

IS COMPETITION NECESSARY IN SPORT?



Jan K.

I've looked up *sports* in a few dictionaries, and they all say that it's a physical activity in which people or teams compete. But what about sports like running that people do for fun or fitness? Are those *not* sports because people don't compete, or are the dictionaries wrong?

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Replies:



Lisbet J.

Competition is at the heart of sports. For me, the best example is soccer. It's the most popular sport in the world. People in every country have a favorite team, watch matches on TV, and go to live games. Without the winning and the losing, no one would care—there would be no point. Another example is the Olympics. They're all about competition and who gets the gold medal. Or what about Formula One racing? It's just incredible to watch car makers, drivers, and support teams compete to be the fastest of the day. If people aren't competing, it isn't a sport—it's a hobby. And it's probably boring to watch.

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Shen F.

Sports have to include physical activity, but they don't have to include competition. I love winter sports—skiing, snowboarding, ice climbing. I never compete and I never want to, but I'm totally sure these are sports. Here's why: you have to make a physical effort to practice them and they require skill, training, special equipment, and certain types of clothing. You can take lessons and improve in them. Of course, it's possible to compete in any of these sports, but it isn't necessary. Maybe Lisbet is talking about watching sports rather than actually doing them? Maybe competition makes a sport more interesting to watch, but it isn't necessary for participating in a sport and enjoying it.

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Adriana S.

For me, the most interesting sports have a mix of competition and people working together. In soccer, teamwork such as passing the ball around the field makes the game exciting. And as Lisbet says, the competition between the teams is also exciting. But competition is important even in sports where teams aren't fighting each other to win. Take winter sports, for example. Shen says he doesn't compete, but the equipment he uses, such as skis, has been developed and improved because people wanted to ski (or snowboard or climb) better and more safely—even if they were just competing against themselves to do their best. Developments in sports technology often come from people trying to do new things that no one has done before: better tricks, harder climbs, faster times. So, although Shen doesn't compete, he does benefit from others' competition.

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Read the question and the replies quickly. Choose the correct answer.

Who thinks competition is necessary in sport?

- Lisbet and Shen
- Lisbet and Adriana

3 Read the question and replies again. Match each idea (1–7) with a writer. Write J (Jan), L (Lisbet), S (Shen), or A (Adriana).

- 1 You can enjoy playing sports without competing. _____
- 2 Competition improves the quality of a sport for people who don't compete. _____
- 3 I'm not sure about the definition of sports. _____
- 4 Sports without competition aren't interesting. _____
- 5 Having a winner is important. _____
- 6 A sport is an activity that includes exercising your body. _____
- 7 Working well on a team is an important part of many sports. _____