

## What's the Most Popular Sport in America?

There are so many sports played and watched in America. These include Baseball, Basketball, Football, Soccer, as well as some sports that becoming increasingly popular such as NASCAR and Mixed Martial Arts. However, the most popular sport in America is usually noted as Football. Why? The NFL (National Football League) dominates the world of American sports. Every year, the Super Bowl is the most watched television event in the country.

Football is extra special to Americans because it symbolizes American culture. The United States of America is the only country in the world that loves football so much. According to a recent survey, 30% of Americans who follow at least one major sport, said that professional football was their favorite (Harris Interactive Annual Poll). Baseball came in second, and then college football.



Outside of the United States, football is often called gridiron or tackle football. For most football players, their career begins in high school. The major forms of football are high school football, college football, and professional football. Each of these three categories is very similar but have slightly different rules.

Football is a considered a "contact sport" meaning that it can be very rough and can cause many injuries. Football requires excellent physical fitness, and players need to be fast, strong, and able to run, block, tackle, pass the ball, catch the ball, and kick. Every season, it is

estimated that 300,000 high school players, 35,000 college players, and half of the players in the NFL are injured to some extent. There are about 250,000 concussions every year.

In 1976, protective equipment was introduced, including helmets and protective clothing. This has caused injuries to decline. Players are also taught to strengthen certain muscle groups and to tackle with specific techniques so that injuries can be avoided.

American football is played primarily in the United States, and some is played in Canada. Many fans watch every game, often travelling far distances. Football is considered part of the quintessential experience of growing up in the United States – attending games, cheering, and playing are a way of bringing communities together. Thanks to technology and cable television, millions of viewers can now watch every game!

While football is considered the most popular sport nationwide, baseball also holds a special place in most Americans hearts. It is considered America's "National pastime." Soccer is also a very important sport – it is the most popular sport in the world.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Multiple Choice Questions

Circle the correct answer.

1. What does NFL stand for?
  - a. National Football League
  - b. National Foot League
  - c. National Football Ladies
  - d. Northern Football League
  
2. What is the most watched television event in the country, year after year?
  - a. The National Cup
  - b. The Super Bowl
  - c. The Formula 1 Races
  - d. The Baseball Championships
  
3. What sport is considered America's "National Pasttime?"
  - a. Hockey
  - b. Basketball
  - c. Baseball
  - d. Soccer
  
4. What is soccer called in most other countries:
  - a. SocBal
  - b. Soccerball
  - c. Grassball
  - d. Football
  
5. True or false: Football is considered a contact sport.
  - a. True
  - b. False
  
6. Every year, it is estimated that \_\_\_\_% of NFL players are injured to some extent:
  - a. 20%
  - b. 40%
  - c. 50%
  - d. 75%
  
7. In which other country is American Football also played?
  - a. England
  - b. Canada
  - c. Brazil
  - d. Mexico

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Short Answer Questions

1. What is considered the most popular sport in the world?
2. What are the three forms of football?
3. Explain how football can bring communities together, in your own words.
4. Last year, many of the players on Jim's football team were injured. What are three things Jim's football team can do to reduce injuries next season?
5. Jim travels to Scotland and overhears two young men talking about "gridiron." What sport are they referring to?
6. Does high school football and professional football have the same rules?
7. Have you ever been to a football game? Explain.
8. How many football-related concussions are reported each year?
9. Ask ten people what their favorite sport is. Report your findings. Are they the same or different from what is reported in this reading?

ANSWER KEY:

Multiple Choice:

1. A
2. B
3. C
4. D
5. A
6. C
7. B

Short Answer:

1. Soccer is considered the #1 sport in the world.
2. The three forms of football are high school football, college football, and professional football.
3. Individual Response. Example: Fans travel together and cheer for their home team, forming a strong community bond.
4. Jim's football team should wearing helmets and protective clothing. They can strengthen certain muscle groups and learn to tackle with specific techniques so that injuries can be avoided.
5. They are referring to American football.
6. No, they are similar but they have different rules.
7. Individual Response.
8. 250,000.
9. Individual Response.