



Changing the Game

FOCUS QUESTION

When should a sport change?

NOTICE AND WONDER

Look at the three texts you will read in this lesson.

What do you notice? What do you wonder?

Discuss your ideas with a partner.

FAIRNESS IN SPORTS

Discuss with a partner why fairness in sports is important.

What is needed to make sure sports are fair?

Write some things that can bring fairness to sports.



fairness in sports

Fairness is important
in sports because ____.

For a sport to be fair, there
must be ____ because ____.



Bigger than the Rules

by Timothy Tocher



Title IX: A Win for Equality

by Sharon Wexler



The Fabulous Fastball

by Layne DeMarin

Bigger than the Rules

by Timothy Tocher

opponent = a player on the other team


Stop & Discuss

What was goaltending?
Why was it a problem?

Discuss your response
with a partner.

When Mikan would
goaltend, he would ____.

Other teams and fans
thought it was unfair
because ____.

- 1 Growing up in the 1930s, George Mikan felt people staring at him. Tall and awkward, he tried to hide by slumping in his seat. Although Mikan didn't know it at the time, his height would someday change the game of basketball.
- 2 When he was 14, Mikan joined a local youth basketball team. He was 5 feet 10 inches tall at the time. Six months later, he had grown another 6 inches! By the time he was 16 years old, he was 6 feet 8 inches tall.
- 3 In those years, basketball coaches thought the perfect player was around 6 feet tall. A taller player might be useful for winning jump balls, but not much else. However, being super tall *did* have value—it helped a player block an **opponent's** shots.
- 4 In college, Mikan would reach up to block the opposing team's shot just as the ball was about to go through the hoop. Other teams and their fans hated this action, which they called "goaltending." It made games less exciting and kept basketball from attracting more fans. At the time, there weren't rules against it, but it still seemed wrong to do. 

- 5 Clearly, the rules of basketball needed to change to make the game better. Goaltending would need to be **banned**. And that's exactly what happened after Mikan blocked 17 shots in one game.
- 6 Members of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) met, and they agreed that to keep the game fair, goaltending should not be allowed. They made a new rule that no player could block a shot on its way down into the basket.
- 7 George Mikan influenced not just one rule change but two. The second rule focused on the lane around the basket. The lane is a painted area where opposing players are limited to staying only three seconds at a time. This area used to be 6 feet wide. But Mikan, with his long arms and strong jumping, could easily reach the basket from the edges of the lane. So, a new rule was created to widen it to 12 feet. Mikan learned to shoot baskets from farther back. The rule change made Mikan a better player, and it made the game more exciting, thus attracting more fans.
- 8 George Mikan's great height helped change the game of basketball. Rule makers reasoned that goaltending was unfair. They also agreed that the area surrounding the basket should be wider. These rules still hold today and help make sure that no team has an unfair **advantage**.

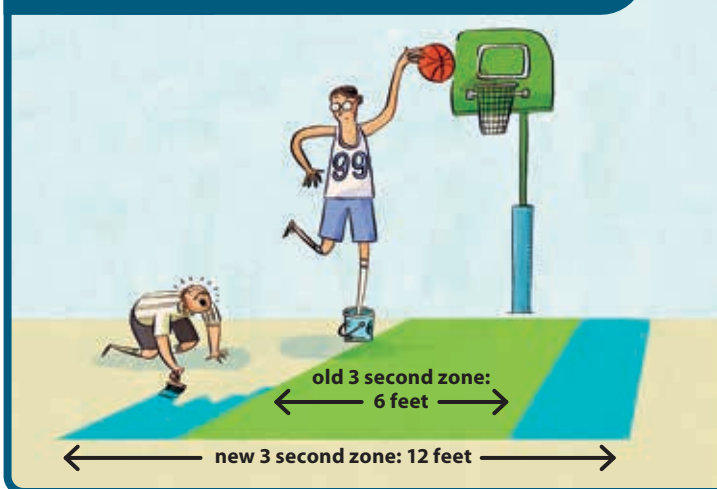


banned = not allowed

Mikan's goaltending meant it was hard for anyone to get a shot in.



The wider lane would make it harder for Mikan to make shots.



advantage = something that benefits one team more than another

Stop & Discuss

What effect did the rule changes have on the game?

Discuss your response with a partner.



Explain Reasons and Evidence

- Authors often make points in a text to try to persuade readers to agree with their ideas about the topic.
- A **point** is an idea about the topic that an author supports with reasons and evidence.
- A **reason** explains why a point is correct or true.
- **Evidence** includes facts, details, quotes, or other information that show why a point is accurate.

