Reading

Global Sports and Their Stories



Read the text and match 1-6 to (A-H). There are 2 extra options you don't need to use.

1. _____ Rugby (England)

Rugby is a fast, rough game that accidentally began in England in 1823, when a boy named William Webb Ellis picked up the ball during a football match and ran with it, breaking the rules at the time. This bold action sparked the creation of a new sport, where players carry the ball, tackle, and rely on teamwork. Over time, rugby has grown into a symbol of British strength and resilience. In fact, the Rugby World Cup trophy is named after the very boy who started it all.

2. _____ Sumo Wrestling (Japan)

Sumo, Japan's national sport, is a unique reflection of the country's balance between tradition and abundance. Two huge wrestlers face off, each trying to push the other out of the ring. What may surprise many is that sumo wrestlers follow a strict, high-calorie diet that includes "chanko-nabe," a special stew to help them gain mass. Despite the focus on size, sumo is steeped in spiritual traditions. Before each match, wrestlers throw salt into the ring to purify it, a practice rooted in Shinto rituals. Matches may last only seconds, but years of training go into each bout.

3. _____ Lacrosse (Canada)

Originally played by Native Americans, lacrosse has deep spiritual roots and was once called "the Creator's Game" because it was believed to be a gift from the gods. This fast-paced sport was played as a form of prayer, a way to heal, and to settle conflicts. Now Canada's national sport, lacrosse reflects the country's hidden competitive edge. Though known for their politeness, Canadians play lacrosse with intensity and speed. Interestingly, lacrosse is one of the few sports where the rules are different for men and women!

4. _____ Capoeira (Brazil)

Capoeira, a mix of dance and martial arts, was created by enslaved Africans in Brazil as a way to fight for their freedom. In the past, authorities feared it was too powerful, leading to a ban that wasn't lifted until 1940. Capoeira's origins are still surrounded by mystery, with stories of masters who could disappear into the night. Despite Brazil's reputation for its relaxed, fun culture, capoeira shows the country's strength and resilience, proving that there's always more beneath the surface.

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5 _____. Muay Thai (Thailand)

Muay Thai is a fast-paced combat sport where fighters use their fists, elbows, knees, and shins. What's surprising to many is the graceful tradition behind the matches. Before fighting, both competitors perform the "Wai Khru" dance to show respect to their trainers and ancestors, with each fighter taking turns. This dance, which lasts a few minutes, reflects Thailand's blend of power and serenity—where even in the midst of a tough fight, there is room for beauty and respect. Many fighters begin training as young as eight, showing a commitment to mastering both strength and honor.

6_____. Pétanque (France)

Pétanque is a classic French sport, where players toss metal balls as close as possible to a small wooden target ball, the "cochonnet" (meaning "little piglet"). Born in Provence in the early 1900s, pétanque is a variation of an older French game called boules. It's not just a competition, but a way of life for many French people, who often play the game in parks while enjoying a glass of wine. This laid-back, social sport reflects the French appreciation for leisure and the joy of taking things at a slower pace.

Which sport:

A *... is known for its relaxed atmosphere?*
B *... was prohibited in 1940?*
C *… was started as the result of a mistake?*
D *... involves drinking an alcoholic beverage?*
E *... might have a short competition time?*
F *... originated as a method for gaining independence?*
G *... uses eight different points of contact to strike the opponent?*
H *... served as a way to resolve disputes?*