



AMERICAN HANDBALL AKA ONE WALL



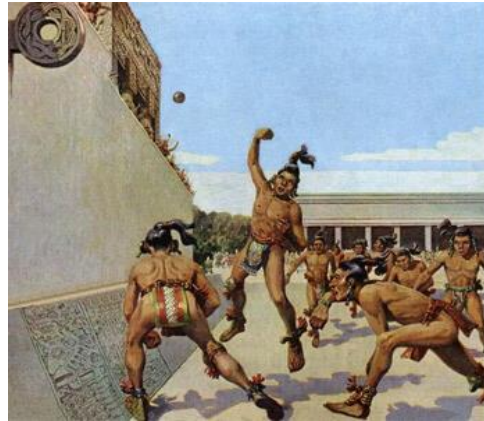
STREET NAME WALL BALL

The History of Handball around the World

It is still very much a matter of controversy as to who introduced wall handball to the world.

B.C.

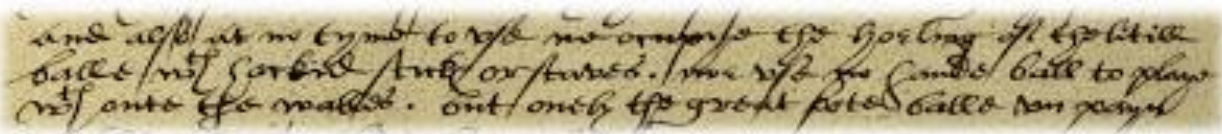
The sport in which a ball is hit or thrown have been referenced as far back as Homer and ancient Egypt. A game that is similar to handball was played by Northern and Central Americans from 1500 BC, most famously by the Aztecs as the Mesoamerican ballgame, a bloody sport that often involved human sacrifice as the penalty for losing the game. However it is thought these ancient games more closely resembled a form of hand tennis due to the size of the ball and not handball.



The Europeans also have records of a similar game, named Valencian, Basque pelota (or Jai-alai), International fronton and Welsh handball.

1400's – 1500's

The first game recorded showing the striking of a ball against a wall using one's hand is from Scotland dating back to the year 1427. King James I ordered a cellar window in his palace courtyard to be boarded up, as it was interfering with his game. 100 years later in Ireland, the earliest written record of a similar game dated 1527 in the town statutes of Galway, Liber A, where the people of Ireland were forbidden to play all ball games except for Irish football.



Translated to modern day English:

...at no time the use nor occupy the hurling of the little ball with hockey sticks or staves, nor use a handball to play outside the walls, but only the great football on pain of the pains above limited. A fine of 8 pence would be placed if anyone disobeyed the law.

1700's

There is also a watercolor painting in Monaghan Museum dated 1782 showing a handball game being played against the walls of Castle Blarney.

The first depiction of an Irishman playing a sport resembling handball after the ban by King James I does not appear again until 1785, after this the sport became standardized and commonly known as Gaelic handball.

History of Handball in the United States of America and New York

Late 1800's

Contrary to most sports, Handball was once a professional well paid sport. Ironically its development over the last 100 years grew massively in popularity but unrecognized as career worthy. Handball officially arrived in 1886 with the first four-wall championship court built in Brooklyn, New York in 1886 Brooklynite Phil Casey, considered by many to be the father of modern handball in America, won the first World Handball Title and \$1,000. This was a lucrative sport initially, dominated by cash prizes but matches were long, Best-out-of-fifteen games to twenty-one points. Championships required the completion of a "rubber," this meant a match had to be played in both the United States and Ireland before determining a winner. Due to travel difficulties, a rubber could easily take a year to complete. Eventually the game became too argumentative, hostile, and difficult to stage, mostly due to difficulty of travel; differences in courts, rules, and balls; and interference by backers and promoters.

