

**College Guild**  
PO Box 6448 Brunswick, Maine 04011

## Sports

### Unit 2 of 4

For this Unit, we will focus our attention on three of the most well-known sports here in the United States.

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#### *Our National Pastime*

Some countries officially name a sport as their national pastime. These are called *de jure* national pastimes. For example, Chile's national sport is rodeo, Sri Lanka's is volleyball, and Canada has two - ice hockey and lacrosse. Other countries have a *de facto* national pastime - a sport that is an important part of that country's culture, but the country has not officially declared it the national pastime. Appendix 1 lists some countries and the sport that would be considered most important there - the "national pastime" - even though it has not been declared or defined as such.

1. Choose one of the sports in Appendix 1 and write a brief explanation of how it is played.
2. Why do you think that baseball is considered the national pastime of the United States? Do you agree with this choice? If not, what sport would you choose?

In the United States, Major League Baseball is divided into the American League and the National League. Appendix 2 and 3 can help answer the next two questions.

3. Identify these American League teams by city and name. For example the "Kansas City Royals," which are in the American League, but not represented here.



4. Identify these National League teams:



In 1973, the American League adopted a new rule that the National League chose not to follow. The rule allows for a "designated hitter" to bat for the pitcher, while still allowing the pitcher to stay in the game. It was hoped this rule would help improve scoring and attendance for the American League. Now, with inter-league play and the World Series, the designated hitter rule is followed when playing on an American League field, and not followed when playing in a National League stadium.

5. Are you in favor of the designated hitter rule? What advantages or disadvantages do you see with this rule?
6. Do you think it is important for both leagues to follow the same rules? Explain.

The first World Series was played in 1903. It was a best of 9 series between the Boston Americans and the Pittsburgh Pirates. Boston won 5 games to 3. In order to win the World Series now, a team has to win four games--best of 7. In an effort to add some meaning to the All-Star game, starting in 2003 the league that won the All-Star Game was granted home field advantage for the World Series. There is some controversy about whether this is a reasonable way to decide home field advantage for the World Series. Fans vote for their favorite players to make the All-Star team, then players and managers get to vote, which may or may not put the best players on the field for this game.

**7. Do you think using the All-Star Game to decide on home field advantage for the World Series is a good or fair idea? Does it really make the All-Star game more important?**

Use Appendix D to answer the following four questions:

**8. What team has had the most World Series appearances?**

**9. What team has won the most World Series?**

**10. Which team has (or teams have) the highest winning percentage?**

**11. Which league has won the most World Series, the American League or the National League?**

In 1919, eight members of the White Sox were charged with conspiring to fix the outcome of the World Series. This is known as the "Black Sox Scandal." After an investigation, they were all acquitted, despite the fact that they had confessed. At that time baseball commissioner Kenesaw Mountain Landis said: "Regardless of the verdict of juries, no player that throws a ball game, no player that entertains proposals or promises to throw a game, no player that sits in a conference with a bunch of crooked players and gamblers where the ways and means of throwing games are discussed, and does not promptly tell his club about it, will ever again play professional baseball." To this day, participants in the Black Sox conspiracy have been denied entry into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Seventy years later, in 1989 and three years after retiring as an active player, Pete Rose became permanently ineligible to participate in baseball because of accusations that he gambled on games while playing and managing the Cincinnati Reds. The Baseball Hall of Fame has banned those on this "permanently ineligible" list from being inducted. This includes Rose, who is a three time National League Batting Champion, seventeen time All-Star, and a World Series MVP.

There is still a great deal of controversy about whether or not Rose should be allowed into the Baseball Hall of Fame.

**12. Write an explanation of why you think Rose should (or should not) be eligible for the Hall of Fame.**

The past several years will probably forever be known as the Steroid Era in baseball. Many well-known players have been connected to illegal performance enhancing drugs, including Barry Bonds, Sammy Sosa, Mark McGwire and Roger Clemens. Clemens was accused of using banned drugs in an effort to achieve success and extend his years of play. He eventually faced felony charges that he lied under oath about using illegal substances. His former strength coach testified he injected Clemens with steroids and Human Growth Hormone (HGH), but that testimony wasn't entirely believable. Andy Pettitte, a former teammate, originally said he remembered a conversation in which Clemens admitted using HGH.

