**Krasnoyarsk State University**

**“Law Faculty”**

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Report

# Sports in the USA

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 Introduction

Americans pay much attention to physical fitness. Many sports and sporting activities are popular in the USA. People participate in swimming, skating, squash and badminton, tennis, marathons, track-and-field, bowing, archery, skiing, skating etc. But the five major American sports are hockey, volleyball, baseball, football and basketball. Basketball and volleyball have been invented in America.
There is a large choice of sports in America. This can be explained by the size and variety of the country. Another reason of the popularity of sports is the people’s love of competition of any kind. One more reason is that Americans use sports activities for teaching socials values, such as teamwork and sportsmanship. All this explains why Americans have traditionally done well in many kinds of sports.
Every high school offers its students many sports, such as wrestling, rowing, tennis and golf. There are no separate “universities” for sports in the USA. Students of any higher educational establishment are trained in different kinds of sports. Many colleges and universities are famous for their sports clubs. There are sports facilities at every school.
Some americans like active games, and others like quite games. I think that quite games, as golf and crocket, intend for rich elite people. Most popular games in the USA is hockey, american football, baseball, basketball. Popular among americans are NHL games. In NHL games play our compatriots: Feudorov, Yashin, Bure brothers. They are ones of the best players in NHL.

American football is like a rugby with kicks. Every player can beat another one. I think american football is one of the rudest games in the world.

Baseball is played with wooden bat and hard ball. It's called "typical" american game.

Basketball is one of the most spectators game in the USA. It's my favourite game too.

Some unusual kinds of sports originated in America. They are windsurfing, skate-boarding and tradition. Triathlon includes swimming, bicycling racing and long-distances-running. Now these are becoming more and more popular in Europe.

Sports is a part of life of an average American.

A SPORTS-LOVING NATION

Whether they are fans or players, the millions of Americans who participate in sports are usually passionate about their games. There is more to being a baseball fan than buying season tickets to the home team's games. A real fan not only can recite each player's batting average, but also competes with other fans to prove who knows the answers to the most obscure and trivial questions about the sport. That's dedication. Dedication short of madness is also what inspired hundreds of thousands of football fans to fill Denver's stadium in dangerously freezing temperatures, not to watch an exciting game but just to demonstrate team support in a pre-Superbowl pep rally, days before the actual contest. And it is with passion that Americans pursue the latest fitness fad, convinced that staying fit requires much more than regular exercise and balanced meals. For anyone who claims a real desire to stay healthy, fitness has become a science of quantification, involving weighing, measuring, moni-toring, graph charting, and computer printouts". These are the tools for knowing all about pulse and heart rates, calorie intake, fat cell per muscle cell ratios, and almost anything else that shows the results of a" workout.

MEDIA COVERAGE

The immense popularity, of sports in America is indicated by the number of pages and headlines the average daily newspaper devotes to local and national sports. The emphasis on sports is evident in local evening news telecasts, too Every evening fox five to seven minutes of the half-hour local newe show, the station's sports analyst, whose territory is exclusively sports, reports on local, regional, and national sports events.

Television has made sports available to all. For those who cannot afford tickets or travel to expensive play-offs like baseball's World Series or football's final Superbowl, a flick of the television dial provides close-up viewing that beats front row seats. Although estimates vary, the major networks average about 500 hours each of sports programming a year. Recently, the emergence of several cable channels that specialize in sports gives viewers even more options. The foremost of these channels, ESPN, runs sports shows at least 22 hours a day and is now received by 37 million American homes, or nearly half of the 86 million homes with television sets.

