



To learn more about the exhibition, visit our website at www.MuseumonMainStreet.org/HometownTeams

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HOMETOWN

TEAMS

HOW SPORTS SHAPE AMERICA

DOCENT HANDBOOK

Museum on Main Street

A partnership of the Smithsonian Institution and State Humanities Councils nationwide in service to America.



Smithsonian



WELCOME!

Museum on Main Street (MoMS) is a partnership between the Smithsonian Institution and state humanities councils nationwide that serves small-town museums and their patrons. This innovative project provides one-of-a-kind access to Smithsonian exhibitions and educational humanities programs. Most importantly, MoMS provides community museums and libraries an opportunity to showcase their strengths and reinforce their meaningful contributions to small-town life. Like all MoMS exhibitions, **HOMETOWN TEAMS: HOW SPORTS SHAPE AMERICA** was specifically designed to meet the needs of small organizations.

Visit the exhibition website at www.MuseumonMainStreet.org/HometownTeams.

For information about other Museum on Main Street exhibitions, visit www.MuseumonMainStreet.org.

Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America is a Museum on Main Street project developed by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service.

COVER: The Gulf Coast Cardinals celebrate a victory, Lake Jackson, TX, 2009. "Hometown Glory" by Brenda Read Photography

BACK COVER: brianbielmann.com

THIS DOCENT HANDBOOK will assist you in helping visitors appreciate and enjoy **HOMETOWN TEAMS**. The guide leads you through the exhibition—section-by-section—and offers ideas, themes, and questions designed to inspire meaningful discussion during your tours. Your job is to encourage visitors to think about the subject matter and invite them to share memories and personal connections to the exhibit.

HOMETOWN TEAMS consists of an introduction with five individual "pylons" and six content sections. This handbook follows the same format. An overview text providing a synopsis of major concepts for each section's themes is followed by "**THINK ABOUT IT**," "**LET'S TALK**," and, in some cases, "**LET'S LISTEN**" or "**LET'S WATCH**" questions and "**TALK BACK**" opportunities.

"**THINK ABOUT IT**" highlights important points in each section to encourage visitors to reflect. "**LET'S TALK**" offers questions to ask visitors. Most are open-ended; the answers to others can be found in the exhibition text. "**LET'S LISTEN**" and "**LET'S WATCH**" remind you to encourage visitors to listen to audio or view a video found in the exhibition. "**TALK BACK**" opportunities encourage visitors to share their own stories with the Smithsonian (see pg. 32 for more information).

Review this handbook and the exhibition script, available online at www.MuseumonMainStreet.org/HometownTeams, to become familiar with the exhibition. Remember, a docent is not expected to be an expert. You're here to initiate and lead a discussion.

Visitors in an organized group usually feel more comfortable speaking up; those who arrive individually and join a tour may require some coaxing. You don't have to ask all the questions in this handbook. Just one question can spark an animated discussion. You'll learn quickly which questions work best for different age groups and how long you need to spend in each section. Share what you learn on your tours with fellow docents. Your experience may help them with their tour.

Helpful hints on being an effective and engaging docent are at the end of this handbook. While this handbook was specifically designed for **HOMETOWN TEAMS**, we hope that you'll extend your skills to initiate discussions about related displays, artifacts, and great sports stories from your own community.

—THE MUSEUM ON MAIN STREET TEAM

Introduction

LET'S PLAY

Hometown sports are more than just games— they shape our lives and unite us and celebrate who we are as Americans. We play on ball fields and sandlots, on courts and on ice, in parks and playgrounds, even in the street. From pick-up games to organized leagues, millions of Americans of all ages play sports. And, if we're not playing sports, we're watching them. We sit in the stands and root for the local high school team, or gather on the sidelines and cheer on our sons and daughters as they take their first swing or score their first goal.

Thanks to our never-ending appetite for competition and games, Americans now have a wider selection of sports to play and watch than ever before. Football, baseball, and basketball—America's traditional hometown sports—share space on our calendars with soccer, hockey, tennis, running, wrestling, skiing, snowboarding, skateboarding, surfing, sailing, and many other sports. What has occurred in our hometowns is nothing less than a sports revolution.

BELOW: Steven Felschundneff / Claremont Courier.
OPPOSITE: Bates College rowing team, 2013,
Steve Johnson / MAAC.



**“Sports gives your life STRUCTURE, discipline,
and a GENUINE, sincere, pure fulfillment
that few other areas of endeavor provide.”**

—BOB COUSY, BASKETBALL STAR

THINK ABOUT IT

Ask visitors to think about the impact sports have on their lives, whether they are athletes, fans, or do not follow sports. Encourage visitors to think about their own “sports biography” by sharing memories of their own interactions with sports. Positive or negative, everyone has a story. After sharing their stories, ask visitors if they agree with the curator that sports “shape our lives.”

LET'S TALK

Ask visitors to find their favorite photo of an athlete in the introduction. Let each visitor share a few words about why the image is appealing to them. Then, read the quote by basketball star Bob Cousy and ask visitors to think about the contributions that sports can make to our lives. Why do you think Cousy feels that sports provide “fulfillment?” What benefits do visitors think the athlete in their favorite image is experiencing? What are the positive elements that sports contribute to individuals and communities? Are there also negative elements in sports?

