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CLASS B

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BRITISH GAMES ARE PLAYED IN MOST COUNTRIES
OF THE COMMONWEALTH
TO WHAT EXTENT IS THIS STATEMENT TRUE?

Members of a family or clan or village usually have the same customs and take part in the same kind of activities. Since the British Commonwealth is a great family of nations, it is natural that its members share a common interest in the same kind of games. Family ties are, however, not the sole reason for the immense popularity of British games throughout the Commonwealth. The intrinsic values and accompanying pleasures of these games must be very high indeed to have won the hearts of so many. To the mind, to the body, to oneself and for the good of each community, these games, originated and developed in the characteristic climes of the British Isles, have found universal acceptance - under the scorching heat of the tropics, in the coldness of the Arctic Fringe, on the verdant greens of Hong Kong, and on the desert lands of Tripoli. Players of all races, nationalities and creeds meet on the common medium of the sportsground and there discover and share oneness of ideals, sportsmanship, teamwork and moral integrity.

Let us discuss these British games, trace their historical development and then engage in the pleasureable and enlightening task of analysing their intrinsic worth and popularity.

The most popular games in England are cricket in summer and football in winter. Cricket is as popular in England as baseball is in the United States of America. It is played in schools, by amateur clubs, in the villages, and in professional matches. The very word cricket has come to mean "fair play" in ordinary life and a dishonourable deal is condemned as "not cricket".

Cricket was first played in the eighteenth century. It soon won much popularity over the British Empire. In India there was a cricket club in Calcutta at the end of the eighteenth century. The players were so keen in the game that, not long afterward, the quality of the teams became very high. The Indian cricket teams toured England many times, notably in 1936 and 1946. Cricket is also widely played in New Zealand. The New Zealand team first visited England in 1927. In the years 1937 and 1949 many fine matches were played between New Zealand and English teams. South Africa was first visited by an English team in 1888. Because of the many visits that followed South Africa produced some of the world’s finest players, such as A. Melville and E. Mitchell. In the year 1942 a cricket club called the Trinidad Club was founded in the West Indies. Through the years the West Indies received a number of visits from English teams. The West Indies teams were so good that in 1947 they beat the visiting English team. In Australia, cricket was started in the nineteenth century. In 1888 the Australian team first visited England. Nowadays the Australian and the English teams compete in matches every year. News of the matches is reported in the newspapers and is keenly followed by the British public all over the world.
Football was started in England in the nineteenth century. Very soon it was very popular not only among the schoolboys but also with the grown-ups. When the game spread to the countries of the British Empire it met immediately with a favourable acceptance. The wide appeal of the game has remained unimpaired through the years and its dominant position in the field of popular sports is as stable as a rock. This may well be illustrated by the existence of many football leagues in each large city in the Commonwealth, by the packed stadiums during the football season, and by the heated arguments over important matches heard on the buses and in the restaurants.

Golf clubs began to be founded in England in the eighteenth century. Golf is a good game for both the young and the old. Expert players have been as young as fourteen and as old as seventy. Young or old, players like the game because each person has an equal chance to show off his best. The score depends solely on the golfer's own ability and effort. Golf also has a wide appeal as a physical exercise. All over the Commonwealth the game has found favour with the upper classes. In as small a place as Hong Kong, there are two fair-sized golf courses.

England is the country in which modern organized racing originated. The earliest formal racing dated back to about A.D. 1174 during the reign of Henry II. At first the sport was meant only for the privileged class but as the years passed, its pleasure and excitement was shared by all classes of people. In England many important people, including the Queen herself, keep horses. Thousands of people thronged into race-courses on racing days. The sport is no less popular in the Commonwealth countries. In the big cities in Australia, India, Canada, South Africa and New Zealand, there are thousands after thousands of racing fans who care neither eat nor sleep but the form and chances of horses during the racing season.

As was previously mentioned, the popularity of British games among Commonwealth countries owes not so much to the family ties as to the high intrinsic values in the games themselves. Cricket in itself is a fine open-air exercise. It trains our judgement and our eyes and teaches good fellowship, true sporting spirit and perseverance.

In playing golf the score depends solely on the golfer's own ability and effort. This trains the golfer to develop independent will. Golf also has a wide appeal as a physical exercise and stresses courtesy and sportsmanship. During play, a golfer stands quietly aside while his opponent makes his strokes. This trains the golfers to have patience. While one golfer makes his strokes the other assists in every way to give his competitor an equal chance. Should a member of a golfing party lose a ball, the other players search for it as thoroughly as if it were their own. This shows that the golfers are trained to be ready to help others. Golf also puts a player on his honour, for he usually keeps his own score.

/In playing ...
In playing football we can exercise our bodies. It can train us to have a keen brain and quick reflex actions. It can cure one's self-centeredness and train a person to work for his team rather than for himself. It teaches him in a further way that the welfare of a community is more important than his own advancement and interests.

At the first blush horse racing seems to be a mere glorified game of chance. Looking into the matter further, however, we find that it has its benefits and charms. Although the joy of winning and the possibility or probability of losing gives an air of excitement, this is far from being the only factor which draws the crowds to Happy Valley or Ascot. The healthiness of an afternoon in the open air; the appraisal of the fitness of the ponies; watching the racing colours of the jockeys; using one's judgement and sharing whatever one has of this asset with friends in order to predict correctly the results; the observation of sportsmanship in action; watching the ladies in their latest millinery creations; these and many other enjoyments and benefits to relax the mind, to invigorate the body and hopefully to enrich the purse, are inherent in horse racing.

Having meditated upon the innumerable benefits of British games one feels that the adage "The Battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton" verily rings true. It is little wonder that the games have become so popular all over the Commonwealth. Indeed, besides her valuable contributions of law, parliamentary institutions, the steam-engine and penicillin, England has done much for the world through popularizing her national games - cricket, football, golf, and equestrian sports.

**REFERENCE BOOKS**

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