However, under cross-examination Pettitte backed off a bit, saying there was a 50-50 chance that he had misheard. Clemens was acquitted.

There is a lot of controversy about whether or not players such as Roger Clemens who have been tied to the use of steroids and HGH should be permitted into the Hall of Fame.

**13. What is your opinion about the use of performance enhancing drugs in baseball? Should those whose names have been connected with their use be barred from further connection to the sport? Should they be banned from the Hall of Fame? Should any records they hold be taken away?**

Some well known baseball players with famous nicknames include George Herman Ruth (Babe, but he also had another nickname), Reggie Jackson, Roger Clemens, Pete Rose, Cal Ripken, Carl Yastremski, Willie Mays, Joe DiMaggio, Lou Gehrig, and Ty Cobb.

**14. See how many of the players listed above you can match with these nicknames: The Georgia Peach; The Say Hey Kid; Yaz; Joltin' Joe; The Iron Horse; Mr. October; The Bambino; The Rocket; Iron Man; Charlie Hustle.**

***American Football***  
***(not just football, as that means soccer to most of the world)***

Vincent Lombardi was coach of the Green Bay Packers from 1959 - 1967. His teams won the first two Super Bowls. He is well-known for comments he made about football and life. One of his most famous quotes is "Winning isn't everything, it's the only thing."

**15. Do you agree? Is there any glory in competing your hardest and doing your best, but losing to a better team?**

Lombardi is also credited with saying: "I firmly believe that any man's finest hour, the greatest fulfillment of all that he holds dear, is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle--victorious."

**16. Explain how that quote connects with an experience from your life.**

The Super Bowl, football's chance to crown a champion and award the Vince Lombardi Trophy to the winning team, has become quite a spectacle. It has changed drastically from the first SB, held on January 15, 1967. Halftime now includes elaborate shows by music groups and companies pay millions of dollars for ads to be aired during the game.

**17. Why do you think the Super Bowl presentation has changed so much? Do you like the addition of activities and ads to go along with the game?**

In February 5, 2012 the New York Giants beat the New England Patriots 21-17 in Super Bowl XLVI. Roman numerals like this are usually used in reference to Super Bowls. And scoring in football games is as follows: TD = 6 points; Points After = 1 or 2; Field Goal = 3; and Safety = 2.

**18. What is one way the teams could have arrived at their scores? And what number does the Roman Numeral XLVI stand for?**

There have been some major recent controversies in football. One of these has to do with a bounty system allegedly set up by New Orleans Saints coaches. If a player on the other team had an injury, Saints players were to go after that weakness. Money could be earned by players causing an injury - all the way up to extra money for sending someone to the hospital.

**19. How do you feel about this bounty system concept?**

Some coaches in football and other contact sports have said to tackle hard - hard enough that it hurts and the person being tackled doesn't want to be tackled again.

**20. How do you feel about this idea? Is it the same as a bounty system?**

Sean Payton, the Saints head coach, was banned from football for a year by commissioner Roger Goodell. Defensive coordinator Gregg Williams was banned indefinitely for instituting the bounty system. Four players were originally suspended for varying amounts of time, from four games to an entire year. Those player suspensions were recently overturned by an appeals board.

**21. Do you think the original suspensions were appropriate? Do you think the commissioner had the right to impose them? What would you have done if you were commissioner?**

Many football players suffer repeated concussions over the course of their careers. In recent years a few players, most notably popular Junior Seau, have committed suicide, allegedly because of continuing post-concussion issues that include personality changes. Some of those players have donated their brains to the medical field so more studies can be done about the long-term effects of concussions.

