

A TRADITIONAL TURKISH SPORT: HORSEMAN JAREED

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Abstract : Although horseman jareed, which is one of the most important activities in Turkish culture and sport, was very popular in the past, today it is not given its deserved value and is performed only in 11 provinces as a subsidiary branch of Turkish Traditional Sports Federation. This situation results in a difficulty to inherit an important sport of Turkish culture to next generations. The aim of this study is to introduce and make our cultural heritage “horseman jareed” widely known both nationally and internationally. Under the light of past, evaluation and edition method has been used in this study to picture today’s situation. Globalization, technological improvements, increases in mechanization and monotyping of humans lead nations to lose commitment to their cultures. Some branches of sport and similar physical activities are important elements of our culture. These sport branches, which are complementary elements of the culture, may either gain an international interest or be performed as a local traditional activity. Traditional sports are a series of activities where manners and customs are exhibited and winning or glory has no priority over the sense of competition. Indeed, horseman jareed is such a kind of cultural activity in Turkish sports culture where entertainment is turned into a sport and performed traditionally on important days. In this study, suggestions to spread the popularity of jareed both nationally and internationally and introduce the history, rules and gameplay of it are given.

Key Words: Culture, Traditional Turkish Sports, Horseman Jareed

Horseman Jareed

Horseman jareed is one of the oldest sports belonging to Turks and also is an entertainment and sport performed by riding horses on a bounded field with pre-set rules. This sport attracts the attention of Anatolian people since the older times. There are no weather and time limitations to do this sport (Koçan, 2006:86-Tutel, 1998:117-Güven, 1999:228). Jareed is the name of the short javelin made up of hard, solid wood with a metal edge. It is intended to throw at enemies (rivals). Such military trainings done during the peace times were called as the “jareed game”. Jarred sport reflects our cultural characteristics such as agility, competency, skill, intelligence, bravery and amnesty. In this game, as the harmony and adoptability between human and horse, speed, tactics and skill are put together; team spirit and teamwork are united with those as well. The exact starting time of jareed is unknown. According to some sources jareed comes from the older times in Middle Asia. Some others, on the contrary, claim that jareed was never played in Asia but first played in Ottoman and Seljuk times (Yıldırım, 1999: 44-Kahraman, 1995:497).

Taking the nomadic and warrior Turks’ relations between their horses into consideration, it can be said that jareed is a revised and improved heritage from our elders. In Chinese sources it is said that *the life of Turks depends on their horses*. Indeed, the horse has a different place in Turks’ lives as a symbol rather than being a mount. It is impossible to think a Turk without his horse (İskenderzade, 2007:324). Horseman jareed was the commonest game, which sultans were proud to exhibit it to foreigner ambassadors, played in Ottoman palaces. Jareed players are named as cümdi. It was a great pleasure for sultans to exhibit jareed to foreigner ambassadors (Tutel, 1998:117-Kahraman, 1995: 497). In the notes and books of some voyagers there are chapters about jareed games. They say that jareed is a unique, traditional, polo like Turkish sport done on horses rode by players carrying blunt wooden sticks. The aim of the game is to gain points by throwing those sticks and pointing them right on the target. Today, it is mostly played in eastern provinces of Turkey (Sheenan, 2004:113-Lafferty, 2008:65).

Ottomans loved this game so much that they made playing jareed at the city square a tradition where the army rests on Fridays. It has been times when the cümdies or the horses were injured or even died. That’s why Sultan Mahmud II forbid Jareed in September 1826 (Kahraman: 1995: 497-500-507-Gezder, 1998:49-Tutel, 1998:117).

Since Ottomans loved this game very much, they found this prohibition unpleasant and kept playing this game in different places of the empire at weddings, fairs and ceremonies.

Horseman jareed in Ottoman Empire's Age

In Ottoman palaces jareed was played by cündies. Cüнди word is used for skilled riders only. Cündies played the game by forming two rival teams. When the sultan put a prize for the winner, the game would become very tougher (Tutel, 1998:117-Gezder, 1998:49). According to Ottoman protocol rules, it was a law that Grand vizier's cündies play jareed at Eskisaray's (one of the palaces) square on the third day of religious festivals and childbirth celebrations. The aim here is doubtlessly to make palace's young servants enthusiastic and accustomed to riding and shooting and surely keep them trained (Sakaoğlu, 2002:50- Gezder, 1998:52).

