

SPORT IN THE USA

WE HAVE SEEN HOW SPORT HAS
DEVELOPED IN THE UK THROUGH
PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND HOW IT IS
ORGANISED

WE NEED TO KNOW

- **CHARACTERISTICS OF USA SPORT**
- **DESCRIBE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE USA – YOUNG CAPITALIST NATION; RELATIVELY LARGE POPULATION.**
- **EXPLAIN THE NATURE OF SPORT IN THE USA (WIN ETHIC;COMMERCIALISM; VEHICLE FOR ACHIEVING THE AMERICAN DREAM**
- **ANALYSE THE GAME OF AMERICAN FOOTBALL (ORIGINS, NATURE OF GAME INCLUDING VIOLENCE, COMMERCIALISM.**

USA

- OVER THE NEXT 4 WEEKS WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE PLACE OF SPORT IN THE USA AND AUSTRALIA
- BULLET POINT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE USA AND INCLUDE:
- YOUNG NATION
- POPULATION
- ENVIRONMENT
- CAPITALISM
- WIN ETHIC

US sport means business!



USA:

- THE MOST POWERFUL NATION ON EARTH
- YOUNG NATION
- ATTRACTED BY THE DREAM OF FREEDOM AND FORTUNE IN THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY
- IT WAS SEEN AS A CHANCE TO MAKE SOMETHING OF THEIR LIVES

COMMERCIALISM

- WHAT IS THE ROLE OF COMMERCIALISM?
- WHAT DO YOU UNDERSTAND BY THE AMERICAN DREAM? – P243

INCLUDE:

- **AMERICA IS A DECENTRALISED SOCIETY WITH SEPARATE STATE INFLUENCE. USA SPORT REFLECT THIS, WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR DOMINATING. USA IS A YOUNG CULTURE WHICH HAS USED SPORT FOR NATION BUILDING AND TO REFLECT THEIR CULTURAL VALUES. WINNING IS EVERYTHING! OLYMPIC SUCCESS IS VERY IMPORTANT – IT IS A CHANCE FOR THE USA TO GAIN INTERNATIONAL PRESTIGE THROUGH SPORT. THE BIG FOUR SPORTS , FOOTBALL, BASEBALL, BASKETBALL AND ICE HOCKEY ARE CONFINED TO THE USA AND THEY HOLD THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS IN THESE SPORTS.**

- **POPULATION IS 293 MILLION – IS A WIDELY MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY AND CLAIMS A POLICY OF PLURALISM, WHICH PROFESSES THAT EACH CULTURE CAN CO-EXIST HARMONIOUSLY; AND THAT EACH CULTURE RETAINS ITS OWN TRADITIONS AND VALUES WITHIN THE MAJOR CULTURE. WHITE ANGLO-SAXON PROTESTANTS REMAIN THE DOMINANT CULTURE.**

- **THE USA COMPRISES 50 SEPARATE STATES – THE UK IS APPROX. 2 THIRDS THE SIZE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA!**
- **LARGE UNPOPULATED AREA STIMULATE THE PASSION FOR THE GREAT OUTDOORS.**
- **VAST NETWORK OF INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS AND DIRECT URBAN FREEWAYS TO ACCOMMODATE EXTENSIVE CAR USE. INTENSIVE AIR TRAVEL IN A LARGE STATE AS WELL AS ESTABLISHED RAIL LINKS.**
- **WIDE RANGE OF CLIMATE ZONES AND TERRAIN – DESERT, MOUNTAINS ETC.**

- **THE USA IS DRIVEN BY CAPITALISM – THIS HAS A DIRECT INFLUENCE ON PROFESSIONAL SPORT – IT DETERMINES OPPORTUNITIES – IT ALLOWS AN INDIVIDUAL TO ACCUMULATE WEALTH. THE IMPORTANT TERM HERE IS INDIVIDUALISM, - TAKING OPPORTUNITIES AND STANDING FOR ONESELF.**
- **THE USA BELIEVES ITSELF TO BE THE 'LAND OF THE FREE' AND A 'LAND OF OPPORUNITY' HOWEVER:**
- **THERE IS STATE AUTONOMY – SELF-RULE FOR EACH STATE**
- **DISTRIBUTION OF POWERE GIVES THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FREE ENTERPRISE AND ONCE AGAIN REFLECTS INDIVIDUALISM,, ALLOWING SOME INSTITUTIONS TO BECOME WEALTHIER THAN OTHERS. THIS FREEDOM TO SEEK WEALTH ACTIVELY IS THE WHOLE IDEA OF CAPITALISM.**