As visitors walk around the five pylons in the introduction, point out the variety of different sports, equipment, and playing fields. We play a great diversity of sports and there's a universe of equipment and settings that support those games. Ask visitors to think about why there are so many different sports played in the U.S. What sports are new or surprising to them? Are there any games that should have been included, or that they would not consider sports at all?

TALK BACK

Encourage visitors with smartphones to scan the QR code on the “Let's Play” pylon and download the Stories from Main Street app. With the app, visitors can record responses to questions and tell stories at the “Story Stops” scattered throughout the exhibition.

Also, ask each of your visitors to take a sports card. Choose one or two of the quick facts about the sports featured on the cards to share with your visitors. Remind them to look for their sport at each of the “Story Stops.”

Introduction

The HOME TEAM, Our AMERICAN SPIRIT and at EVERY AGE

Sports play a big part in the lives of many Americans. They leave an indelible mark on us all, whether we play or watch. The essential qualities of sports—competition, fair play, and the zeal to win—embody the American spirit. No part of American culture so colorfully and passionately celebrates American life as does sports.

And nowhere do we more intimately connect to sports than in our hometowns. Sports generate hometown passion and loyalty and teach the fundamentals of fair play. Our connection to sports spans generations. It all begins at an early age as we put balls in the hands of infants and register our children for youth leagues. Many young athletes go on to play high school and even college sports. As older adults, we might move to the grandstand, but our desire to remain fit and competitive keeps us engaged in sports.

THINK ABOUT IT

Ask visitors to read the quote from Jesse Owens. What does Owens mean when he says, “even if you don’t win, how can you lose?” Ask each visitor to share a word that describes a value that is learned or promoted in sports. What do those words tell us about American society? Do you think all athletes today would share Owens’ view of the importance of hard work, self-discipline and sportsmanship?

LET’S TALK

Towns turn out to support their hometown teams. Why do people in your community support local athletes? What are the benefits for the community?

The curator for **HOMETOWN TEAMS** argues that “the essential qualities of sports—competition, fair play, and the zeal to win—embody the American spirit. Ask visitors if they agree with that statement. Where do they find those values are reflected in American society? How do we fall short of those values? Is it fair to say that many of the same issues we encounter in society are also dealt with on the playing field?

Ask visitors who have played sports how old they were when they began to play. How do they continue to remain active and athletic today?

“... it’s extra EFFORT that separates a winner from second place... DESIRE, determination, discipline, and self-sacrifice. ... Put these all together, and even if you don’t WIN, how can you lose?”

—JESSE OWENS, OLYMPIC CHAMPION



Olympic champion Jesse Owens, The Ohio State University Archives.

More Than a Game

SPORTS and COMMERCE

Sports are an American obsession. We play to stay in shape, to quench our thirst to compete, and to have fun. We watch sports and connect to our favorite teams. When they win, we win. When they lose, we share in their defeat.

Signs of sports are never far away, influencing the way we talk, what we buy, the food we eat, the movies we watch, and the books we read. Quite simply, American culture is saturated with sports.



THINK ABOUT IT

Ask visitors to look at each of the objects and magazines and then, think about all of the different ways that we show our love of sports. From clothing to slogans, popular books and inspiring movies, Americans think and talk about sports. Ask visitors what they think that saturation of sports says about our culture.

LET'S TALK

How do you think sports and culture are intertwined?

How can consumer products and mass media affect the relationship between fans and athletes?

Point out each of the objects and images that feature a famous athlete. Why is "star power" important to commerce? What qualities does an athlete possess that would encourage a company to select her/him to endorse its products? Have you ever purchased a product because an athlete endorsed it?

ABOVE: Yogi Berra ad for Yoo-hoo chocolate drink, courtesy of Dr. Pepper/Seven Up Inc. © 2012. OPPOSITE: Esther Williams swimsuit ad, Cole of California, courtesy of InMocean Group, LLC.

For Swimmers Only...

Cole's "Esther Williams"

If you're the one in five who really swims, you need more than an ordinary swimsuit—you need Cole of California's new "Esther Williams"! Created by Cole designer Margit Fellegi and tank-tested by famous M-G-M swim star, Esther Williams, this suit gives you complete freedom—yet it's perfectly controlling! Dive, churn, twist and turn—and Cole's "Esther Williams" stays smooth and shapely.

And for glamour, too—you can't beat those streamlined curves!

In Lestex and nylon... light, long-wearing, fast-drying. Red, white, aqua, royal blue, citron. \$17.95

Cole
OF CALIFORNIA
ORIGINAL

© 1952, COLE OF CALIFORNIA, INC., LOS ANGELES 58



More Than a Game

SPORTS and CULTURE

If you can't see evidence of America's obsession with sports, you can certainly hear it and see it. Over the years many popular phrases from sports have entered the American lexicon. Whether it's "saved by the bell" (boxing), "in the home stretch" (horse racing), "striking out" (baseball), or "slam dunk" (basketball), sports terms color our conversations.