**Early 1900s,**

Four wall handball already well known in the city of New York but a new version of the game began to emerge along the beaches of Brooklyn. The beach goers were playing a game of hand ball with just one wall known on the street as "wall ball or "one wall" They would hit a bald tennis ball with their bare hands against the sides of the wooden jetties that lined beaches. In 1909 Charles J. O'Connell was a manager at Parkway baths in Brighton Beach, O'Connell convinced his boss Charles Keene into building a one-wall handball court at his establishment. His

idea was an immediate success! Very quickly all Brooklyn beach clubs built one wall courts for their members to keep up with demand and within a few years Brighton Beach Baths had more than 20 one wall courts in constant use. The A.A.U. (Amateur Athletic Union) also held the first city-wide tournament.

1930s,

American handball is played in public parks, beaches, and high school yards around New York. The NYC Parks Department built 1000's of Wall Ball courts throughout the five boroughs. Tournaments were held almost every week during the warmer months at the beach clubs, in the colder months these continued indoors at New York athletic clubs. There was intense competition between their own "home" teams.

Early 1930's

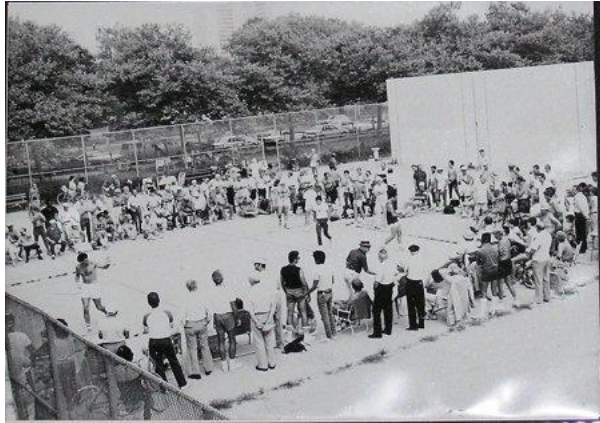
Women's tournaments started outdoors at the beach clubs.

Late 1930's

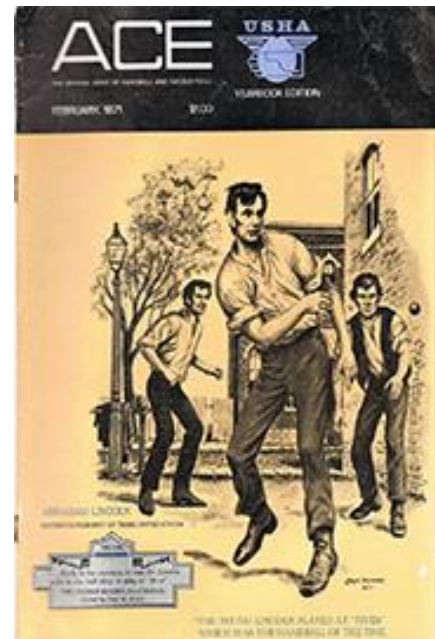
More American States and larger urban areas began to build outdoor public courts to keep up with the popular game.

1940's - 1960's

the Irish version of Wall Ball became known in many other states and countries around the world, Americans hand changed it so much that it became recognized as its own sport. With a few variations. One wall, Three wall and four wall.

**1970's**

This cover of Ace magazine from 1971 shows then Senator Lincoln playing a game of "fives" as handball was sometimes referred to at the time. It is a historically documented fact that Abraham Lincoln, our 16th President, was an avid handball player. President Lincoln's handball, preserved at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington DC.



The Play

Handball may be played as singles (two players against each other), doubles (two teams of two players), or "cutthroat" (three players rotating one against two). In cutthroat handball, one server plays against two receivers, until he or she is "put out." Then, the left-most receiver serves. Serves rotate in this way until one player wins by scoring either 7, 11, 15, or 21 points. Should both teams reach a score 1 below the winning score, the game can be continued by 'win-by-two' or 'straight'. In 'win-by-two', the winning score is increased by 2 points. In 'straight', the score remains the same and cannot be pushed. When a tie of 20 is reached in a 21-point match, a common decision is 'straight 25', where the winning score is set to 25 and cannot be changed. The cutthroat mode of play is also known as "triangles."