**22. What should be done as a preventative measure so there won't be so many players suffering concussions in games?**

**23. How should teams determine when a player is fit to play again after a concussion?**

Former quarterback Kurt Warner suffered several concussions during his career. He now says he will not let his sons play football. Many children are starting to play football in organized leagues starting at about fourth grade.

**24. What age do you think is appropriate for starting football and why?**

In 2009 the movie *The Blind Side* came out, based on the book with the same name by Michael Lewis. The book and movie focus on the life of Michael Oher, from a childhood of poverty, being adopted by a well-to-do family, to playing tackle in college and the pros. He has played both the left and right tackle position.

**25. What is the significance of the title *The Blind Side*?**

The quarterback is often considered the most important player on a team.

**26. What are some skills needed to become a successful quarterback in the NFL?**

Fans often argue about who is the best quarterback of all time. It's difficult to compare current players to those who played years ago and to choose objectively. Zach Bolen, a contributor to *The Bleacher Report* has come up with a formula, found in Appendix 5. His top five quarterbacks are Brett Favre, Peyton Manning, Joe Montana, Johnny Unitas, and Dan Marino. Only one of these - Manning - is still playing.

**27. How would you suggest rating quarterbacks to decide who is/was the best? If you have a quarterback you would put at the top of the list, who is he and why is he your top choice?**

Many teams receive penalties for players' "excessive celebration" after a score. Even knowing they will receive a penalty doesn't put a stop to these behaviors.

**28. Do you think there ought to be penalties for excessive celebration? If a player causes several penalties for his team in this way, should the team fine him? How do you think a player should act after scoring?**

### ***That Big Orange Ball***

It should come as no surprise that professional basketball has its own scandal. In 2007, Tim Donaghy was charged with betting on games he officiated and making calls that affected the point spread of those games. Apparently Donaghy had a gambling problem and was approached with an opportunity to pay off his debts this way. He has spent time in jail.

**29. Is there anything that can be done to protect basketball (and other sports) from this sort of experience in the future?**

**30. Do you think it would have been OK for Donaghy to bet on games that he wasn't officiating? Why?**

The five positions on a basketball team are usually referred to now as center, power forward, small forward, shooting guard, and point guard. The point guard is sometimes referred to as the team's quarterback. Muggsy Bogues was the shortest point guard, at 5'3". The tallest was Magic Johnson, who is 6'9" tall.

**31. What skills do you think a point guard has to have in order to run the offense?**

**32. Which position is usually assigned to the tallest player on the team? What skills should that player possess?**

**33. What do you think a "run and gun" offense refers to?**

There are several types of shots in the game of basketball. Some, but not all, are easy to guess from their names.

**34. Choose five of the following types of shots, and give an explanation of how they are done.**

<b>Bank Shot</b>	<b>Dunk</b>
<b>Finger Roll</b>	<b>Hook</b>
<b>Jump Shot</b>	<b>Set Shot</b>
<b>Lay Up</b>	<b>Free Throw</b>

LeBron James is one of the best and best-known current professional basketball players. He started his career with the Cleveland Cavaliers, and then made a much publicized move to the Miami Heat in 2012. He called a press conference to make his announcement, and the conference and his comments are very controversial. He went from one of the most loved players to one of the most hated - especially by former fans in Cleveland. Part of the reason he left Cleveland was money, but the main reason was probably a chance to play for a team that had a chance to "win it all." And it has.

**35. How do you feel about LeBron's decision to leave Cleveland? Did he owe anything to the team and the city where he had his start in the league? Could he have handled his decision in a way that fans could have accepted more easily?**

Similar to the problems in choosing the best quarterbacks in football, there is no easy way to choose the best basketball players in history,

### 36. What are some criteria that should be used to identify great players?

Appendix 6 lists possible top players in the history of the NBA. Some are better known than others. Depending on who is making up the list, other names would show up on the list.

