Cycling: tough but fun

I love cycling. I got my first bicycle when I was just nine years old and loved going for long bike rides with my parents, *despite* not enjoying sport much at school. It was compulsory for us to play football twice a week, and I never enjoyed it, mainly because I was smaller than most of the other boys my age and our opponents were often quite rough! *However*, I was quite athletic and fit, so I was delighted to find a sporting activity that I really enjoyed.

Although cycling is something anyone can do just for fun, it's also a competitive sport and if you start to take part in races and join a team, you'll find you have to train several times a week and you'll need someone to coach you. And if you and your team want to win a trophy, you'll all have to work extremely hard.

Although it's a tough sport, I would recommend cycling to anyone who loves being outdoors and keeping fit. *However*, if you don't want to cycle in competitions, it's a great sport for spectators as well, and it's often on TV!

4 Look at the structure of the article. In which paragraph does the writer deal with these points?

1 Describing an activity.
2 How he started.
3 Why he would recommend it.

5 Study how the words in *italics* in the article are used. Then complete these sentences by writing *although*, *however* or *despite* in the gaps.

1 ..... the swimming pool is quite far from where I live, I try to go there three times a week.
2 ..... being given tickets to the football match, we decided to watch it on TV.
3 I'd love to be a professional footballer, ... I don't think I'm talented enough.
4 He was very easy to talk to ..... being a famous tennis star.
5 ..... feeling very tired, she managed to finish the race.
6 I didn't enjoy the match. ....., our opponents played very well.

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6 Study how the writer used the words in the box in his article. Then use them in the correct form to complete the sentences below.

athletic opponents competitive rough trophy coach spectators

1 Although Valerie enjoys ..... sports, she prefers exercising on her own.
2 Ice hockey is a ..... game where players often get hurt.
3 If I was more ....., I might be able to win a few more races.
4 Our ..... for the next match are last year's champions.
5 We need someone to ..... our team so that we learn to play better.
6 Few ..... watch adventure sports because they take place in areas that are hard to get to.
7 We're rated as one of the top teams despite never having won a single ..... .

7 Now write your own answer to the writing task in Exercise 1.

- Before you start writing, make a brief plan.
- Try to use structures and vocabulary you have studied in this writing section and this unit.
- Write between 140 and 190 words.
- Read through your article when you have finished to improve it and to check it for mistakes.

EXAM ADVICE

- Write a plan before you start writing the article.
- Organise your ideas into paragraphs, and use linking words such as: *however, despite, in addition, for example* and *on the other hand*.

Before you write:

- think about what the people reading the article will find interesting, enjoyable or useful.
- write a plan by:
  - underlining all the points you must deal with.
  - organising your ideas into paragraphs so that you cover everything you've been asked to do.