Sports have also penetrated art, literature, and film. The dynamism of sports—the excitement of a game, the grace of an athlete's performance, and the drama that occurs with the triumph of victory and the agony of defeat—inspires artists, authors and filmmakers. Classic films, such as *Hoosiers* and *Field of Dreams*, are, for many fans, as significant a part of our national sports memory as famous sporting events.

THINK ABOUT IT

In what ways do you think that Americans romanticize or idealize sports heroes?

Why do Americans often cheer for the underdog? Why do we enjoy seeing an athlete rise to the top in the face of tough odds and stiff competition? What does that say about our own national spirit of competitiveness?

LET'S TALK

How often do you think you use sports-themed or sports-inspired phrases in conversations? Do you even notice? Why do you think that sports sayings so easily become part of our everyday language?

Ask visitors to look at the paintings depicted on the panels and the "Saturday Evening Post" magazine. Then, ask visitors to think about how the elements of each game (or the setting in which it was played) inspired the artist to capture the moment. If you were an artist painting your favorite sports moment, what elements would you most want to include?

Allow visitors to open the DVD cases and consider the real-life stories behind famous sports films. What are some of the cultural themes addressed in the films? [Possible answers: opportunities for women in sports, racial integration, succeeding against the odds]. Is the depiction of sports and the cultural themes mirrored in the films realistic? Why do artists find athletes to be interesting subjects?



TOP: Post office mural, Lake Placid, NY, by Henry Billings, 1937. Image provided by a friend of the Smithsonian. ABOVE: Baseball star Satchel Paige, Library of Congress, LOOK Magazine Collection.

HEART of Our HOMETOWNS

We call them **cathedrals**—classic ballparks where baseball is played—and where the sights, sounds, and smells are collectively embedded in our consciousness. We cherish most any field, ballpark, and court where athletic contests of every kind take place. Basketball players and fans recall the old gym with wooden bleachers. Even sports like fishing, skiing, and surfing possess unique places that become forever etched in our memories.

In America's hometowns, fields of play mean something special to the community. In many places, it's the high school football field where each fall the pride and passion of small towns everywhere are on display in grand form. Americans play sports wherever they can, and over the years certain fields and courts, or even vacant sandlots and frozen ponds take on added meaning in our memories.



OPPOSITE: Minnesota state high school hockey championships, 1964. Minnesota Historical Society.



THINK ABOUT IT

Ask visitors to look at the photos of Wrigley Field, the World Series ticket and the bricks. Ask visitors why they think athletes and Chicago Cubs fans developed tight bonds to the stadium. How does a venue like Wrigley come to possess such a strong sense of place? What role does the collective experience of enjoying sports play in developing that sense?

LET'S TALK

Encourage visitors to use the stereoscope viewers to look at photos of famous sports venues. What are the most famous fields, courts or arenas in your state? What accounts for the "mystique" of these venues? How are they important culturally in your state?

What is your favorite sport? If you could play your dream game, where would you most like to play it?

Point out the images of ticket stubs throughout the section. Ask visitors what kinds of souvenirs they keep from their favorite games. Ticket stubs? Cups? Hats? Programs?

LET'S LISTEN

Play the audio clip on Eveleth, MN, for visitors. Why do the speakers hold their local hockey arena, the Hippodrome, with such reverence? What are some reasons why you consider your local home fields special? How are the sports played there part of your community's traditions? How are those traditions passed from generation to generation?

TALK BACK

Point out the "Story Stop" and tell visitors to open the app and tell the Smithsonian what makes their favorite ballpark special.

Take Me Out to the Ballgame

FUN, FANS, and FOOD

It's not just the players on the field that make sports such a big part of our lives. On the sidelines and in the parking lots, down in the box seats and up in the bleachers, the sights and sounds of fans enjoying the game are all part of a grand sports tradition in America. Whether teams win or lose, the fan experience and the rituals that go with it are an important part of sports in our hometowns.

Fans have their own set of traditions. Singing "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" makes the seventh-inning stretch a fun part of baseball. In many sports, "the wave" rolls through the stands, while the most dedicated fans paint their faces in team colors and create banners and signs. Fans in the stands clap, whistle, hoot, and holler; they are an essential part of the game. Plus, the foods we enjoy at a game are all imbued with their own history. Tailgating is a national sports ritual and a run to the concession stand for a hot dog is a time-honored tradition.



LEFT: The Primanti Brothers sandwich is a Pittsburgh, PA, favorite. Dominique King (www.midwestquest.com).
OPPOSITE: Pawtucket Red Sox Baseball Club.



THINK ABOUT IT

The action, time with friends and family, connection to the team, game food, crowd activities, music: All of these elements contribute to the atmosphere of a sporting event. Ask each visitor to provide a word that best describes the environment at an athletic event to them. Once each visitor has shared a word, ask the group to think about what all of their descriptions, taken together, say about these community events.

LET'S TALK

Ask visitors to lift a couple of the seat cushions on the bleachers and read about the origins of some baseball traditions. What are the unique traditions of their favorite sports that are part of the excitement and experience of the game? [Possible examples: team entrances and introductions, the football coin toss, the starting pistol at track events, the call to "start your engines" in auto racing.] What are the origins of those rituals?