### 37. Who would be your top five NBA players? Explain your choices.

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

## Appendices Sports: Unit 2 of 4

### Appendix 1: *De facto* (unofficial) National Pastimes

Country	Sport
Australia	Australian Football
Barbados, Bermuda, Jamaica	Cricket
Cuba, Dominican Republic, USA	Baseball
India	Field Hockey
Japan	Sumo
Latvia, Lithuania	Basketball
New Zealand, New Guinea, Wales	Rugby
Scotland	Golf
Slovenia	Alpine Skiing
Turkey	Wrestling

### Appendix 2: American League Teams

Baltimore Orioles; Boston Red Sox; Chicago White Sox; Cleveland Indians; Detroit Tigers; Kansas City Royals; Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim; Minnesota Twins; New York Yankees; Oakland Athletics; Seattle Mariners' Tampa Bay Rays; Texas Rangers; Toronto Blue Jays

### Appendix 3: National League Teams

Arizona Diamondbacks; Atlanta Braves; Chicago Cubs; Cincinnati Reds; Colorado Rockies; Houston Astros; Los Angeles Dodgers; Miami Marlins; Milwaukee Brewers; New York Mets; Philadelphia Phillies; Pittsburgh Pirates; San Diego Padres; San Francisco Giants; St. Louis Cardinals; Washington Nationals

#### Appendix 4: World Series Appearances

Series Appearances	Team	League	Wins	Losses	Win %	Last Win
40	New York Yankees	AL	27	13	.675	2009
18	St. Louis Cardinals	NL	11	7	.611	2011
18	San Francisco Giants	NL	6	12	.333	2010
18	Los Angeles Dodgers	NL	6	12	.333	1988
14	Oakland Athletics	AL	9	5	.642	1989
11	Boston Red Sox	AL	7	4	.636	2007
10	Detroit Tigers	AL	4	6	.400	1984
10	Chicago Cubs	NL	2	8	.200	1908
9	Atlanta Braves	NL	3	6	.333	1995
9	Cincinnati Reds	NL	5	4	.556	1990
6	Baltimore Orioles	AL	3	3	.500	1983
7	Philadelphia Phillies	NL	2	5	.286	2008
7	Pittsburgh Pirates	NL	5	2	.714	1979
6	Minnesota Twins	AL	3	3	.500	1991
5	Chicago White Sox	AL	3	2	.600	2005
5	Cleveland Indians	AL	2	3	.400	1948
4	New York mets	NL	2	2	.500	1986
2	Miami Marlins	NL	2	0	1.000	2003
2	Kansas City Royals	AL	1	1	.500	1985
2	San Diego Padres	NL	0	2	.000	-
2	Toronto Blue Jays	AL	2	0	1.000	1993
2	Texas Rangers	AL	0	2	.000	-
1	Arizona Diamondbacks	NL	1	0	1.000	2001
1	Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim	AL	1	0	1.000	2002
1	Colorado Rockies	NL	0	1	.000	-
1	Houston Astros	NL	0	1	.000	-
1	Milwaukee Brewers	AL/NL	0	1	.000	-
1	Tampa Bay Rays	AL	0	1	.000	-
0	Seattle Mariners	AL	0	0	-	-
0	Washington Nationals	NL	0	0	-	-

#### Appendix 5: Quarterback Rating System

MVP awards = 10 points Super

Bowl wins = 5 points Super

Bowl losses = -2 points Pro

Bowl selections = 2 points

Total Career Yards = 1 point for every 1000 yards rounded to the closest whole number

Career Yards per Attempt = 1 point per yard rounded to closest whole number

Career Touchdowns = 1 point for every 10 touchdowns

Career interceptions = -1 point for every interception

Total career wins = 1 point every 10 wins rounded

Winning Seasons = 2 points every winning season played

Losing Seasons = -1 point per losing season

Appendix 6: Possible Top NBA Players of All Time

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar	Tim Duncan	Shaquille O'Neal
Ray Allen	Julius Erving	Oscar Robertson
Charles Barkley	LeBron James	Bill Russell
Larry Bird	Magic Johnson	John Stockton
Kobe Bryant	Pete Maravich	Dwayne Wade
Wilt Chamberlain	Steve Nash	Jerry West