Sultans attended jareed games sometimes. This was told "sultan gets on the jareed". Jareed was the most favorite sport of Ahmet III, Mustafa III, Abdulhamid I, Selim III and Mahmud II. It is known that sultan Osman II, who was a good rider, performed this difficult and dangerous sport. Sultan Murat IV was another successful rider. It has been told that Sultan Murat IV was so skilled and agile that he could jump from one horse to another. In ottoman era there raised a lot of master cündies and they are very appreciated with their competency, bravery and dominances (Tutel, 1998:118, Kahraman:1995: 501).

Prohibition of horseman jareed in Ottoman Era

One of the most important rules of jareed is that players do not bear a grudge against each other. Nevertheless, it has been times when the cündies or the horses were injured or even died. Even though such incidents are common, jareed has been played with a manner of respect to jareed until Sultan Mahmud II age. According to Mohammaden calendar in 1231 a cüнди intentionally killed a rival during a religious festival celebration. Because of that sultan Mahmud II cancelled and forbid the games in 1826 A.C. He started archery and did not let jareed again (Kahraman, 1995:507). Since Ottomans loved this game very much, they found this prohibition unpleasant and kept playing this game in different places of the empire at weddings, fairs and ceremonies.

Horseman jareed today

Jareed has been played since the early years of republic. It has been performed mostly at weddings, festivals and celebrations. Jareed has been played in many Anatolian villages where oil wrestling has a common place as well. Jareed has been exhibited by Dadashs of Erzurum in Üçkümbetler region for Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's honour. Jarred games have been exhibited as a part of republic celebrations schedule in Kayseri by city community centre (Şanal, 2004:129/Gezder, 1998:153/Karahüseyinoğlu, 2007:82).

Jareed was accepted as a branch of Federation of Turkish Traditional Sports in 1996 in order to improve and spread our elders' heritage. Moreover, financial support is being given to jareed players and their horses by the federation. Those jareed clubs, who win titles in local competitions held by the federation, get the right to enter national jareed championship held again by the federation every year and all expenses are covered by the federation.

According to January 2011 statistics, there are 74 jareed clubs in 11 provinces and a total of 1450 jareed players in Turkey (Aka, 2010).

The place of the horse in horseman jareed

Riding can be described as an art where the rider and his/her horse, which is one of the noblest creatures in the world, are acting together in a complete harmony and esthetics. The relation between man and horse starts from the existence of first human and the horses have been used for several purposes for centuries. Horses have tasted the complete freedom by galloping in the meadows before getting domesticated by humans. It is not difficult to guess that those who were able to sit on a horse properly have raced with each other (Ünver ve Karaküçük, 2003:68-Tutel, 1998:7).

A jareed horse must be older than 4. Medium sized ones are favored since high and long horses are not very agile in the field. Easygoing Arab and Turkish horses are the most suitable ones. Jareed horses are being raised with care (Kahraman,1995:507- Koçan, 2006:85).

Nowadays, jareed horses are being selected from veteran thoroughbred Arab racing horses. Arab horses are mostly preferred because they have a warm relationship with humans and an easygoing nature.

Rules of horseman jareed

Teams are formed with 7 starters and 3 substitutes for each. Minimum of 14 horse riders are needed for the game to start. If the total number of riders and horses of a team drop below 5 then the whole team loses by default. Starting horses and riders cannot get back to game again if they are once substituted.

In every jareed game, there are a total of 7 referees namely a head referee, a recording head referee, 2 recording referees, a midfield referee and 2 sideline referees. Other staffs in the game are drummers and shrill pipers (a trumpet like local instrument), jareed pickers, field organizers, doctors, veterinarians and health officers.

Dimensions of the game field are as follows; a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 50 meters of width, a minimum of 90 and a maximum of 160 meters of length. Sidelines must be at least 15 cm wide. The ground must be covered with at least 5-6 cm deep, non-gravelly, raised and loose sand layer.

A standard game field is 40 meters in width and 130 meters in length. There are two 7 meters long areas located at the heads of the field where the horses are put in an order. This area is called as the “regiment station”. In front of each regiment stations, right before the shooting site, there are 5 meters long areas called as the “forbidden site” at where opposite team’s players are not allowed to violate. After the forbidden sites there are 7 meters long areas called as the “shooting site” bounded by dashed lines where shooting is allowed (Fig.1).