What are some of the ways that fans can impact the outcome of games? Ask visitors to think about what would sports would be like if there were no fans. Imagine an athletic event without the fans' excitement and interaction. How might that change the game? How might a team's or an athlete's experience be different? What do athletes gain from their fans' support?

How do fans form a community centered on their favorite team? [Possible answers: shared traditions; loyalty to school, town or team.] How does the fan community extend beyond the stadium?

Point out the game-day objects. What do you take with you to show your team spirit?

TALK BACK

Get visitors to use the squeeze bottle to sample a game-day food scent. What is the scent? [Answer: Popcorn.] What are your favorite game-day foods? Are there any foods served at your local games that are specific to your region?

What's your favorite thing about going to a game? Point out the "Story Stop" and tell visitors to share a story about their favorite game-day experiences in our app.

Take Me Out to the Ballgame

MAKE SOME NOISE

Cheering—organized and otherwise—elevates the fan experience and fuels the hometown team's will to win. Cheerleaders yell out their cheers and team spirit fills the air. Marching bands add to the excitement by playing traditional fight songs. And mascots enliven the crowd with their silly antics.

THINK ABOUT IT/LET'S WATCH

Point out the "Spirit of the Game" interactive on the iPad. Encourage visitors to take a few moments and view images and videos of cheerleading squads, marching bands and mascots from across the country. What are some of the special activities their local schools perform for fans?

LET'S TALK

Ask visitors to take a look at the images of the cheerleading squads and review the text on the history of cheerleading. Ask if there are any cheerleaders in the group? How is cheerleading different today? Discuss how cheerleaders require the same level of athleticism as the players they encourage. What are some of the risks of cheerleading?

Point out the large banner image of the Grambling University marching band. Marching bands bring great drama and showmanship to games, and routines have grown more sophisticated over the years. How do bands get the crowd excited and moving? Ask visitors to share some lyrics from their school's fight song.

What is the history behind your local schools' athletic team names? How were they selected and how do you feel about them? If you had to rename your team today, what name would best reflect your community? Would it be related to a local animal, a natural feature, an industry, agriculture, or something unique about your community's culture?

Most mascots bring fun to the game, but some team names and mascots cause controversy. Were there any disputes in your state over team names that are considered offensive by some cultural groups? How were those disputes resolved?

BELOW: Grambling State University marching band, 2005.
Jesse Beals, www.OlympicPhotoGroup.com.



Playing the Game

The ATHLETE'S EXPERIENCE

Playing the game is more than putting on a uniform and taking the field. It's about winning, playing hard, following the rules, and exhibiting the best sportsmanship. Adhering to these standards teaches young athletes in hometowns across America the value of fair competition.

On occasion, our desire to win oversteps the standards of fair play. Performance enhancement drugs such as steroids, illegal equipment and practices, and simple cheating have soiled, at one time or another, nearly every sport. Despite these pressures, most athletes strive to win with integrity, by training, preparing, and performing to protect the virtues of the games we all love.



ABOVE: Players from Ohio's Wellington and Independence High Schools, 2011. Anna Norris / *Morning Journal*, Lorain, OH. OPPOSITE: Coolidge High School players listen to their coach's instructions, Washington, DC, 2009. Michael Starghill, Jr.



THINK ABOUT IT

What do "good sportsmanship" and "fair play" mean to you? What are some of the other lessons that sports teach us? Ask visitors to share stories of good sportsmanship from their own experience. What did they learn from those experiences?

Point out the trophies and medals in the case. We all love to win, and athletes work so hard to achieve their greatest victories. But, sometimes athletes and teams are criticized for being too obsessed with winning at the expense of sportsmanship. Do your visitors agree with that assessment? If they were leading a team, how would they instruct their players to play hard, but fair?

LET'S TALK

Ask visitors to look at each of the photos of athletes. What stands out in those images? [Possible answers: playing hard, intensity, focus, joy, sadness.] Discuss the physical effort and emotions each of the athletes shown are experiencing. Why are emotion and mental preparation just as important as physical strength and stamina in sports?

Sometimes you win and sometimes you lose. What is the "agony of defeat" for an athlete? What lessons about the game and about sportsmanship can be learned from a loss?

Ask visitors involved in athletics to talk about their own experiences playing the game. What was it like to be a member of a team? How do teams function like communities and help unite players to work toward a common goal? What qualities do teams need to succeed?

TALK BACK

Point out the "Story Stop" and encourage visitors to use the app to share what they think are the most important lessons that sports teach us.

