

Some Possible Topics for Essay 3 (Investigative Essay)

Note: These topics are large areas. You will want to narrow your topic to a more specific question that will motivate your essay. You are not limited to these topics, but your topic must be approved by me.

Historical Focus

Individuals: Babe Ruth, Babe Didrickson Zaharias, Muhammad Ali, Jackie Robinson, Jim Thorpe ...NOTE: These figures should not be living—Ali is the exception.

Leagues or Conferences: Negro Leagues or the Women's league (baseball), NCAA, the origins of college sports (pick a sport!), MLB, NFL ... why has league play in tennis never really taken off?

Origins of a particular sport

Origins of a particular sport at MIT, its history at MIT, and its current standing --using MIT archives and *The Tech* as main sources (and including interviews with coaches or athletic directors)

Cultural meanings of a particular sport—e.g., why was boxing so popular in its heyday? Why are martial arts and mixed martial arts so popular now? Why is baseball no longer in fact the national sport? (Or would you like to argue that it is?) Why is soccer so popular around the world, but not in the US?

The Olympic games: What is their role as a global phenomenon—essentially commercial, or do they contribute to popular culture in a significant way?

Current issues

The (proper) place of sports in higher education

The place of sports in elementary or high school, incl. non-school teams

The politics of women in sports—effects of Title IX, women in boxing, equal pay for women in tennis...

Benefits of playing sports

Impact of sports on communities—how they can contribute positively to whole communities or to special communities (The Jimmy Fund, etc.)

Sports psychology as a “science”

Media and \$\$\$\$

Burnout of young athletes

Violence/safety, esp. but not limited to concussions—e.g., the violent culture of pro hockey ...

Gambling

Juicing/doping

Salaries, management issues for pro teams and leagues; the role of agents

Issues re: “other” sports such as skiing, horse racing, etc.

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