



Flag thrower

In Switzerland, flag throwing is an inherent part of the classic folk festival and the tradition like yodelling, alphorn blowing, ländler-music, Swiss wrestling, stone put etc. The flag throwers want to present an artful performance to the audience.

A secondary aim may certainly be, to give his competitor a good dressing down. Thanks to that, the thought of competing at the flag throwing might have come to be .

There are two different theories of the origin flag throwing. Basing upon the first theory, the Swiss brotherhood of dairymen and the Äpler-association (Alpine association) owed banner flags (banner). At the place of trials, the blood banners have been thrown for the purpose of corroboration and confirmation of the verdict, and showed thereby the judgment to the common folk. By virtue of old notations, the flag throwing should have been brought to the mountain areas of the Ur-Switzerland, by homecoming mercenaries, between the 16th and 18th century.

But other sources document the beginning in the magical (Old Stone Age) and the animistic (New Stone Age) epoch with its heathenish world view. The flag throwing and call to prayer were the magical ban gestures in the ring. Originally, a „Chästuch“ (cheese rag) which has been fixed at an hazelstick, was thrown, but has been replaced with a crimson foulard. The flag throwing shepherds and dairymen wore a shepherds chemise for that purpose. This historical fact lets the mercenaries-theory take a back seat and confirms our assumption, that the magically impressed ban gestures of the shepherds and dairymen, rather should be brought in relation with the expiation actings with the blood banner, as they have been usual in e.g. the ancient Rome and the German ancient. The old saying: „Miär wend d`Fahne driber schwingä“ („We want to throw the flag over it“) of the Ur-Swiss dairymen, corroborates this hypothesis anyway.

Since the 17th century, the flag throwing has gotten more and more out of fashion in Europe, though this tradition could always stand the test of time in Switzerland. The flag throwing, also called as flag spinning, flag play or flag waving, is a national sport, which has been developed itself further, out of an old tradition. There have been competitions since about 150 years. Today, it is thrown tournament-like in front of a jury of four, in an hall of 8-10m height, with a Swiss- or canton flag of 120/120cm and in a costum. There are single- and duet performances. One performance takes 3 minutes. All throwings and excercising parts are to be conducted on the right and left side. The competitor starts with a score of 30, of which points are subtracted for mistakes.

The throwings are arranged in:

1. Unterschwünge (Underhand-throwings)
2. Leib- und Körperschwünge (Belly- and body throwings)
3. Tellerschwünge (Disk throwings)
4. Mittelhohe Schwünge (Medium-rising throwings)
5. Hochschwünge (High throwings)

In Switzerland, the costums do not only differ from canton to canton, but (especially the women-costums) do also varify within each of them. There is, practical everywhere, the differentiation between Sundays- and working days-costums. **Our flag thrower wears one of the most popular men costums of Switzerland.** It is about the „Berner Mutz“ resp. „Berner Kühermutz“. This consists of a black, short-sleeved, embroidered velvet jacket. A black costum-hat and black trousers are worn with it.