PRIVATE AND INSTITUTIONALIZED ACTIVITIES

 Opportunities for keeping fit and playing sports are numerous. Jogging is extremely popular, perhaps because it is the cheapest and most accessible sport. Aerobic exercise and training with weight-lifting machines are two activities which more and more men and women are pursuing. Books, videos, and fitness-conscious movie stars that play up the glamour of fitness have heightened enthusiasm for these exercises and have promoted the muscular, healthy body as the American beauty ideal. Most communities have recreational parks with tennis and basketball courts, a football or soccer field, and outdoor grills for picnics. These parks generally charge no fees for the use of these facilities. Some large corporations, hospitals, and churches have indoor gymnasiums and organize informal team sports. For those who can afford membership fees, there is the exclusive country club *and* its more modern version, the health and fitness center. Members of these clubs have access to all kinds of indoor and outdoor sports; swimming, volleyball, golf, racquetball, handball, tennis, and basketball; Most dubs also offer instruction in various, sports and exercise methods.

Schools and colleges have institutionalized team sports for young people. Teams and competitions are highly organized and competitive and generally receive substantial local publicity. High schools and colleges commonly have a school team for each of these sports: football, basketball, baseball, tennis, wrestling, gymnastics, and track, and sometimes for soccer, swimming, hockey, volleyball, fencing, and golf. Practices and games are generally held on the school premises after classes are over. High schools and colleges recognize outstanding athletic achievement with trophies, awards, and scholarships, and student athletes receive strong community support.

AMERICAN SPORTS

Football, baseball, and basketball, the most popular sports in America, originated in the United States and are largely unknown or only minor pastimes outside North America. The football season starts in early autumn and is followed by basketball, an indoor winter sport, and then baseball, played in spring and slimmer. Besides these top three sports, ice hockey, boxing, golf, car racing, horse racing, and tennis have been popular for decades and attract large audiences.

VIOLENCE AND SPORTS

Although many spectator sports, particularly pro football, ice hockey, and boxing, are aggressive and sometimes bloody, American spectators are notably less violent than are sports crowds in other countries. Fighting, bottle throwing, and rioting, common elsewhere, are not the rule among American fans. Baseball and football games are family affairs, and cheerleaders command the remarkably non-violent crowd to root in chorus for their teams.

COMMERCIAL ASPECTS

 For many people, sports are big business. The major television networks

 contract with professional sports leagues for the rights to broadcast their

games. The guaranteed mass viewing of major sports events means advertisers

 will pay networks a lot of money to sponsor the program with announcements

for their products. Advertisers for beer, cars, and men's products are glad of

the opportunity to push their goods to the predominantly male audience of

the big professional sports. Commercial businesses enjoy the publicity which

 brings in sales. The networks are glad to fill up program hours and attract

 audiences who might perhaps become regular viewers of-other programs

 produced by those networks, and the major sports leagues enjoy the millions

of dollars the networks pay for the broad-casting rights contracts. Many sports

 get half of their revenues from the networks. National Football League (NFL)

 teams, for example, get about 65 percent of their revenues from television. The

networks' 1986 contract with the NFL provided" each-of the 2g teams in the

league with an average of $14 million a year. -

"Just as in any business, investments are made and assets are exchanged. Team owners usually sign up individual players for lucrative long-term contracts. Star quarterback Joe Namalh was invited to play for the New York Jets, one of the NFL teams, for $425,000 in 1965. Coveted baseball player Kirk Gibson recently signed a three-year contract with the Detroit Tigers for $4.1 million. More often in the past than now, team owners traded players back and forth as items for barter.

Any business' operator hopes to get a good deal. However, the network sports industries have not been faring well lately. They have experienced financial setbacks mainly caused by the oversaturation of sports programming on networks and compering cable channels. Networks claim they are now losing money on once-lucrative telecasts. Ironically, the slump in business is occurring at a time when sports shows are drawing larger audiences than in recent years. Part of the problem is that advertising costs got too high, and the industries mat traditionally Duy ads beer ana car companies are not paying the high prices. Networks, dependent on advertising for revenue, are hoping that the market will change before they have to make drastic reductions ir sports programming.

