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It's not your dad's ick-ack-ock

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Steven Wells exposes the seedy underbelly of the Rock, Paper, Scissors world and reveals that football isn't the only beautiful game cheats and Americans have tried to destroy

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You might think Rock, Paper, Scissors is a moronically simple game played only by small children and drool-stained kaffan-wearing IT types but you'd be wrong.

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RPS is a flourishing international sport complete with secret cults, cheating scandals and crazy Americans trying to "improve" the game by introducing deranged and incredibly complicated new rules. Just like soccer. But first, the good news.

As the snide, self-loathing, flag-burning liberals who run this website never tire of reminding us, the English suck at football, rugby and cricket. But when it comes to Rock, Paper, Scissors (the game Brits call ick-ack-ock) they kick world ass.

On November 12 in Toronto, Bob Cooper, a 28 year old sales manager from London, ended four years of Canadian RPS dominance to become World RPS champion - and immediately launched a campaign to have the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year competition re-opened.

RPS is a deadly serious sport. Philadelphia blogger Daniel McQuade recently volunteered to referee a qualifying tournament and confessed that the pressure nearly made him puke.

In one match a Zorro-masked contestant called Midnight Rider freaked out his opponent by saying "You might want to think about throwing scissors." Which of course, his foe promptly did. Meanwhile an eliminated contestant with the amusing moniker PJRhymeswithsausage harassed McQuade by screaming "horizontal scissors!" (the name of a cheat throw) every time a female contestant made a throw.

McQuade also claims to have found evidence of a secret cult within global RPS calling itself Majestic 12. Since exposing M12's existence, McQuade has not been invited to officiate at any further RPS events.

But the biggest threat to the World RPS Society's monopoly of the competitive game is probably external. Enter the villain of our blog: 36-year-old graphic designer and self-described "boring capitalist dipstick" David C Lovelace from Connecticut.

For years now Lovelace has been trying to revolutionise a game so ancient that nobody is quite sure when or where it originated.

Lovelace invented RPS-15 and RPS-25 (with 15 and 25 signs respectively). And now he's unveiled his meisterwerk - RPS-101.

That's 101 signs-including chainsaw, poison, porcupine, princess, woman and cockroach (all of which can be beaten by dynamite) - with 5050 outcomes and four septuagintillion (that's a 4 followed by 144 zeros) possible layouts.

Which apparently makes RPS-101 "9.58e+125 (quadrantillion) more complex than a Rubik's cube". But only twice as complicated as American football and half as complicated as cricket.

RPS purists are outraged. They point out that this global sport (in Indonesia it's known as "Earwig Man, Elephant") might well have traveled with mankind from its birthplace on the African plains and is today one of only three truly planetary global phenomenon (the other two being porn and soccer).

Some have accused Lovelace of blasphemy. One critic described two-handed RSP throws such as Spock ears and dynamite as "monstrosities". Another stated that Lovelace's deranged innovations are the equivalent of introducing "poison puddles, deathchalk and hip-checking" into hopscotch.

Which, when you think about it, is a pretty neat idea.

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