The Rules

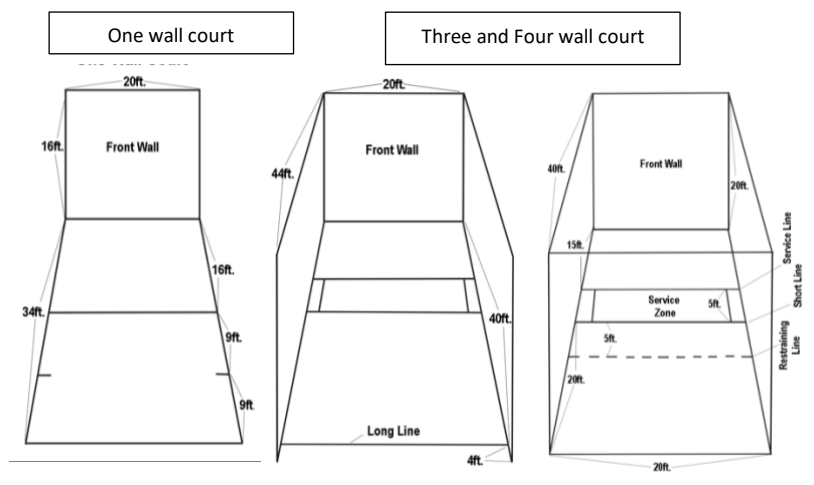
The rules can be simple or complex depending on how official the game is and if there is a referee such as in tournaments and championships.

These can be found on the USWA (United States Wall ball United States Wall ball Association) website <https://wallballworld.com/uswa-official-rules/>

And more detailed tournament and championship official rules can be found on the USHSA (United States Handball Association) website <https://www.ushandball.org/index.php>

Court Dimensions and Specifications

For one, three, and four wall ball the court is 20 feet wide, 20 feet high and 40 feet long, with back wall recommended minimum height of 14 feet.



One wall floor dimensions

Must be 20 feet wide from the outside edges of the side lines and 34 feet from the wall to the outside edge of the long line. The side lines should extend at least three feet beyond the long line. There should also be a minimum of at least six feet, but ideally 20 feet, of floor beyond each side line as well as 16 feet beyond the long line to allow for playing space.

Equipment

The black or blue rubber ball weighs 2.3 ounces (65 g) and is 1.875 inches (4.76 cm) in diameter (this is smaller, heavier and harder than a racquetball), protective gloves, sneakers, athletic shorts and goggles. Eye protection is required in tournament handball, as the ball moves at high speeds and in close proximity to the players. The ball is hit with gloved hand (open palm, fingers, fist, back of hand). However on the street players often don't wear gloves or goggles.

Ball types



A true handball is referred to as an "ace ball" or, in the earlier days, "blackball". If a racquetball is used to play handball it is called a "big ball" or "big blue". A small ball is hard, bounces higher and moves faster. Types of small balls include the Red Ace (for men) and the White Ace (for women). The Red Ace small ball is heavier than the White Ace small ball.

Four-wall games use the small ball almost exclusively. Three-wall and one-wall games use both balls. Formal one wall games, such as tournaments or school competitions, use only the small ball. Informal games, or "street wall ball," use the big ball most often. Both balls are used extensively in New York City, with formal tournaments exclusively using the big ball in NYC.

Terms and Techniques

Ace

A serve in which the retriever is not only unable to return the ball, but is also unable to touch the ball. In some games, any return from a serve that does not make it back to the wall is called an ace.

Backhand

A technique of hitting the ball with the palm of the strong hand so that the palm faces the body. The arm is swung away from the body. This technique is usually used when players who have a weak off-hand or when the ball comes towards the mid-line of the body, and the person lacks the time to move into position.

Block

Occurs when the ball hit by the receiver doesn't reach the wall, but instead directly hits another player, or when the enemy player is directly in the path of the ball that the receiver is unable to see and hit. Should the ball hit a partnering player in a doubles game before the first bounce it results in a down. Should the ball hit any player after the first bounce, it results in a take-two.

Block (Moving)

A call from the receiver to indicate that an opposing player interfered in the receiver's ability to reach and return the ball during a rally. It results in a take-two.

Carry

An illegal move made by a player who cups the ball and moves towards the wall by 'carrying' the ball without actually gripping the ball.

Ceiling shot

A defensive play in a four-wall court in which a player hits the ball hard and upward, so that it first contacts the ceiling and then the front wall, usually forcing the opponent to go to the back of the court to make a return.