PROFESSIONAL SPORTS

The commercial aspects of American professional sports can make or break an athlete's career. Young, talented athletes make it to the top because they are exceptionally talented, but not in every case because they are the best. In women's tennis, for example, an aspiring young tennis star must not only possess a winning serve and backhand, she must also get corporate agents on her side. Without agents who line up sponsors and publicity, a player has a very difficult time moving from amateur to professional sports. To get the endorsement of corporate advertising sponsors, a talented young tennis player has a much better chance for success if she is also attractive. Sales-conscious tennis sportswear companies pay large sums of money to tennis pros who promote their products. Many top players earn more money a year in product-endorsement fees than in prize money. Competition and success in sports, then, is not only a matter of game skill, but marketability as well.

COLLEGE SPORTS

College sports lost its amateurism years ago. Teams and events are institutionalized and contribute to college publicity and revenue. Sports bring in money to colleges from ticket sales and television rights, so colleges like having winning teams. The better the team, the greater the ticket sales and television coverage, and the more money the college can channel back into athletics and other programs. Football and basketball are the most lucrative college sports because they attract the most fans. Other college sports, particularly women's sports, are often neglected and ignored by spectators, the news media, and athletic directors who often disregard-women's sports budgets and funnel money for equipment and facilities into the sports that pay. On the other hand, top college teams get a lot of attention. In 1986, the Division 1 college football programs had a budget ofnearly $1 billion, while entertaining millions of spectators and television viewers.

STUDENT ATHLETES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

To recruit student athletes for a winning team, many colleges are willing to go to great lengths, providing full academic scholarships, to athletes, and sometimes putting the college's academic reputatiori at risk. The tacit understanding shared by college admissions directors as well as the potential sports stars they admit is that athletes do not enroll in college to learn, but to play sports and perhaps use intercollegiate sports as a springboard for a professional career. The situation often embarrasses college administrators, who are caught between educational ideals and commercial realities, and infuriates other students, who resent the preferential treatment given to athletes. Of late, some universities, such as the University of Michigan, have initiated support programs to improve academic performance and graduation rates of athletes.

WINNING

Increasing commercialization of college sports is part of a larger trend. American sports are becoming more competitive and more profit-oriented. As a result, playing to win is emphasized more than playing for fun. This is true from the professional level all the way down to the level of children's Little League sports" teams, where young players are encourag'ed by such "slogans as "A quitter never wins; a winner never quits," and "never be willing to be second best." The obsession with winning causes some people to wonder whether sports in America should be such serious business.

Sports: Colleges and Universities

*The athletic programs of American*

 *colleges and universities have come*

 *in for a great deal of criticism*

*but there does not seem to be*

 *a chance to alter the system.*

*James A. Michener gives background*

 *information and comments on the problems.*

First, the United States is the only nation in the world, so far as I know, which demands that its schools like Harvard, Ohio State and Claremont assume responsibility for providing the public with sports entertainment. Ours is a unique system which has no historical sanction or application elsewhere. It would be unthinkable for the University of Bologna, a most ancient and honorable school, to provide scholarships to illiterate soccer players so that they could entertain the other cities of northern Italy, and it would be equally preposterous for either the Sorbonne or Oxford to do so in their countries. Our system is an American phenomenon, a historical accident which developed from the exciting football games played by Yale and Harvard and to a lesser extent Princeton and certain other schools during the closing years of the nineteenth century. If we had had at that time professional teams which provided public football entertainment, we might not have placed the burden on our schools. But we had no professional teams, so our schools were handed the job.

Second, if an ideal American educational system were being launched afresh, few would want to saddle it with the responsibility for public sports entertainment. I certainly would not. But since, by a quirk of history, it is so saddled, the tradition has become ingrained and I see not the remotest chance of altering it. I therefore approve of continuing it, so long as certain safeguards are installed. Categorically, I believe that our schools must continue to offer sports entertainment, even though comparable institutions throughout the rest of the world are excused from doing so.

Third, I see nothing wrong in having a college or a university provide training for the young man or woman who wants to devote his adult life to sports. My reasoning is twofold: 1) American society has ordained that sports shall be a major aspect of our

national life, with major attention, major financial support and major coverage in the media. How possibly can a major aspect of life be ignored by our schools? 2) If it is permissible to train young musicians and actors in our universities, and endow munificent departments to do so, why is it not equally legitimate to train young athletes, and endow them with a stadium?

