## Part 2

You are going to read an article about the traditional Japanese sport of sumo wrestling. Seven sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences **A–H** the one which fits each gap (**9–15**). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet.**

# Women storm the sumo ring

*Thea Jourdan explains how a once male-only sport is now helping women to improve their fitness and confidence.*

*'Hakkyoi!'* At this signal, two crouching sumo wrestlers rush towards each other and the contest starts. Loud grunts fill the air as the opponents collide and, less than a minute later, it's all over. The loser, a 140-kilo mountain of muscle and fat, lies flat on his back, brought down by a hip throw. The winner, 60-kilo Chantal Freebury, bows low to her fallen rival.

This *dojo*, or sumo ring, is in England, and Freebury is not a typical sumo wrestler. Sumo has been a male-only martial art since it first began in Japan 1,300 years ago. No longer. 9 ☐ According to the International Sumo Federation, which oversees women's sumo, female wrestlers are now represented in 17 countries.

'I started doing sumo because I wanted to get in shape in a fun and exciting way,' says Freebury, who trains with other female sumo enthusiasts in her area. 'I have actually lost weight since I started learning sumo three years ago. It has really toned up my muscles.' 10 ☐ 'I can come to a session and get rid of it fighting an opponent,' she says. 'It makes me feel great. I can forget everything when I come to the sumo ring.'

Sumo master Steve Patemen, who has coached Freebury for the past three years, says the sport is ideally suited to women. 'It is not just about brute force,' he says. 'Anyone can win through technique and tactics.' 11 ☐ 'Stability is everything in sumo,' he says, 'and women benefit because they tend to have shorter legs so their centre of balance is naturally closer to the ground.'

The risk of injury is minimal, too, as sumo is one of the more straightforward martial arts. The idea is to push your partner out of a five-metre round ring, or force him or her to touch the ground with any part of their body other than the soles of their feet. 12 ☐ As Pateman says, 'Kick-boxing and karate are much more violent.'

Freebury trains twice a week, and each hour-long session starts with a warm-up. The *shiko*, or leg-stamping exercise, important for developing balance and thigh strength, involves a crab-like movement where each bent leg is raised in turn and stamped back down on the floor. But collision training is the most demanding. 13 ☐

According to Patemen, 90 per cent of a sumo contest has been won before it begins. 14 ☐ He encourages Freebury to adopt a frightening manner, and smiling is forbidden. Freebury says she feels mentally stronger since taking up sumo. 'You learn to give an impression of strength,' she says.

Freebury clearly loves doing her sport. 15 ☐ Freebury is not convinced. 'A lot of girls would like it if they gave it a try, but they are put off by the look of it,' she says.



LIVEWORKSHEETS

**A** Women are even at an advantage because of their body shape.

**B** There are 48 legitimate techniques for doing this, but kicking, punching and hair-pulling are not allowed.

**C** Each contest might last only seconds, but high levels of physical effort are required.

**D** So what is the likelihood of it becoming popular among women?

**E** Physical preparation is important but psychological toughness is key to winning sumo contests.

**F** Despite some protests from traditionalists, there are numerous women-only sumo contests and a female world champion.

**G** This involves charging and pushing another wrestler across the ring until both parties are red-faced and sweating.

**H** The Japanese art is also a great way to deal with stress.

LIVEWORKSHEETS