Crack

When the ball hits a crack in the ground or wall and moves in an erratic direction. In some games it is considered a live ball that can still be hit like a normal exchange, in others it results in take-two.

Cut/chop/slice

A shot in which the player puts a heavy spin on the ball, causing the ball to bounce off the wall in an erratic motion. To perform a cut, the ball must be struck by a sudden twist in the hand and/or fingers. The main purpose of these shots is to throw off the opponent's hitting rhythm.

Down

Term used for when the ball hits the floor before the wall. Also refers to serving two 'shorts' or 'longs' in a row. It is commonly used for any mistake in-play as well. It is an error, ends the rally and results in a point or change of server.

Fist

A shot made by hitting the ball with a closed fist. It can launch the ball in very different directions due to the bone shape of the hand. It often puts more force into the ball as opposed to the regular slap, keeping the momentum of the ball continuous. It is often considered illegal to fist a serve.

Flag

To distract the opponent by creating unnecessary noises or movements in front of the other player. A flag is often a physical distraction by making large movements around the vicinity of the ball blocking the opponent's view of the ball. Such movement is considered a flag when it occurs closer to the ball, but distant from the opposing player, as there is much time to hit the ball after the flag, whereas a block occurs instantaneously leaving no time to prepare. A take-two may be called, but is not necessary.

Hook

A shot with spin that veers off to one side.

Kill

A shot (usually side-arm or underhand) in which the player hits the ball so that it hits very low on the front wall, causing the ball to rebound low to the ground. This shot can end a rally, although it is possible to pick up a kill. Although it helps the player win the rally immediately, it is risky given the chance of missing and hitting the floor. A variation of the killer is the corner-kill.

A corner-kill

is a kill shot that is aimed at the extreme left or right of the wall. In one-wall, this shot has more risk than a normal kill because the player runs the risk of hitting the ball out. A corner-kill is often more difficult to pick up because players usually occupy the center of the court, making the shot harder to reach.

Lob (overhead shot)

In one-wall handball, an underhand shot in which the player hits the ball to the wall in a high arc such that the ball is launched back high above the top of the wall through a parabolic path that results in the ball landing near the long line. This tactic is mainly used against short players or players who hover near the front of the court. An overhead shot is similar, but can be used with an overhand shot, must be hit near the top of the wall, and does not go any higher, unlike the lob.

Long

When the ball is served over the long line.

Pass shot (corner shot)

A shot where the ball passes an opponent low and fast near one of the side walls, out of the opponent's reach.

Pop

Occurs when the ball is hit at a 45 degree or similar angle to bisect the right angle of the wall and floor. Hitting the ball to cause a pop results in the ball 'popping' upwards. It is often identified on court by a distinct popping noise and sometimes the occurrence of dirt flying upon hitting the wall and floor, even leaving a mark on the ball as a result. A pop results in a down.

Roller

A shot where the ball is hit towards the very bottom of the wall leaving little space for the ball to bounce, causing it to instead roll. It is a guaranteed end to the rally as it is impossible to pick up due to the ball rolling instead of bouncing.

Short

When the ball is served before the short line.

Shut-out

A challenge play where a player (in a singles match) or team (in a doubles match) attempts to score a set amount of points without allowing the opposing party to score. A shut-out is used to end a game early in 11, 15, or 21 point matches, with the shut-out score often being 7. In such case, it is referred to as a 7-Zip Shut-out.

Spike

Similar to that in volleyball, the spike is a shot in which the player slams the ball down from a high altitude to hit the base of the wall. Doing so forces the ball to bounce up much higher than it usually would.

Take-One

A call made in doubles games. At the start of a game, if the serving team does not score a certain amount of points (often three), the defending team may call take-one to become the serving team. This skips the second-man serve bringing the defending team to the front to serve.

Take-Two

A redo of the rally. No points are given and no penalties occur.

Other Variations of the game include:**School handball**

An extended version of handball played at schools across the nation. It has three modes of play: freestyle, old school, and new school.

Handball

Played in Loyola School, Jamshedpur, India. It was introduced in the school as early as 1949 by Father Keogh

Prison handball

A simplified version of handball popular in North American prisons.