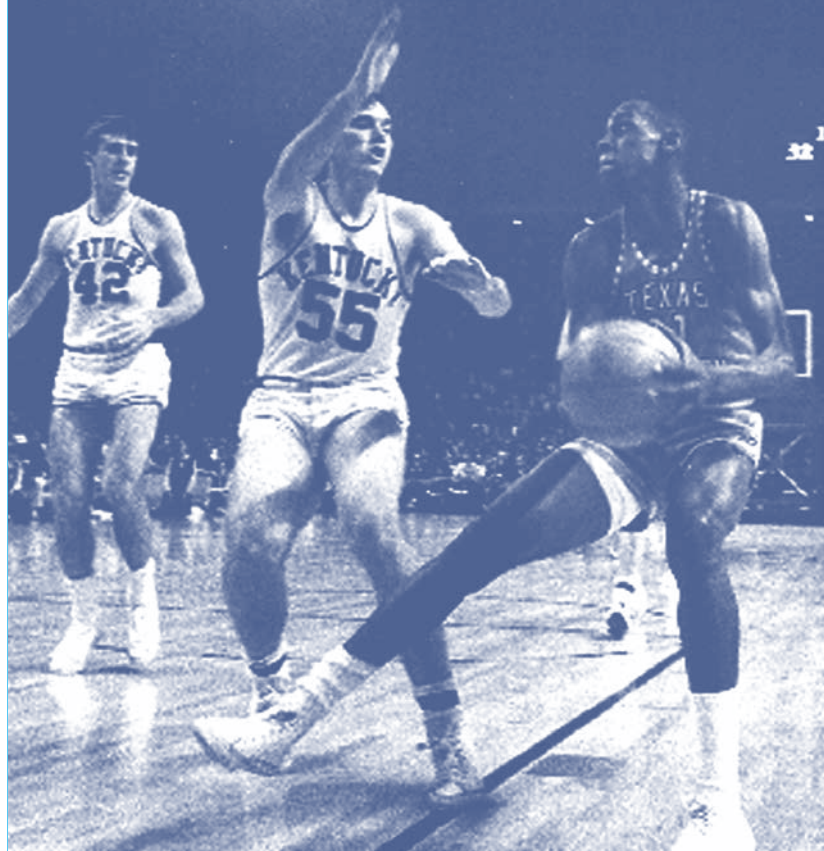
Playing the Game

EVERYONE Plays

Although sports have always been a part of American culture, equality in sports, as in society itself, was not easy to come by. African Americans and women, in particular, struggled to gain the same athletic opportunities enjoyed by white males. In 1947, Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in baseball, paving the way for other African American ballplayers to realize their dream of playing in the major leagues.

In 1972, legislation known as Title IX banned sex discrimination in federally funded educational programs, including high school and college sports. This landmark legislation entitled young female athletes to the same funding and support that boys enjoyed.

BELOW: Paralympic Games champion Tatyana McFadden. Photo courtesy of Tatyana McFadden. OPPOSITE: 1966 NCAA basketball champion Texas Western plays against Kentucky. UTEP Athletics.



THINK ABOUT IT

It is often said that sports mirror society. In what ways do sports reflect our national struggles with issues related to race, gender, and ability? Discuss with visitors whether or not they feel that women, cultural minorities, and disabled athletes are accepted into sports. What barriers remain to be overcome in sports today?

LET'S TALK

Ask visitors to look through the flipbook of athletes and teams that helped change perceptions in their respective sports. Who are the "Game Changers" who broke through stereotypes and prejudice in your state and community? How did they change sports? How are they recognized today?

After the passage of Title IX, the number of young women playing sports in high school and college skyrocketed. How does your community respond to its women's teams? Have they struggled to obtain the same recognition as men's teams?

At some schools, particularly at the college level, male athletes have argued that the creation of Title IX women's teams result in the dissolution of smaller, non-revenue-producing athletic programs for men. How would you recommend creating opportunities for all athletes? Should men and women have separate teams?

Organizations like Special Olympics and Little League's Challenger Program help athletes with physical and intellectual challenges develop their skills and compete at a higher level. What opportunities are available for disabled athletes in your community?

The LOCKER ROOM

Preparation and practice are the keys to maximizing performance. Today's athletes have made their bodies into powerful machines—bigger, stronger, and faster than ever before—by embracing strength training and focused diets. But success depends on more than physical prowess. Athletes and coaches pour time and attention into learning even the most subtle aspects of their sport to ensure successful performances on the playing field.



On hometown fields across America, coaches guide young athletes, teaching them the rules and instilling in them a competitive edge that carries into adulthood. Coaches are fathers, mothers, and volunteers; they give their time for the love of the game, which they hope to pass on to the next generation. Many coaches become mentors to athletes, instructing them not only in their chosen sport, but also in the game of life.

ABOVE: Summer practice for Woodstock High School ski team, VT, 2012. *Vermont Standard* photo by Charles Kahn. OPPOSITE: Coach Dorothy Franco-Reed encourages a player during a volleyball match. Photo by Tom Reed.



THINK ABOUT IT

Encourage your visitors to walk around and look through the lockers and at the ball cage. Ask them to share memories of their own sports experiences. What did they keep in their lockers? What types of uniforms and equipment did they use?

LET'S TALK

Point out the clipboard with a training schedule, diet, and game plans. A recent NCAA survey showed that college athletes spent more than 40 hours per week, outside of their classes, on their sports. High school athletes put in similar efforts and may also participate in club sports outside of school, requiring more travel and practice. What happens when parents don't support young athletes? Should teams with losing records get the support they need? How does the emphasis on training and practice affect athletes?