Reread/Think

Reread "Bigger than the Rules." Complete the chart with reasons and evidence.

| Author's Point | Reason | Evidence |
|--|--|--|
| Goaltending was unfair. | (paragraphs 3 and 4) Really tall players could block an opponent's shot just before it went through the hoop. | (paragraph 5) • Mikan blocked 17 shots in one game. (paragraph 6) • The NCAA decided goaltending should not be allowed. |
| A 6-foot lane around the basket was too small. | (paragraph 7) | (paragraph 7) • • |
| Basketball needed to change its rules to become a better game. | (paragraphs 4 and 7) | (paragraph 7) • • |



TITLE IX A WIN FOR EQUALITY

by Sharon Wexler

1 Let's take a step back in time. The year is 1968. A girl is about to start school, and she loves basketball. Her dream is to play on the school team, but she's not allowed to try out. Why? Her school has one basketball team, and it's for boys only.



2 Until the 1970s, this experience was common. Schools often had several sports teams for boys, such as basketball, soccer, and wrestling. But for girls, there was often only one choice: field hockey. Then, in 1972, girls had more opportunities—thanks to Patsy Mink and a law called Title IX.


proposed = formally suggested for debate

Stop & Discuss

What did the Title IX law state?

Underline details in the text that tell what the law was meant to change.

A New Law

3 Patsy Mink, a member of the U.S. Congress from Hawaii, noticed how schools treated girls unfairly. She decided to do something about it. Her goal was for girls to have the same chance as boys to get involved in school activities, including sports. Mink **proposed** a new law, now called Title IX, which passed in 1972. The law said that if a school receives government money for a program, then that program must be offered to all students. 



Sports for Everyone

- 4 Because of Title IX, girls today have a real chance at developing their athletic skills and exploring their interests. All students need to have the opportunity to participate in any sport that a school offers. So, either a school has to have a girls' team and a boys' team, or it has to let all students participate on a single team. Just ask the 2,400 young women currently playing high-school football in the United States. Title IX helped prove that there is no such thing as a “boy” sport or a “girl” sport. Students today can try out for any sport offered at their school, **regardless** of their gender.

regardless = without thought

A Win for Women and Girls

- 5 Title IX has also helped talented female athletes earn college scholarships. For many years, athletic scholarships for girls were very uncommon. But now, if a girl wants to become a professional athlete, a scholarship may help her pay for college *and* give her a chance to continue training.
- 6 Title IX has opened opportunities for more than just top athletes. It has also allowed many girls to discover the fun and team spirit of sports at school. In 1972, only 700 girls in the United States played high-school soccer. Today, close to 400,000 girls play on their high-school teams every year. That's almost equal to the number of boys who play each year! 🖐️

Stop & Discuss

What effects did Title IX have on school sports?

Discuss your response with a partner.


One effect of Title IX was ____ Another effect was ____

equality = the same rights for all people

Stop & Discuss

In addition to sports, how did Title IX affect students in school?

Discuss your response with a partner.

7 Even though Title IX became law, **equality** didn't happen overnight. Mink and other supporters had to keep fighting for it. The fight for gender equality still continues, but everyone owes many thanks to Patsy Mink and Title IX. Remember, the law isn't only about sports or just about girls. The law says that *any* school program must be open to *all* students. Before Title IX, classes like automobile repair or cooking were offered only to boys or only to girls. But today, no student can be kept from taking a class because of gender. Just as Mink had hoped, Title IX provides all students with an equal opportunity to learn. 

Because of Title IX, all students, regardless of gender, get to participate in all sports and activities.





Explain Reasons and Evidence

- Authors often make points about a topic. They support the points with reasons and evidence.
- Evidence can include quotes, examples, facts, and statistics (information given through numbers).

Reread/Think

Reread "Title IX: A Win for Equality." Complete the chart below with reasons and evidence.

| Author's Point | Reason | Evidence |
|---|---------------|------------------------------------|
| In 1972 a new law called Title IX gave girls more opportunities in sports. | (paragraph 3) | (paragraph 1) (paragraph 2) |
| Girls today have a better chance at developing their athletic skills and exploring their interests. | (paragraph 4) | (paragraph 4) |
| Girls who want to become professional athletes have the opportunity. | (paragraph 5) | (paragraph 5) |
| Title IX is not only about sports or just about girls. | | |



Talk

Review the completed chart with a partner. Then discuss how the reasons and evidence help you understand the author's points.

To support this point, the author gives a reason. This reason is ____.

As supporting evidence, the author tells readers that _____.

Write

Choose one of the author's points in "Title IX: A Win for Equality." Then explain the reasons and evidence the author uses to support that point, drawing on details in your chart and your partner discussion.

[illegible]

WRITING CHECKLIST

- ☐ I included reasons and evidence in my response.
- ☐ I used complete sentences.
- ☐ I used correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.