Fourth, because our schools have volunteered to serve as unpaid training grounds for future professionals, and because some of the lucky schools with good sports reputations can earn a good deal of money from the semi-professional football and basketball teams they operate, the temptation to recruit young men skilled at games but totally unfitted for academic work is overpowering. We must seriously ask if such behavior is legitimate for an academic institution. There are honorable answers, and I know some of them, but if we do not face this matter forthrightly, we are going to run into troubla.

 Kinds of sports:

 BASEBALL

Baseball is a nine-a-side game played with bat, ball, and glove, mainly in the U.S.A. Teams consist of a pitcher and catcher, called the battery, first, second, and third basemen, and shortstop, called the infield, and right, centre, and left fielders, called the outfield. Substitute players may enter the game at any time, but once a player is removed he cannot return.

The standard ball has a cork-and-rubber centre wound with woollen yarn and covered with horse-hide. It weighs from 5 to 5 1/4 oz. (148 g.) and is from 9 to 9 1/2 in. (approx. 23 cm.) in circumference. ... The bat is a smooth, round, tapered piece of hard wood not more than 2 3/4 in. (approx. 7 cm.) in diameter at its thickest part and no more than 42 in. (1.07 m.) long.

Originally, fielders played barehanded, but gloves have been developed over the years. First basemen wear a special large mitt, and catchers use a large, heavily-padded mitt as well as a chest protector, shin guards, and a metal mask. Catchers

were at first unprotected. Consequently,- they stood back at a distance from home plate and caught pitched balls on the bounce, but the introduction of the large, round, well-padded mitt or "pillow glove" and the face mask enabled them to move up close behind the plate and catch pitched balls on the fly. Players wear shoes with steel cleats and, while batting and running the bases, they use protective plastic helmets.

The game is played on a field containing four bases placed at the angles of a 90-ft (27.4 m.) square (often called a diamond): home plate and, in counter-clockwise order, first, second, and third base. Two foul lines form the boundaries of fair territory. Starting at home, these lines extend past first and third base the entire length of the field, which is often enclosed by a fence at its farthest limits.

The object of each team is to score more runs than the other. A run is scored whenever a player circles all the bases and reaches home without being put out The game is divided into innings, in

each of which the teams alternate at bat and in the field. A team is allowed three outs in each halfinning at bat, and must then take up defensive positions in the field while the other team has its turn to try to score. Ordinarily, a game consists of nine innings; in the event of a tie, extra innings are played until one team outscores the other in the same number of innings.

The players take turns batting from home plate in regular rotation. The opposing pitcher throws the ball to his catcher from a slab (called the "rubber") on the pitcher's mound, a slightly raised area of the field directly between home and second base. ... Bases are canvas bags fastened to metal pegs set in the ground.

The batter tries to reach base safely after hitting the pitched ball into fair territory. A hit that enables him to reach first base is called a "single," a two-base hit is a "double," a three-base hit a "triple," and a four-base hit a "home-run." A fair ball hit over an outfield fence is automatically a home run. A batter is also awarded his base if the pitcher delivers four pitches which, in the umpire's judgement, do not pass through the "strike zone" - that is, over home plate between the batter's armpits and knees; or if he is hit by a pitched ball; or if the opposing catcher interferes when he swings the bat. To prevent the batter from hitting safely, baseball pitchers deliver the ball with great speed and accuracy and vary its speed and trajectory. Success in batting, therefore, requires courage and a high degree of skill.

After a player reaches base safely, his progress towards home depends largely on his team mates' hitting the ball in such a way that he can advance. ...

Players may be put out in various ways. A batter is out when the pitcher gets three 'strikes' on him. A strike is a pitch that crosses the plate in the strike zone, or any pitch that is struck at and missed or is hitinto foul territory. After two strikes, however, foul balls do not count except when a batter bunts - lets the ball meet the bat instead of swinging at it - and the ball rolls foul. A batter is also out if he hits the ball in the air anywhere in fair or foul territory and it is caught by an opponent before it touches the ground. He is out if he hits the ball on the ground and a fielder catches and throws it to a player at first base, or catches it and touches that base, before the batter (now become a base runner) gets there.