Ask visitors to touch the equipment in the ball cage. How have the soccer shoe, football helmet, and baseball glove changed over the years? Why were the enhancements made? How has this new equipment changed the games? How do you think equipment will change in the future to respond to concerns like head and neck injuries? Will sports become less physical and rough over time? What do you think should be done to ensure player safety?

Open the center locker, and let visitors review the discussion on performance enhancement. How do schools and other athletic clubs in your community balance staying drug-free with the emphasis on winning and performing at a high level? What steps would you take to keep your team from skirting the rules to get ahead?

LET'S WATCH

Allow visitors to watch the video on coaching and preparing for games. Discuss how coaches like Donna Murphy and Bob Underwood were inspired at a young age to play and how they are now giving back to young people. How do you think the relationships between coaches and players affect sports and our communities, off the playing field? What lessons do athletes learn from coaches? Are there good sides and bad sides to those relationships? How should coaches be strong role models?

TALK BACK

Ask visitors who or what inspired them to become athletes or to become fans. Point out the "Story Stop" and encourage them to open the app and record their story.

Root, Root, Root for the Home Team

COMMUNITY Support

Everyone loves a winner—especially a team or athlete from our hometown. We fill with pride and share in their success and in many ways embrace it as our own. Sports carry over into our daily lives as well as into the character and make-up of our communities.

Local sports leagues keep us connected with each other. Booster clubs support high school athletics. Corporate sponsorships help with the financial cost of local teams. Pep rallies bond students and town elders alike. And, parents play a special part in hometown sports. They volunteer as coaches and referees, and shuttle kids to practices and games. When a hometown team is victorious, the entire community celebrates with a parade and other award ceremonies to bring us still closer together.

“LOOK around you, guys. Do you think you have enough SUPPORT? These are the PEOPLE that make you SPECIAL and our school special and our TOWN special.”

— ROGER BARTA, Head football coach, Smith Center High School, KS, 2008

THINK ABOUT IT

Families and networks of friends provide the most substantial support system for local sports. Ask your visitors how they support family and friends who are active in sports. What motivates their support? Ask visitors to share stories about their longest trip to watch a loved one play. How many round-trip miles did they travel?

LET’S TALK

Read the quote by Smith Center High School football coach Roger Barta and then point out the photos of signs, ads, and boosters supporting local teams. What do booster clubs and groups of parents do to keep athletic programs running at your local schools? How do your local teams show their appreciation?

How do businesses support your local teams? How does financial sponsorship affect those teams? How might too much money have a negative impact?

TALK BACK

Point out the large photo of the parade and the yearbook. Towns show their spirit for their teams in many different ways. What are your community’s traditions for bringing out crowds to support local teams? Homecoming parades? Pep rallies? How do these activities create a sense of community? Point out the “Story Stop” and encourage visitors to describe how sports bring people together in their town.

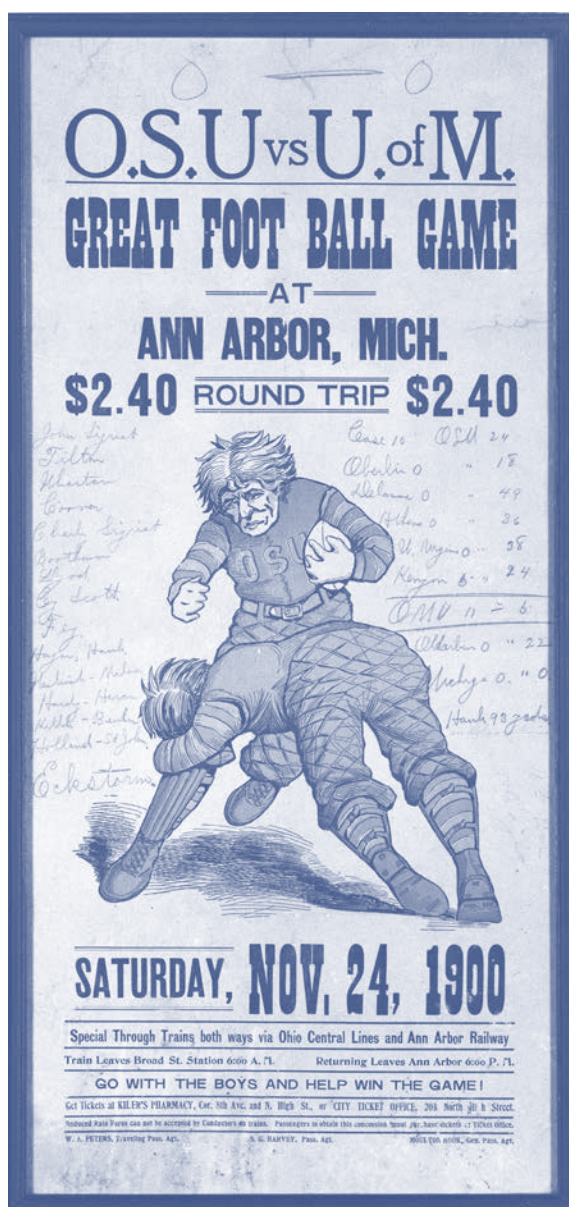
BELOW: 2012 Rose Bowl pep rally, University of Oregon / Jack Liu.