THE FABULOUS FASTBALL

by Layne DeMarin

- 1 In baseball, a good pitcher knows how to throw a heater. What does that mean? It means that the pitcher can throw a ball so fast that it's "hot" or "on fire." Believe it or not, very fast pitches, called fastballs, haven't always been welcome in baseball. But over the years, fastballs have changed the way baseball is played, and they have made the game even better.
- 2 Fans would agree. Fastballs have made baseball more exciting to watch. When the game was first invented, people thought the fun would come from watching **batters** hit the ball and then waiting to see if **fielders** could catch the ball to get the batters out. The pitcher's job was simply to toss the ball to the batter. For this reason, the first rules actually made it *easier* for batters to hit the ball. But over time, pitchers started throwing the ball harder. In 1914, pitcher Walter Johnson threw a fastball that was estimated to be moving at 97 miles (156 kilometers) per hour. These pitches were more challenging for batters to hit. But fans loved watching pitchers throw fastballs—and watching batters try to hit them!

Fastballs can sometimes move close to 100 miles (161 kilometers) per hour!

batters = players who hit the baseball with a bat

fielders = players who try to catch or stop balls hit by the batters

**TWO-SEAM FASTBALL****FOUR-SEAM FASTBALL****SPLIT-FINGER**

officials = persons in charge of a sports game

3 Fastballs have also improved the skill level of the game. Pitchers realized that throwing fast was a skill they could improve with practice. In fact, a pitcher could learn to control the path of the ball by gripping and releasing it in a particular way. Today, the best pitchers know how to throw different types of fastballs, such as the two-seam, the four-seam, and the split-finger. Batters, too, have needed to improve their skills to hit fastballs. Batters must be able to identify the type of pitch thrown and react to it in a very short amount of time to make a hit.

4 Pitchers have set some amazing records. The first pitcher to throw a ball over 100 miles (161 kilometers) per hour was Bob Feller in 1946. People are often watching to see who, if anyone, will break the current fastball record. So far, the fastest pitch on record flew through the air at just over 105 miles (169 kilometers) per hour in 2010. This speed is almost as fast as the fierce winds of a tornado!

5 Fastballs are still changing the sport of baseball. Pitchers have become so good at throwing fastballs and striking out batters that **officials** are considering new rule changes. But even if some things change, the fastball is here to stay. Fans love it, and the players keep getting better and better—all big wins for baseball!



Respond to Text

Reread/Think

Reread "The Fabulous Fastball." Then choose the best response to each question.

1. The author argues that fastballs have had a positive effect on baseball. What is one reason she uses to support this point?
 - A. "Fastballs have made baseball more exciting to watch." (paragraph 2)
 - B. "But over time, pitchers started throwing the ball harder." (paragraph 2)
 - C. "Pitchers realized that throwing fast was a skill they could improve with practice." (paragraph 3)
 - D. "So far, the fastest pitch on record flew through the air at just over 105 miles (169 kilometers) per hour in 2010." (paragraph 4)
2. What does the author suggest about the rules of baseball in paragraph 2?
 - A. They are affected by what people like to watch.
 - B. They are agreed upon by a group of baseball fans.
 - C. They are supposed to make the game fair for everybody.
 - D. They are meant to be especially challenging for fielders.
3. What evidence does the author use to support the idea that fastballs have improved the skill level in baseball?
 - A. She mentions that fastballs were not always part of the game.
 - B. She explains that fans love to watch people throw fastballs.
 - C. She describes how pitchers learned to throw different types of fastballs.
 - D. She lists the names of pitchers in history who threw the fastest.



Reread/Think

4. Read the sentence from paragraph 3.

In fact, a pitcher could learn to control the path of the ball by **gripping** and releasing it in a particular way.

Which word from the sentence means the **opposite** of *gripping*?

- A.** "learn"
B. "control"
C. "releasing"
D. "particular"

Write

The author states that baseball became more challenging once fastballs were allowed. What reasons and evidence does the author provide to support her point? Use details from the text in your response.

[illegible]

WRITING CHECKLIST

- ☐ I used reasons and evidence from the text to support the author's point.
- ☐ I used complete sentences.
- ☐ I used correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.



Respond to the Focus Question

When should a sport change?

Reread/Think

Choose one text from this lesson to reread.

TEXT: _____

What is one change in sports that you learned about through this text? When did the change happen, and why?

Talk

Share your answer with a partner.

One change I learned about in this text was ____.

As a group, discuss these questions. Take notes in the chart.

When should a sport change? What helped people realize it was time for a change?

| Text | Reason for Change | The Change |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| "Bigger than the Rules" | | |
| "Title IX: A Win for Equality" | | |
| "The Fabulous Fastball" | | |

Write

Which change to sports do you think was most important? Why do you think so? Use details from your charts, discussions, and the texts to support your response.