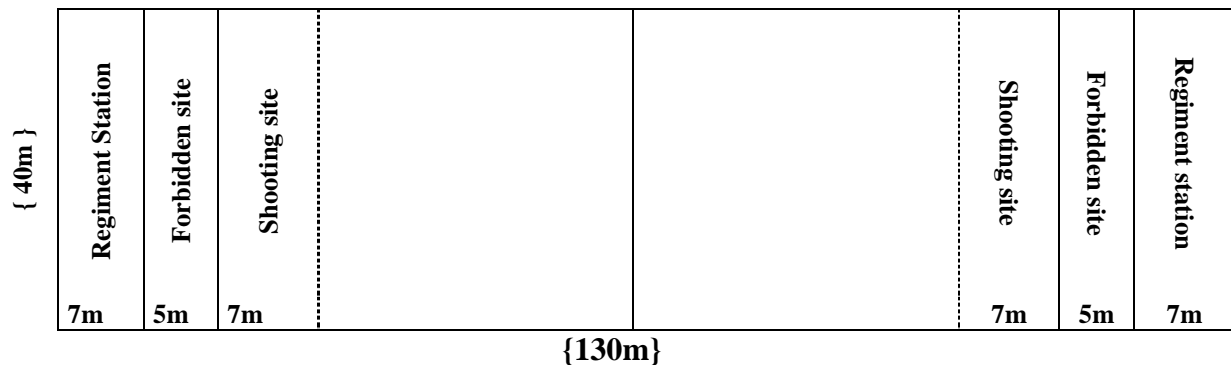


Figure1. Horseman jareed game field

Jareed games are played over two halves of 40 minutes. Halftime break is 10 minutes. Time losses during the game are added to the ends. Shot clock is 35 seconds. When 20 seconds pass, the rider is let known by the recording head referee with announce. If the rider cannot manage to use his jareed then he receives a penalty and the referee gives the attack turn to his team and 35 seconds starts counting again.

It is usual that a draw happens. Nevertheless, in elimination and final matches there is no draw. To have a winner, two halves of 10 minutes are consecutively played upon the end of first 80 minutes of regulation time. If the draw lock is not broken again then the winner is determined with coin toss.

Score system in horseman jareed

There are positive and negative points in the score system. The team with a higher cumulative score wins the game. These positive and negative points are given below (Aka, 2010).

Positive moves and their points

- Shooting an opponent located at the midfield +4 points
- Shooting an opponent located at the regiment station +4 points
- Catching and then forgiving (amnesty) an opponent +3 points
- Crossing an opponent’s path +3 points
- Catching a shot jareed in the air +2 points

Negative moves and their points

- Throwing a jareed from short distance -3 points
- Making an horse intentionally hit opponent -3 points
- Intentionally shoot opponent's horse with jareed -1 points
- Heading into opponent regiment -1 points
- Intentionally heading into opponent regiment -3 points
- Sideline violation -1 points
- Taking a shot at the opponent regiment from somewhere but the shooting site -1 points
- Not using the attack turn -1 points
- Riding of 2 players from the same team at the same time -1 points
- Starting ride early -1 points
- Falling off the horse -3 points
- Dismounting a horse without permission during the game -1 points
- Existence of 3 or more riders at the forbidden site -1 points
- Entering from the sideline of a rider receiving the attack turn -1 points
- Intentionally throwing a jareed off at the game field -1 points
- Dropping a jareed -1 points
- Forbidden site violations -1 points

Conclusion

Culture is the sum of material and essential moral values, which are formed and developed through the history and creating a nation from a crowd, in accordance with the characteristics of that nation. If these values are not left to next generations, they cannot be named as the "culture" anymore. If the national culture and folklore are substantial, then, correspondingly, the sportive activities increase. Sports and similar activities cannot be demerged from the cultural values of a society. While sport, a supplementary of culture, is being affected by the culture itself as it is affecting it with its popularity and sociality.

Traditional Turkish sports are important organizations where national and religious rituals are included, Turkish customs are exhibited and examples of fair-play are shown.

Horseman jareed is such a kind of cultural activity in Turkish sports culture where entertainment is turned into a sport and performed traditionally on important days. Studies should be made in order to attract attention to jareed and such similar traditional sports which were very popular in the past but not today. Modernizing the traditional sports by taking the traditions into consideration and not changing them, has an integral role in protecting traditional sports culture of all countries in regards to leaving them to next generations. In globalized world, in order to spread and develop tendency towards the traditional sports, using of mass communication tools should be more effective and efficient.

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