Frisian handball

A Dutch version known as Kaatsen.

Picigin

A Croatian game played since 1908 in Split on Bachvitse (Bačvice) beach in shallow water with attractive dives to keep the ball in the air.

Chinese handball

Another variation of handball (albeit developed in America) where the return must hit the ground before the wall. There are no teams in this variation.

Wall Ball Around the world

The United States, together with 26 other nations represent the growing sport of wall ball. The World Wall Ball Championships have been held every three years since 1964 alternating between Canada, Ireland, and the USA. There are over 3,000 wall ball clubs worldwide with players ranging in age from 9-89 years old. Recently, wall ball has piqued the interest of the International Olympic Committee for inclusion in the Olympic Games, hence the name change to "Wall Ball." The name change is because there already exists a sport in the program called "Olympic Handball" also referred to as "Team Handball."

Museum



The United States Handball Association Hall of Fame is located in Tucson, Arizona. This serves as America's shrine to the game of handball honoring the heritage of the sport, acknowledging great players and contributors, and welcomes visitors to view the museum in person. This 'museum' features memorabilia such as photographs, plaques, medals, trophies, and painted portraits of the Hall's Members.

Wall of Fame

Several organizations and committees have formed around the country and the world to continue bringing awareness to the sport and get Wallball recognized as an Olympic sport and a paid career choice. They proudly honor the winners of past tournaments and championships with their name on a wall of fame.

The New York handball wall of fame

<https://www.nyhandballhalloffame.com/>

Associations in The United States

United States Wallball Association

<https://wallballworld.com/>

The Illinois Handball Association (IHA)

<http://www.illinoishandball.org/iha/>

Inner City Handball Association (ICHA)

<https://www.icha.org/>

Notable players

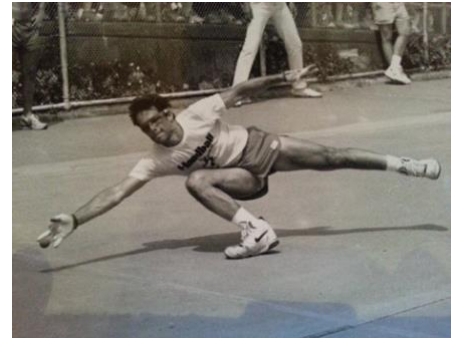
Albert Apuzzi

Apuzzi won "Outdoor" USHA National championships in one-wall singles handball in 1986 and in 1993. In addition he has won the "Indoor" USHA National 1-wall singles (1987) & doubles (1985) as well as 9 YMCA 1-wall, singles (1989 & 1995) & doubles (1989, 1993-1996, 2002 & 2004), titles.

Albert Apuzzi has a total of 21 National titles and has been in 32 National finals. That is more than any other player.

His seven consecutive "Outdoor" USHA National doubles championships made him a USHA record holder. His play was noted for power, speed and stamina. He has helped run many tournaments and has been described as a "goodwill ambassador" for the sport.

He received his USHA Handball Hall of Fame plaque & jacket at the ICHA Awards Dinner in 2011.



Joe Durso

Durso won National Championships in one-wall singles handball in 1982, 1984, 1987–1992, and 1994. He also won National Championship At age 47 he made the semis in the 2002 Nationals in one-wall doubles handball in 1983, 1984, 1986–1989, and 2003.

Joe Durso was inducted in the Hall of Fame of the USHA In 2012



Vic Hershkowitz

Considered by most historians as the greatest all-around player in handball history. No other player has ever so thoroughly dominated one-, three-, and four-wall handball competition. VIC worked in New York City as a fireman, and incidentally won several National Firefighters tournaments. In 1954, Hershkowitz was the first handball player to win a career fifteenth U.S. national title, and between 1947 and 1967, except for 1959, he won at least one national championship each year. He is proudly honored in the International Jewish sports Hall of fame



Al Goldstein

Affectionately known as “the Teacher.” An intelligent and gentle soul, the Teacher was a fierce handball player possessed of great speed, power, and a hopping, skidding serve which provided no end of trouble for his opponents. He passed while nearing his 98th birthday. And only until last year did he stop attending the National One-Wall Championships held in Coney Island.