- **CAPITALISM HAS LED TO THE FORMATION OF THE MAJOR AMERICAN IDEOLOGIES WHICH ARE IDENTIFIED BELOW:**
- **PROVISION OF OPPORTUNITY – EVERYONE IS GIVEN THE CHANCE TO SUCCEED WITHIN THE SYSTEM.**
- **FREEDOM AND LIBERTY – GIVE FREEDOM FOR TO ACHIEVE WEALTH AND HAPPINESS.**
- **THE AMERICAN DREAM – EVERYONE HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS AND IS ACHIEVED THROUGH THE GENERATION OF WEALTH AND HAPPINESS AND THUS GIVES THE INDIVIDUAL THE ULTIMATE ‘AMERICAN DREAM’. TO REACH THE DREAM IS THE IDEAL OF EVERY AMERICAN AND THIS AMBITION DRIVES THE MACHINE OF CAPITALISM.**
- **HIRE AND FIRE POLICY – LACK OF SUCCESS BRINGS DISMISSAL. A REPLACEMENT IS QUICKLY APPOINTED.**
- **LOMBARDIANISM – WINNING ISN’T EVERYTHING – IT IS THE ONLY THING.**

WIN!

- **SPORT IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR CULTURAL PRACTICES AND IS CLOSELY WOVEN INTO SOCIETY. THIS WIN AT ALL COST ETHIC RUNS THROUGH BOTH SPORT AND SOCIETY.**
- **CHARACTERISTICS OF SPORT AND COMMERCIALISM – THE 'AMERICAN DREAM'**
- **America's sports are the most technically advanced in the world and their major sports are not really played anywhere else in the world. It can hold World Championships in American football and baseball, in which only the American teams compete!**

- **USA SPORTS FALL INTO 3 CATEGORIES**
- **ADAPTATIONS – MODIFICATIONS TO GAMES ALREADY IN EXISTENCE IE. RUGBY BECAME AMERICAN FOOTBALL, BASEBALL FROM ROUNDERS**
- **ADOPTIONS – GAMES TAKEN FROM EUROPE – TENNIS**
- **INVENTIONS – DESIGNED NEW SPORTS TO SUIT THE 'NEW WORLD' CULTURE – BASKETBALL.**
- **US sport means business!**
- **Sports tend to be high scoring and action packed to maximise their entertainment value.**
- **Most sports rely on the money made from TV.**
- **US school sport has a very high profile and attracts big sponsorship. The most promising compete for athletic scholarships to colleges and universities.**

- College players receive top level coaching and support and under enormous pressure to win in a highly competitive field, which is heavily funded by TV and sponsorship deals. The best college athletes are drafted into professional sport.
- Professional sport inextricably linked with dependent upon commercialism. TV and advertising not only fund professional sport, but also govern procedures influence its rules. For example, American Football has evolved into a constant stop-go staccato pattern to allow companies to screen advertisements every five minutes.
- In US culture the 'win ethic' dominates.
- In the nineteenth century, European games were adopted and quickly moulded to suit their new environment and rapidly evolving culture. Other games were invented. This was a new society – the 'land of opportunity' Games are high scoring, action packed and with exciting short bursts of activity which are followed by commercial breaks – basketball, American football.
- There is a flip side to this, sport in the USA is extremely elitist. In athletics, for example, there is not even one amateur athletic club where the general public can attend. For most it is something that you watch rather than play.

- US sporting stars are the richest in the world. The 'American dream' assumes that anyone can be a success in society, irrespective of age, gender or ethnic background and sport is particularly useful to achieve success.
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- The idea of rags-to-riches success, best personified in the Rocky films, where a nobody becomes World Champion overnight.
- Through sport, stereotypical views can be defied, the restricting glass ceiling of opportunity can be smashed and role models for future generations can be created.
- Professional sport dominates the US society and reflects its competitive and capitalist nature. (Capitalism – an economic system that enables private enterprise to accumulate power and wealth.)

