29 Early Sports Rules - mental_floss List Show (Ep.223)

List Show
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John: Hi, I'm John Green. Welcome to my salon. This is Mental Floss on YouTube.

1. Did you know that in the early days of baseball, there were no innings? Instead, teams played to a certain number of counts, or as we know them today, runs. They usually played until one team reached 21 and that's the first of many facts and one lie about original sports rules I'm gonna share with you today in this video presented by Geico.

[opening sequence]

2. Baseball is different in a few other ways too, like in the 19th century, pitchers didn't intend to strike out batters. Instead, they were supposed to throw the ball in a way that made it easy to be hit.

3. Plus in those days there had to be 9 bad pitches for the batter to get a walk. Because you know what they say, baseball games just don't last long enough.

4. As is the case today, batters were out if a fielder caught their fly ball, but they were also out if fielders caught the ball after one bounce.

We're not gonna bounce this one because it is signed by the entire roster of the 1991 Cincinnati Reds.

5. Original basketball rules included a jump ball after every single basket. There were also 18 players on the court and no foul shots.

6. Nor was there dribbling in basketball. Rather than being able to move the ball that way, when a player caught it, they would have to throw it from the spot where it was caught. It was essentially the same thing as ultimate Frisbee.

7. Anyway Wilt Chamberlain, who played in the NBA from 1959 - 1973 is responsible for a lot of basketball rules changes because he was like too good?

Wilt is responsible for the offensive goal tending rule for instance. Also, he used to inbound the ball over the backboard, which is no longer allowed.

8. But arguably more interesting, when he was playing was playing in college, Chamberlain used to dunk his free throws.

According to Chamberlain "I would step back to just inside the top of the circle, take off from behind the line and dunk." This is why there is now a rule that you can't cross the free throw line until the ball goes through the basket or touches the rim.

9. In the 1870s, field hockey was played with a cricket ball.

10. Billiards originated outdoors. In fact, it evolved from the same outdoor games that croquet and golf emerged from.

By the way, did you know that croquet is pronounced "crow-quette" in England? I mean it, next time you're in England, call it cro-quette and see how it goes.

11. In 1470, King Louis XI of France owned the first indoor billiard table. It looked a lot like croquet on the table with like one hole in the middle and the balls were moved around with sticks that resembled croquet mallets rather than the pool cues that we know today.

12. Darts also has its roots in the outdoors. The original dartboard was the cross-section of a *tree*. See, that's why we said it has its *roots* because its the cross-section of the tree.

13. By the way, a dartboard used to be called "a butt". I know that's not technically a sports rule but I just felt like I couldn't leave it out.

14. American football was pretty dangerous in its early days. For instance, in 1905 around 20 people died while playing. The next year, the forward pass became legal and the game became somewhat safer, although, you know, not that safe.

15. Football helmets weren't required until 1939 for college football. They became required in the NFL in 1943.

16. The first professional football player was William, aka "Pudge" Heffelfinger, who perhaps had the greatest name in the history of the world.

In 1892, Heffelfinger received five hundred dollars to play for the Allegheny Athletic Association in one game. In today's terms, that's around 13.1 thousand dollars. Now I know that's not technically a rule, but it's definitely a significant difference in pay.

17. As for non-American football that is, real football, it has a much older history.

Like in the Middle Ages, Europeans played something called "mob football" which had very few rules. As many people who wanted to participate could, and you could use whatever means possible, including your hands to move a ball from one place to another.

And those two places could span like streets or fields or even villages. It was kind of like Calvinball.

18. Back in the day, soccer balls were made out of different materials like animal bladders. Often they would be covered in leather. The football that we use today emerged in 1941.

19. Moving forward in time, in 2011 Sheffield Football Club auctioned off a rule book from 1858. It contained rules like "the ball may be pushed or hit with the hand, but holding the ball, except in the case of a fair kick, is altogether disallowed."

20. But if I may briefly return to animal organs, early water polo games used a pig's stomach as a ball. Wait, did somebody say pig's stomach? Time to put a quarter in the staff Pork Chop Party Fund.

21. To return to water polo, it looked a lot like water rugby in the 1800s. Like, players would even wrestle underwater which, of course, turned out to be rather dangerous.

22. If these rules are making your favorite sports sound chaotic, imagine playing volleyball in the 1890s when there were an unlimited number of players on each side *and* an unlimited number of times the ball could be hit before it went over the net.

23. In the Middle Ages, Germans bowled as a religious symbol. Like during church, a pin was set up to represent Pagans and if a person could knock down a pin with a ball, it was considered indicative of their Godliness.

24. Speaking of bowling, there is an unconfirmed rumor that King Henry VIII bowled using a cannon ball.

I came in like a cann- shut up, I know how to sing.

25. Tennis was originally played with a wooden or leather ball, and people's hands. Eventually, a paddle was introduced and then in the 1500s, players started using a cork ball and a racket with sheep guts where we know have strings.

Man, a *lot* of 16th century leisure was dependent upon animal

innards.

26. Ping pong also started out with a cork ball and many of the first paddles were made out of cigar box lids.

27. In the early days of boxing, Ancient Romans used leather strips in place of boxing gloves. And boxers also often fought to the death.

28. The boxer Jack Broughton introduced rules to the sport in 1743, but fights were done glove-less back then and there were still an unlimited number of rounds.

29. And finally, I return to my salon to tell you that the rules of golf actually haven't changed much over the years. The 1744 articles and laws of playing at golf contain 13 rules. Now, this one still applies but it's a bit outdated:

"If a ball be stopp'd by any Person, Horse, Dog or anything else, The Ball so stopp'd must be play'd where it lies."

So watch out for those horses and dogs my friends and play it where it lies.

Thank you for watching Mental Floss here on YouTube which is made with the help of all these nice people and with the support of our friends at Geico.

Every week, we endeavor to answer one of your mind-blowing questions. This week's question comes from the entity of darkness (that's a little bit concerning) who asks: where did the rumour that Disney was cryogenically frozen come from?

Well, the legend says that Disney was frozen and his corpse now resides beneath the Pirates of the Caribbean ride at Disneyland. In fact, he was cremated and his ashes were interred in the forest along Memorial Park in Glendale, California.

The first known human cryonic freezing didn't even happen until a month after Disney's death. Now there were two biographies published, one in 1986 and one in 1993 suggesting that Disney was fascinated with cryonics. But, both of those biographies have been widely discredited.

It's thought that the rumor came from Disney Studio animators however, that was told to us by a Disney Studio publicist so who knows what actually happened. I'm just kidding, he's definitely not frozen.

Thank you for watching Mental Floss on YouTube and as we say in my hometown: don't forget to be awesome.