A base runner may be put out if, while off base, he is tagged by an opposing player with the hand or glove holding the ball, or if he is forced to leave his base to make room for another runner and fails to reach the next base before an opposing player tags him or the base; or if he is hit by a team mate's batted ball before it has touched or passed a fielder.

An umpire-in-chief "calls" balls and strikes from his position directly behind the catcher at home plate, and one or more base umpires determine whether runners are safe or out at the other three bases.

BASKETBALL

 The History of basketball, a game that started with 18 men in a YMCA gymnasium in Springfield, Mass., has grown into a game that more than 300 million people play worldwide. The man who created this instantly successful sport was Dr. James Naismith.

Under orders from Dr. Luther Gulick, head of Physical Education at the School for Christian Workers. Naismith had 14 days to create an indoor game that would provide an "athletic distraction" for a rowdy class through the brutal New England winter.

Naismith's invention didn't come easily. Getting close to the deadline, he struggled to keep the class' faith. His first intention was to bring outdoor games indoors, i.e., soccer and lacrosse. These games proved too physical and cumbersome.

At his wits' end, Naismith recalled a childhood game that required players to use finesse and accuracy to become successful. After brainstorming this new idea, Naismith developed basketball's original 13 rules and consequently, the game of basketball.

As basketball's popularity grew, Naismith neither sought publicity nor engaged in self-promotion. He was first and foremost a physical educator who embraced recreational sport but shied away from the glory of competitive athletics.

Naismith was an intense student, collecting four degrees in the diverse fields of Philosophy, Religion, Physical Education and Medicine. Although he never had the opportunity to see the game become the astonishing spectacle it is today, Naismith's biggest thrill came when he was sponsored by the National Association of Basketball Coaches (NABC) to witness basketball become an Olympic sport at the 1936 Games held in Berlin.

Naismith became famous for creating the game of basketball, a stroke of genius that never brought him fame or fortune during his lifetime, but enormous recognition following his passing in 1939.

For his historic invention, Naismith's name adorns the world's only Basketball Hall of Fame, a tribute that forever makes James Naismith synonymous with basketball.

Abner Doubleday, who didn't invent baseball, is probably a more widely recognized name than Naismith, who did invent basketball. And even those who know about him continue to learn more about the man who invented a sport designed for offseason physical exercise, which began with his own 13 basic rules, but which has grown to become a game not for a specific culture or nation or ethnic group, but for an entire planet to share and enjoy.

Naismith is the only coach in University of Kansas men's basketball history to own a losing record. Naismith was 55-60 from 1898 to 1907, which mattered little to him only in that one of his most famous quotes was that basketball was never meant to be coached, anyway, only to be played.

The new game was explained by 13 basic rules and was played with a soccer ball, peach baskets and nine to a side. There have been major changes to the game since that first contest, which is believed to have been played Dec. 21, 1891.

But perhaps what is most amazing about Naismith's creation, other than the fact that few sports that are purposely invented actually stand the test of time, is that the essence of basketball-throwing a ball into an elevated goal-has remained the focus from day one.

Today, Naismith would be universally recognized as a genius, a Bill Gates of sport. And in all likelihood, the opportunity would exist for him to become a multi-millionaire.

But if Naismith was The Basketball Man, he was not The Money Man, and life in 1891 was far different than in 1991 or 2001.

But if Naismith's invention did not lead to profit, it did lead to huge popularity for basketball. Even in the final years of the 19th century, with communication and transportation that was primitive by today's standards, the game's growth was palpable, immediate and widespread.

James Naismith had changed the face of sport, not so much for the 19th century, but the 20th, and it is now clear, the 21st. All in an effort to keep unruly students at bay.

Sources

### America in Close up

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