Fred Lewis

Both of his parents played handball. Lewis is a six-time U.S. Handball Association National Four-Wall Handball Singles Champion (1972, 1974–76, 1978, and 1981). He is also a three-time National Three-Wall Singles Champion (1974, 1977, and 1978). He was named 1970s "Handball Player of the Decade" by the National Handball Association. He made the finals of the National Open championship 14 consecutive years. He won 16 titles as a professional.

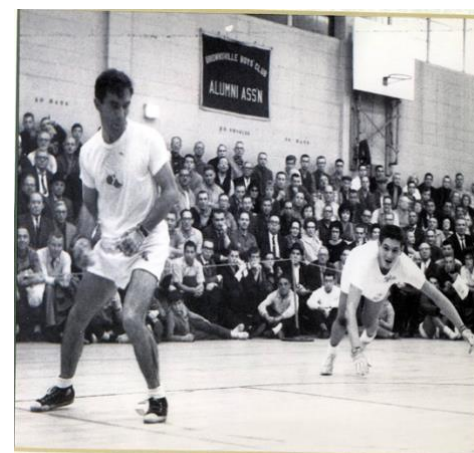
In 1998 Lewis created Yes2Kids, a handball club for children.



Oscar Obert

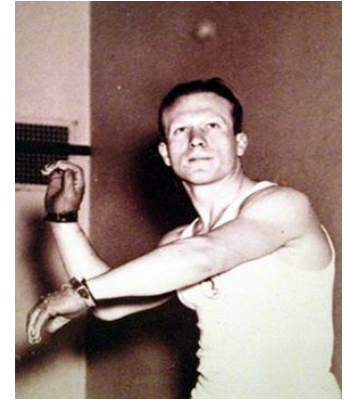
Oscar won more open USHA national championships than any other player in the history of the game, accumulating 20 crowns.

- Four wall: singles, 1962 and 1963; three-wall: singles, 1962; doubles, 1957, 1959, 1960, 1964, 1965, and 1967; one-wall: singles, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1963, 1964, and 1965; doubles, 1959, 1960, 1961, 1962, and 1963. All his one-wall and three-wall doubles titles were achieved with his brother, Ruby. Oscar developed into a champion four-waller comparatively late in his career mainly because he had concentrated on one-wall. He brought a real crowd appeal to handball as a tremendous competitor, exciting all-out shooter, with championship "killer instinct" demeanor on the court. He made it on the wall of fame in 1972.



Joe Platak

Won seven national four-wall singles championships in a row, added two more after Navy service in World War II, and took two doubles titles. Never in his nine singles victories was he pushed to three games and only once did an opponent score more points in the second game than in the first. In 1937, when Joe was at his peak, he went on an exhibition tour. He played 136 games in 21 days in 17 clubs in 13 cities and nine states, covering some 3,000 miles on the trip. He didn't lose a game in singles or doubles.

**National Championships**

Handball Championships have been held annually in the United States since 1919. These championships were organized by the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) until 1950, when their control was transferred to the newly formed United States Handball Association (USHA).

Tournaments

In 1959 Irving Ehrlich founded the Brownsville Handball Club. This club has promoted and ran the National U.S.H.A. 1-Wall tournaments annually, with 2 exceptions.

Registered members in the United States

Northern California has the highest number of members almost 1500.
New York is the second largest with almost 1000 registered members.

Very popular around, 500 members.

Texas, Illinois

Washington, Arizona, Florida

Fast growing popularity, 150-300 members.

Michigan

Ohio

Oregon

New Jersey

Pensilvania Missouri

Minnesota

Wisconsin

One Wall seen in other media



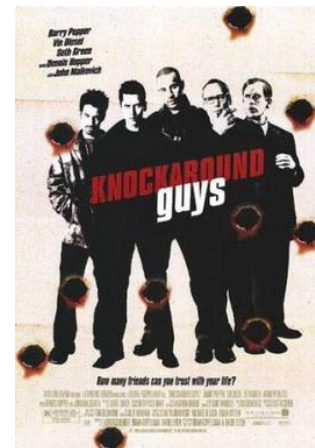
Playwright

A playwright was written by Daniel John Kelly named WALL, BALL, SUMMER AND FALL about a young kid from Coney Island who plays wall ball.

