

## Recitation E

### **The Most Popular Sports in the World**

What are the five most popular sports in the world? Some of the answers may surprise you!

Football is the world's most popular sport. Today, about 3.5 billion people watch or play football. It is popular in Europe, Asia, South America, Africa, North America...almost everywhere! In a professional football game, players run about eight kilometers.

The world's number two sport is cricket. Cricket is originally from the UK, but today it is also popular in Australia, New Zealand, some African countries, and some Caribbean countries. In India and Pakistan, cricket is more popular than football. About three billion people around the world watch or play cricket each year. Four hundred million people, which is about 40 percent of India's population, watch important cricket games on TV.

Field hockey is number three. Approximately two billion people play or watch field hockey, mostly in Asia, Europe, Australia, and Africa. In the United States, it is mainly for high school girls. It is a very old sport. In Egypt, 4,000-year-old drawings show people playing field hockey. Of course, the rules of the game are different today.

Next is tennis. Today there are roughly one billion players and spectators of tennis around the world. Tennis is originally from France, but today it is very popular in the United States, Asia, Australia, and Europe. The longest tennis game lasted eleven hours and five minutes!

Table tennis is popular around the world, with about 900 million players and spectators. Today, table tennis is especially popular in China, Korea, and Singapore. In table tennis, the ball can go more than 160 kilometers per hour.

There are many popular sports around the world, but these are the top five. What is similar about all of these sports? They are fun, they are fast, and they use a ball. Is that why the expression "have a ball" means "have a lot of fun?" Maybe!

(315 words)