

College Guild
PO Box 6448 Brunswick, Maine 04011

Sports

Unit 1 of 4

"College Guild has given me a measure of freedom, elevated my self-confidence, and offered me a dignity that often disappears in Prison, all while challenging me with courses that dare me to dream again."
~ Bryan ~

Many people watch sports for relaxation and enjoyment. Following a losing team can also cause disappointment, anger, and frustration. Sometimes, fans forget that the field of sports is really a big business. This can cause even further frustrations for fans, as decisions are made and players dismissed or traded for financial reasons, even if they are fan favorites. The huge salaries received by professional players in many sports also contribute to fans' feelings of disillusionment.

Show Me the Money!

Many athletes have started charitable foundations or found other ways to contribute to society (Appendix 1). Most teams also get involved in supporting people in need in their communities.

1. Do you think players who receive millions of dollars for their skills in a particular sport have a responsibility to "give back" to a community in any way? Why or why not?

Some of the better known charitable foundations started by athletes focus on the health, education, and welfare of children. The Tiger Woods Foundation and the Andre Agassi Charitable Foundation are two examples of those. Brian Griese founded Judi's House to provide grief support for children who have lost a parent. Tennis's great Billie Jean King started the Women's Sports Foundation dedicated to advancing the lives of girls and women through sports and physical activity. See Appendix 2 and 3 for more examples.

2. What are some other good ways that athletes or teams could get involved (or have been involved) in their city or state to help those in need?

Formula 1 racer, Fernando Alonso, earned over \$22 million last year. Yankee third baseman Alex Rodriguez's salary for 2012 is about \$29 million. Boston Celtic power forward Kevin Garnett earned over \$21 million. Many athletes earn even more money by endorsing products on television and in print. Appendix C shows a chart of the top ten total earnings by athletes in 2012.

3. Identify the sports that the names in Appendix 3 are connected with. Do as many as you can!

4. What do you think about the salaries today's athletes earn? Do they make too much, not enough, just right - why?

5. If you were told that you would be earning \$10 million dollars a year for the next three years (not a huge salary for an athlete these days) what are some things that would do with that money?

According to a *Sports Illustrated* article, 78% of NFL players file for bankruptcy only two years after retirement and 60% of NBA players filed after five years of retirement. Some famous athletes who have ended up with little or no money after making millions include boxer Mike Tyson, basketball player Allen Iverson, and sprinter Marion Jones.

6. If athletes command such high salaries, why do you think there are many who live out their lives after retirement in poverty? Is there anything that could be done early in an athlete's career to help keep this from happening?

Do As I Say, Not As I Do

Many young people look up to professional athletes as role models. Some professional athletes happily and seriously take on that role. Others say, "Not me!" Some athletes demonstrate qualities we would like to possess, or would like our children to develop. In recent years, there have been some athletes that children and adults alike looked up to, only to find there were off-the-field (or course or court) issues that were not so wonderful.

7. Do you think professional athletes have a responsibility to be role models for young fans? Why? What would it look like for an athlete to be a good role model? Does behavior outside of the sport make a difference?

There have been athletes in many sports who have been charged with crimes. Some of the more common are domestic violence, DUI, assault, and tax evasion. Michael Vick (football) spent time in jail for his part in an illegal dog-fighting ring. Boxer Floyd Mayweather, the top earner for 2012, also spent two months in jail during that year for domestic abuse.

8. Do you think professional teams should punish or release players who get into trouble with the law? Does it make any difference what crimes they are accused of? Should it matter if they are found guilty of a crime or not?

It's All About the Ladies

When thinking about sports teams, most fans think of men's teams. The 40th anniversary of Title IX is being celebrated in 2012. Title IX is responsible for the huge increase of opportunities for women in sports.

9. Can you name at least one professional women's sports team?

10. Do you follow (or could you follow) a women's team? What team or sport? If you find it difficult or different from following a men's team, please explain.

11. Name five famous female athletes and tell one thing you know about each of them.

Oh, and by the way, you may have noticed that there were no women on the list in Appendix 3. Maria Sharapova made \$12 million last year and Danica Patrick earned \$12 million. Their earnings were at or near the top for women.

12. Why do you think male athletes make so much more than female athletes? Do you think men and women in the same sport should receive similar salaries?

I Can Do It By Myself!

Some fans prefer to watch team sports; some like individual sports; and some will watch sports of all sorts.

13. Which do you find more interesting - team sports or individual? Why?
14. Name five team sports, and five individual sports.
15. What different skills or attitudes might be needed to play a team sport rather than an individual sport?
16. What are some examples of an individual sport being played as a team competition?
17. What examples can you think of where individual stats and "glory" interfere with the best interests of a team?

All About You

Think about your connection to sports.

18. Do you have a favorite sport that you have enjoyed watching over your lifetime? What is that sport, and why do you think it appeals to you?
19. List five more sports that interest you. Is there anything similar about these sports and your favorite?
20. Are you a fan of any particular team? Discuss why you have enjoyed following this team, and why you chose it in the first place. Have you found it difficult to stay a fan of this team for any reasons?
21. Who would you say is your favorite athlete? Why did you choose this person and what has impressed you the most about him or her?
22. Have you participated in any sports in your life? Which ones? How would you rate your experience?
23. If you could participate in any sport now, what would you choose and why?
24. Write a poem about your favorite team or sport.

Final Thoughts

Several television channels air sports events and shows all day long. Some people have expressed surprise at seeing poker and billiards on those channels.

25. Do you think those two examples are "sports" and should be aired on a sports channel? Why or why not?
26. Which brings us to a final question for Unit 1: How would you define "sport"?

Remember: First names only & please let us know if your address changes

Appendices

Sports: Unit 1 of 4

Appendix 1

Charitable foundations started by some current baseball players - only a sampling.

Curtis Granderson	Grand Kids Foundation
Derek Jeter	Turn 2 Foundation
David Ortiz	The David Ortiz Children's Fund
Albert Pujols	Pujols Family Foundation
Brian Roberts	Brain Roberts: The One For All Fund
C.C. Sabathia	PitCCh in Foundation
Nick Swisher	Nick Swisher: Swish's Wishes
Kevin Youkilis	Youk's Kids

Appendix 2

A few headlines highlighting the "good in sports":

Yankees Contribute to Hurricane Relief
Time Tebow Donates to pop Warner League
Orlando magic Receive Community Honor
Glazer Family Distributes Backpacks
Rory McIlroy Grants Boy's Wish
Broncos Visit Shooting Victims
Diamondbacks Grant \$50,000

Appendix 3

Based on an article by Nicholas Schwartz published in *Forbes Magazine*, June 2012, the top ten athletes for earnings are as follows:

Athlete	Salary/Winnings	Endorsements	Total Earnings
Floyd Mayweather	\$85 million	0	\$85 million
Manny Pacquiao	\$56 million	\$6 million	\$62 million
Tiger Woods	\$4.4 million	\$55 million	\$59.5 million
LeBron James	\$13 million	\$40 million	\$53 million
Roger Federer	\$7.7 million	\$45 million	\$52.7 million
Kobe Bryant	\$20.3 million	\$32 million	\$52.3 million
Phil Mickelson	\$4.8 million	\$43 million	\$47.8 million
David Beckham	\$9 million	\$37 million	\$46 million
Cristiano Ronaldo	\$20.5 million	\$22 million	\$42.5 million
Peyton Manning	\$32.4 million	\$10 million	\$42.4 million