Motion pictures

Knockaround Guys

The 2001 major motion picture Knockaround Guys shot on location at the West 5th Street courts. Several regulars at the courts served as handball consultants for Dennis Hopper and John Malkovich. More stills are available at www.streetplay.com.



Wild Style



In 1981, **Charlie Hearn** created the mural “Wild Style”. Two years later the movie debuted in Times Square and Tokyo introducing a music the world to what would soon be called hip hop. This mural Was the capture in the first semi-scripted feature film about Hip Hop. This led the path for many great legends including Fab Five Freddy, the Cold Crush Brothers, and graffiti legends like Lee Quinones. It went on to become a sacred text for graffiti writers and aspiring DJs, inspiring art and music from Banksy and the Beastie Boys to Nas and Missy Elliot.

Famous actors who play the game

Thomas Stafford

John Young

Michael Collins

Ed O'Neil

Dennis Hopper

John Malkovich

Barry Pepper

Harold Lloyd

Famous Athletes

Rocky Marciano (Boxer)

Jack Dempsey (Boxer)

Harry Greb (Boxer)

Mike Tyson (Boxer)

Books

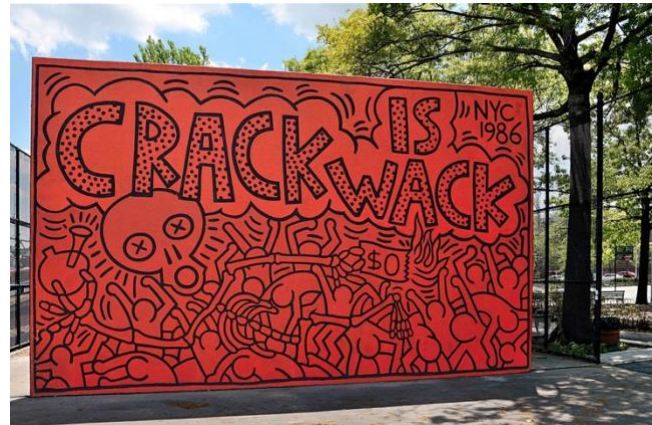
Treacherous Beauty, by Mark Jacob and Stephen H. Case, about the Arnold-Andre conspiracy, Major John Andre and General Sir Henry Clinton are said to have played a game called handball during the American Revolution.

Street graffiti to send a positive message

Crack is Wack

Keith Haring: Harlem River Drive and E. 128th St.

He created the piece on BOTH SIDES during a time when HIV/AIDS and the CRACK epidemic became a devastating reality for many hitting the city hard. (Haring himself tragically died of AIDS in 1990 at the age of 31.)

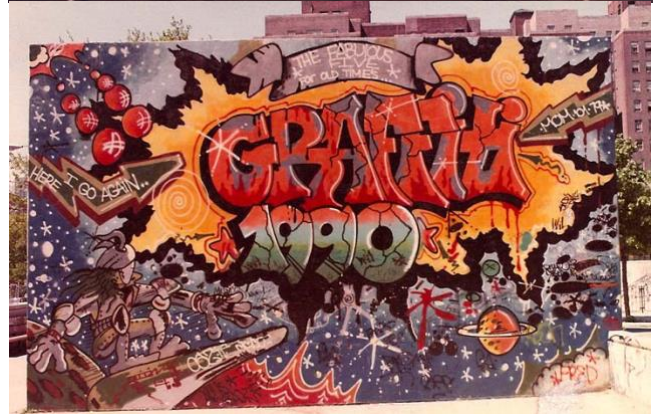


Rocky Point NY (now destroyed)



Lee Quinones

Considered the single most influential artist to emerge from the New York City subway. He is considered the single most influential artist to emerge from the New York City subway art movement. Unfortunately most of his One wall murals have been destroyed.



Other media focusing on handball and One Wall ball

<https://youtu.be/PUi9KJ5k5z8> featuring Joe Durso NYC