Root, Root, Root for the Home Team

RIVALRIES

Over time, rivalries between towns and teams served to boost interest in sports and intensified competition. With signs and displays, storefronts help tell the sports story in our hometowns. Banners that hang across Main Street keep “the big game” the talk of the town. Former players recall classic games in bars and barbershops, and newspapers recount the victories and defeats from long ago.



THINK ABOUT IT/LET'S WATCH

Encourage visitors to watch the video on rivalries. The rivalries between teams like Army and Navy or between professional teams like the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox transcend the athletic field and take on cultural significance across the nation. Discuss how rivalries become much more than just an athletic competition, but part of our culture.

LET'S TALK

Players always circle their biggest rivalry game on their calendars. Why is it so important to develop a rivalry with another team? What do players and fans get out of a rivalry?

What are the most storied rivalries in your state? They may exist at the professional, college, or local level. How did they develop? How do those rivalries play out in your town? How do fans of each team add to the spirit of competition? Are there any special traditions?

Usually, rivalries result in friendly pranks or some good-natured teasing or gloating among groups of fans. But, sometimes, emotions get the best of ardent fans. Ask visitors to look at the photo of fans taunting an opposing player during a game and read the flipbook page “Going Too Far.” Are there any local stories about a fan that did something mean-spirited to a rival? How did other fans react?

ABOVE: High school players renew their basketball rivalry, 2013.
 David Anderson / *The Richfield Reaper*.

Sports Explosion

ALTERNATE SPORTS and Name that Sport

In recent years, America has seen a sports explosion. NASCAR racing is practically a religion in some parts of America. Soccer, unfamiliar to many Americans before the 1970s, now rivals football and baseball in popularity, particularly with young people. Interest in lacrosse, a game devised by Native Americans hundreds of years ago, is on the rise. Motocross and mountain biking are here to stay. Board sports—surfing, snowboarding, and skateboarding—fuel a multi-billion-dollar “alternative” sports industry.

New, more extreme sports continue to elbow their way onto our sports landscape. Triathlons inspire athletes to push themselves to the limit, while rock climbing and extreme skiing attract the most fearless.

THINK ABOUT IT

Ask visitors to consider what they define as a sport. What are some of the primary elements of a sport? Rules? Scoring? Athleticism? Stamina? Endurance? Where do visitors draw a line between sports and recreation?



LET'S TALK

What does the constant creation of new sports say about our culture? How do new sports reflect our creativity, originality, adventurousness, and competitiveness? Why do you think athletes are always looking for new ways to challenge themselves?

Why do we refer to some sports as “extreme” or “alternative?” Why are some athletes attracted to sports that are so physically rigorous, risky, and even dangerous?

Point out the wave board and describe how its shape, finish, and lightness are design features that are helpful to athletes. Ask visitors to consider the impact of equipment on sports and the unique equipment their favorite games require. How is it designed to help athletes?

Ask visitors to look at the “Name that Sport” interactive and note how many of those games include elements of older, established sports. Ask visitors what elements of their favorite games they would combine to create a new sport. What would the new sport be called? How would you get others interested in the sport?

TALK BACK

Point out the “Story Stop” and ask visitors to open the app and talk about the new sports people play in their community.

ABOVE: The Lonestar Rollergirls, photo by Earl McGehee for Texas Roller Derby. OPPOSITE: Wakeboarder Trevor Maur, Thomas Gustafson, www.thomasgustafson.com.

Sports Explosion

Sports **ANYTIME** ... **ANYWHERE**

It's never been easier to be a sports fan. Advances in media and technology enable us to follow our favorite teams on television, on our laptops and iPads, and even on our smart phones. We can still follow our favorite hometown teams, even if life takes us far from home, as more and more high school and local college games are streamed on the Internet. It all makes for an all-consuming sports experience.

BELOW: Participants in a fantasy football league at a senior center watch a game, MA, 2009. Jon Chase photo / jonchase.com.

THINK ABOUT IT

The connection people have to their favorite team can be very strong. Now that fans can use technology to follow a team from practically anywhere, they are involved far beyond just cheering along during games. With the ability to do online research and communicate through social media or call in to radio talk shows, fans are not shy about sharing their opinions about sports. Where do you draw the line in giving feedback about a team or team member? In what ways can debates about a team or an athlete be positive or negative?

LET'S TALK

Ask visitors about their first memories of listening to a game on the radio or watching on television. What was it like to join with family and friends to enjoy the game? Today, Super Bowl Sundays and March Madness are like national holidays that draw millions to their televisions. How has the availability of games at home affected fan culture? How do you observe these "holidays"? Can you feel like you're a part of the game from your living room?

Many restaurants and bars have their televisions tuned into sports networks. Why not television series or news channels? What makes sports so universal?

Ask visitors what media they use to learn more about their favorite sports. How do they follow the success of their teams?



