**, from the lowliest **zhan'tad** to the highest ranking **zdobrdievl**. Any time the games are held in a city or region, they are a grand spectacle. Members of the nobility are expected to attend, particularly if they have chosen **dlenchiepr** from their staff as competitors. The games are, after all, one of the ways the future leadership of the Consulate is chosen.

Gambling

While it may seem ironic and even out of character, betting on the outcome of specific events is common and even encouraged during the **Teqozdievl**. Friendly wagers under controlled and monitored circumstances are considered essential to building community and harmony between the various **zhan'tad** clans.

Like so many other aspects of Zhodani culture, gambling on the games is never taken to excess, for such would attract the attention of the **Tavrchedl** and result in counseling or reeducation.

The Winner's Circle

The **Teqozdievl** traditionally lasts for three **chten** (±×㐁) or one **teqozdij**, at the end of which the winners are announced. This always takes place on **Teqozastial** (⊂×±ℓ⊂ℓ±ℓ±) or *Olympiad Day*, a special holiday added to the New Year celebration following **Dranzhrin** (⊂ℓ±ℓ±㐁) or *Sunbright*.