Sports in US education

The sports business

Sports are very important to American people. Millions of people play sports and millions more watch them on TV. Professional sports, for example American football, basketball and baseball, are big business. Companies now sponsor sports competitions, TV stations that show games earn lots of money from advertisements and successful young sportspeople can can also make millions of dollars.

Little League baseball

Young starters

Children start to play baseball from the age of five. They play in the ‘Little League’ – the largest youth sports organisation in the world. More than 2.5 million children and young people between the ages of 5 and 18 play in the league. For many boys and girls it is free. Volunteers help to run teams and local businesses often sponsor them.
School cheerleading

A real sport

Cheerleading is a big part of sports in America. Cheerleaders perform at professional American football matches and basketball games. They also perform in competitions against other schools. The biggest cheerleading competitions are on TV. There are about 400,000 school cheerleaders in the USA. Most cheerleaders are girls, but some teams have boys as well. Cheerleaders start at a young age. Most middle schools and high schools have cheerleaders. They practise almost every day and do some very difficult stunts.
University students in the USA play sports for money. The Oklahoma Sooners, for example, are a famous college American football team. More than 80,000 people go to watch their games – that’s more than at a Juventus game! The tickets to see the Sooners are expensive – about $100. The team has even got its own TV channel and the players are very popular around the university and the city.

It costs about $20,000 a year to study at the University of Oklahoma. But students who play for the Oklahoma Sooners can get a scholarship to pay for their studies. Then, when they leave university they can become professional players. There are scholarships for cheerleaders, too! Sports can be a good way to pay for your studies.
Super Bowl

Big business on the football field

The Super Bowl is the biggest professional American football game of the year. It’s the final game of the American football season. It’s played by the best two teams in the USA that season. The first Super Bowl was in 1966. Since then 18 different teams have won it. Pittsburgh has won the most Super Bowls – six in total. There isn’t a Super Bowl stadium. The game is played in a different city every year.

Many people spend Super Bowl Sunday with friends and family and they watch the game on TV. In fact, more than 100 million people watch it – that’s more than any other TV programme! The world’s most popular singers often sing at half-time – in 2013 the singer was Beyoncé. As a result advertising is very expensive. It costs $4 million for a 30 second advertisement during the Super Bowl.

Americans eat a lot during the game. In fact, it’s the second largest day for food consumption in the USA after Thanksgiving!