Americans began to play football at university in the 1870s. At the beginning the game was like rugby. Then, in 1882, Walter Camp, a player and coach, introduced some new rules and American Football was born. In fact, Walter Camp is sometimes called the Father of American Football.

Today American football is the most popular sport in the USA. A match is only 60 minutes long, but it can take hours to complete because they always stop play. The season starts in September and ends in February. There are 11 players in a team and the ball looks like a rugby ball.

‘I play American football for my high school team. We play most Friday evenings. All our friends and family come to watch the games and there are hundreds of people at the stadium. The atmosphere is fantastic!'
In my free time I love watching professional football. My local team is the Green Bay Packers. It’s difficult to get a ticket for a game, but I watch them on TV.

**Ice hockey**

People don’t agree on the origins of ice hockey. Some people say that it’s a Native American game. Other people think that immigrants from Iceland invented ice hockey and that they brought the game to Canada in the 19th century. Either way, ice hockey as we know it today was first played at the beginning of the 20th century.

The ice hockey season is from October to June. There are six players in each team, but they don’t use a ball – they use a puck. Each game has three periods of 20 minutes, so the game lasts 60 minutes.

‘I don’t play ice hockey, but I love watching it on TV! It’s a very fast moving game. My favourite team is the Boston Bruins. The Bruins play at the TD Garden Stadium, in Boston. Nearly 20,000 people go to see their games.

During the season I watch it twice a week when it’s on TV. One strange thing about ice hockey is the fighting. Players often fight during the game. A lot of people like this tension, but I don’t!’
Baseball is an old historical sport, but it’s still very popular today – about 20 million Americans regularly play it! English immigrants brought baseball to the USA in the early 18th century. Americans play baseball from April to September.

A baseball is quite small, it’s only about 7 cm in diameter. There are nine players in each team. Unlike other American sports, there is no clock in baseball! You play until every player has batted. A professional game usually takes about three hours – sometimes longer!

‘My favourite sport is baseball. I love it! I play in a Little League team called West Shore, near my home on Staten Island, it’s great fun! I sometimes go to watch the Staten Island Yankees with my dad and my sister and I always watch the New York Yankees when they’re on TV!’
Basketball was invented in 1891 by James Naismith, a school gym teacher. He wanted a game for his students to play inside when it was wet outside. Basketball is now a winter sport. The season is from October to April. There are five players in a basketball team. The ball is about 70 cm in diameter and the basket is three metres from the floor. The players have to jump really high to score! A professional game is 48 minutes long. They have four quarters of 12 minutes, but the game is much longer because there are a lot of breaks.

‘The sport I love is basketball and I play for my school team – we’re the league champions! I want to play for my local professional team, the Sacramento Kings, when I’m older. I go to watch them with my mom and dad every weekend.’