A SPORTING NATION

The future of sports—in our hometowns and beyond—knows no bounds. Whether we enjoy traditional sports or develop new ones that reflect our cultural and athletic diversity, the thrill of competition and the drive to win are stronger than ever before. Athletes will continue to view sports as a means to achieve their goals and pursue them throughout their lives. Fans and spectators will never let their teams down, cheering and supporting their favorites from the start of the game to the finish.

There is no escape from sports in our hometowns or anywhere else. We wouldn't have it any other way!



LET'S TALK

Why do you think Americans will always be attracted to sports? Do you agree with the exhibition curator when he says "We wouldn't have it any other way?" What do you think that says about American culture?

How do you think American attitudes toward sports will change in the future? What issues might limit access to sports for young athletes in the future? [Possible answers: health and safety, costs, availability of school-based athletic programs.] Do you think that, regardless of those concerns, Americans will still find a way to play?

LET'S WATCH

Ask visitors to watch the video. What are some of the reasons parents and kids in the Beacon Hill area of Seattle, WA, participate in their local soccer league? What do you think the young athletes are learning about the value of sports?

TALK BACK

Point out the "Story Stop" and encourage visitors to talk about why sports are popular in your community.

ABOVE: Newkirk High School football players, OK, 2012. Photo by Tiffany Ruhl for Museum on Main Street. OPPOSITE: Youth rugby player, Seattle, WA, 2010. © 2012 Steven Seiller / Summit Lights Photography.

TALK BACK to the SMITHSONIAN!

Scattered throughout **HOMETOWN TEAMS**, you will find eight “Story Stops” that encourage visitors to answer a question about sports in your community or about their own personal experiences. Visitors can record their audio story by downloading the Smithsonian’s **STORIES FROM MAIN STREET** app as they enter the exhibition. The application is free, but the visitor’s smartphone data charges will apply. A QR code on the “Let’s Play” pylon in the exhibition introduction will lead visitors to a website where they can obtain the free app for their iOS or Android smartphone. Visitors can also take a printed card featuring one of eight sports. Encourage visitors to look for that sport’s symbol on a corresponding “Story Stop.”

This free application offers a chance for you and your visitors to participate in an exciting initiative called **Stories from Main Street**, a Smithsonian repository for stories from rural America. A project website at www.StoriesFromMainStreet.org provides a place where the Smithsonian, state humanities councils, host organizations, and the general public work together to create a permanent home for important stories, images, oral histories, and videos that document life in small and rural communities.

What Kinds of Stories Does the Initiative Collect?

We’re interested in more than your visitors’ sports stories. If it happened in small-town America, we want to hear about it. Visitors can not only answer questions from **HOMETOWN TEAMS**, they can also add stories in other categories like:

- Favorite food traditions
- Experiences living in a small town
- Work
- Travel and immigration
- Local music traditions

How Can My Community Help?

Ask your visitors to tell their stories to the Smithsonian. Visitors can use the app or leave stories, photographs, and even videos at www.StoriesFromMainStreet.org.

Share your stories! Remind your visitors to visit www.StoriesFromMainStreet.org!

DOCENT HINTS

Tips for Being an Informed and Effective Docent

Thank you for serving as a docent for **HOMETOWN TEAMS**!

- **INTRODUCE** yourself and make sure each visitor in your tour group feels welcome.
- **TELL** visitors that **HOMETOWN TEAMS** was created by an innovative partnership that brings Smithsonian exhibitions to rural towns. Each exhibition is specifically designed to be small and flexible.
- **ORIENT** your visitors to the exhibition, and give them a starting point from which you’ll begin the tour. Give your visitors an idea of what to expect—how long the tour will last (30 minutes is a good average), whether there are seating areas along the way, where facilities are located, etc.
- **ASSESS** your audience and structure your tour accordingly. Younger visitors often relate to technology, popular culture, and references to today, while older visitors relate to historical content and personal memories. Be prepared to provide information to any visitors that may not be able to access the exhibition due to a disability.
- **BE FAMILIAR** with the exhibition and the information provided. Feel free to carry your handbook on tours, but avoid reading directly from it. Aim for comfortable and conversational exchanges with your visitors.
- **ENCOURAGE** visitors to ask questions. Don’t be afraid to say, “I don’t know,” but try to find out the answer before the visitors leave.
- **AVOID** focusing on questions that can be answered with “yes” or “no.” Ask open-ended questions like: “What do you think...?” or “How do you feel about...?”
- **GIVE** visitors time to think about and answer questions. Usually someone will speak up in about 10 to 15 seconds.
- **BE SURE** to practice your tour with museum staff, other docents and volunteers, and your family and friends.
- **REMEMBER**, if you’re relaxed and having a good time, your visitors will enjoy themselves too. Have fun!

As representatives of the museum, docents are often...asked all sorts of questions. BE PREPARED!

- **KNOW** the museum’s name, address, phone number, hours of operation, and the location of the gift shop, restrooms, water fountains, and seating areas for all visitors, including those with disabilities.
- **BE FAMILIAR** with dates and times of programs and special events associated with **HOMETOWN TEAMS**, and with other exhibitions in the museum.