

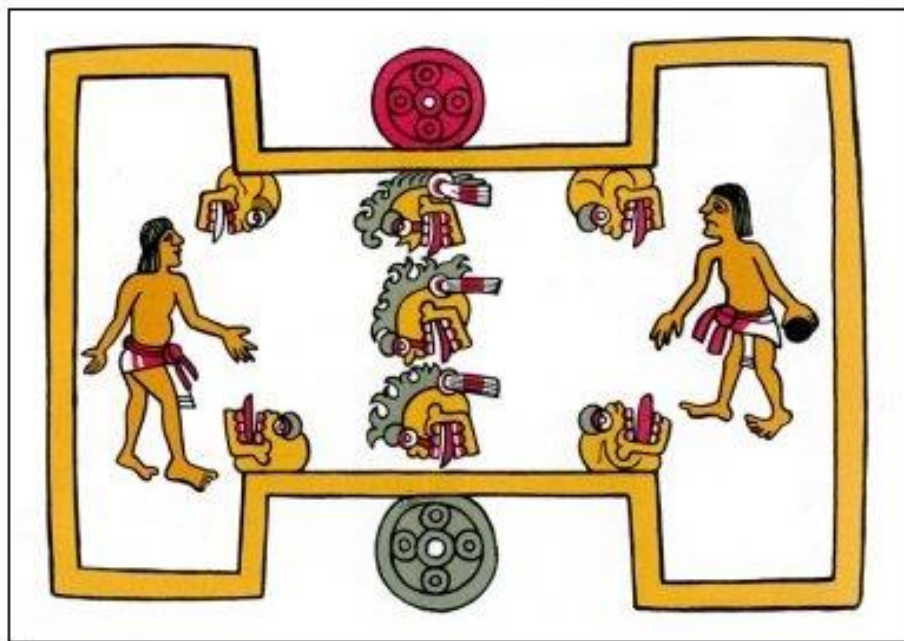
It's amazing how crazy people get about sports these days, especially considering how much sports suck compared to what they used to be.

No, we're not talking about the 1940s when football players wore leather helmets. We're talking about the ancient sports where Viking heads were trophies and "crocodile death" had its own slot on the scoreboard.



Mesoamerican Ballgame

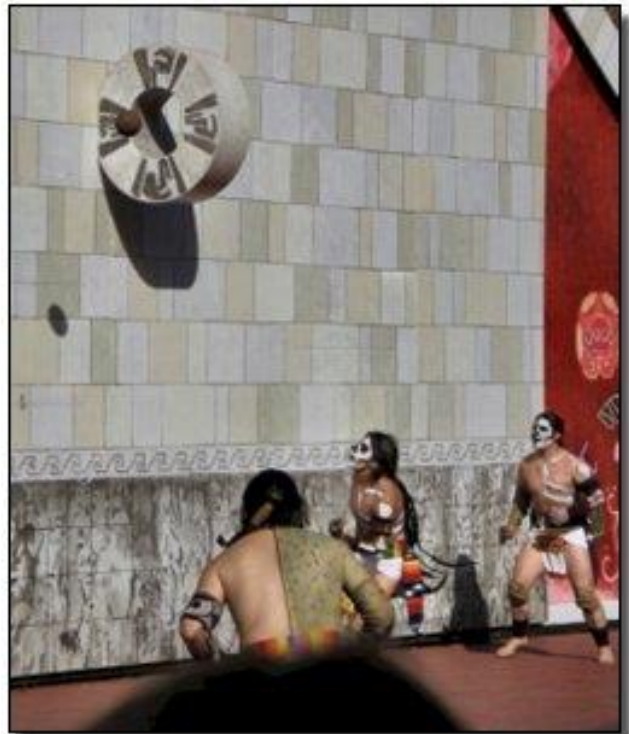
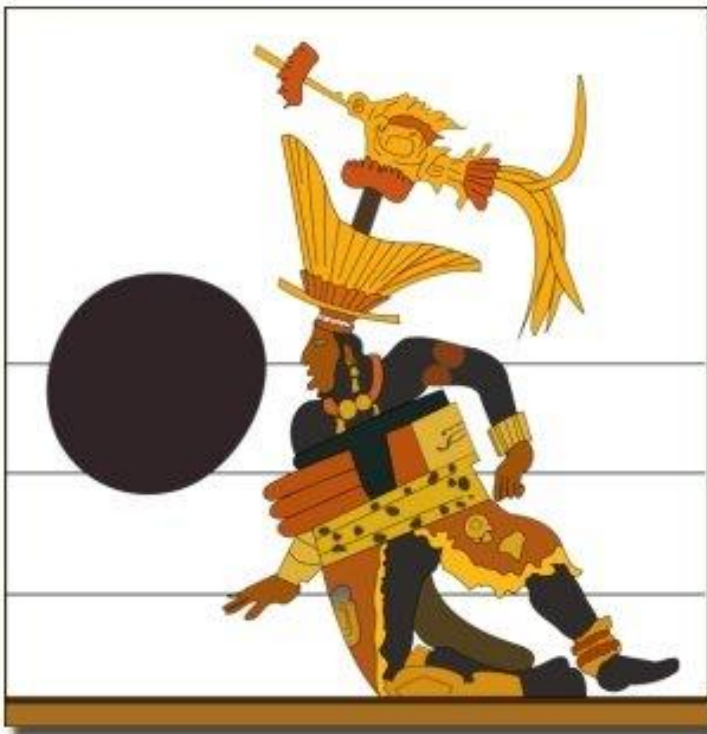
Long before soccer (and smallpox) took pre-Columbian America by storm, the official sport of Ancient Mexico was an odd game that the Mayans called [pitz](#). Since there is no word in the English language that can do justice to its brutality, we simply call it "*The Mesoamerican Ballgame*".



The "Game"

Mesoamerican Ballgame was a lot like volleyball, except the ball involved was nine pounds of solid rubber. And there were beheadings.

Players had to keep the heavy ball-of-hate in play by bouncing it off their forearms, hips, elbows and (if you're a sissy) bats and rackets. Points were scored by striking the ball against the opponents' wall, while points were lost if the ball hit the ground more than twice.



The Mesoamericans included one final draw to wow their crowd. Either team could score an instant win by knocking the ball through an impossibly-high sideways-basketball-hoop (sort of like Quidditch with crazy Mexicans).

How is that "Insane"?

Consider the post-game party: Winners would be whisked off to celebrate with some shapely Mesoamerican ladies with a penchant for body-painting, while the losing team got lead into the back and had their heads chopped off. However, there remains some discrepancy as to who actually got sacrificed: the opposing captain, the opposing players or even the *winning* team (since they were clearly the greater warriors). Either way, there would be blood.

Oh, and all those decapitated heads? Yeah... They used nine-pound balls for a reason: The entire game was just a warm-up for the post-game party favorite, head-ball.

