

## Sport in the UK

1 Sports of all kinds play an important part in many  
2 people's lives. There are several sports that are  
3 particularly popular in the UK. Many sporting events  
4 take place at major stadiums such as Wembley  
5 Stadium in London and the Millennium Stadium in  
6 Cardiff.

7 Local governments and private companies provide  
8 sports facilities such as swimming pools, tennis  
9 courts, football pitches, dry ski slopes and  
10 gymnasiums. Many famous sports, including cricket,  
11 football, lawn tennis, golf and rugby, began in Britain.

12 The UK has hosted the Olympic games on three  
13 occasions: 1908, 1948 and 2012. The main Olympic  
14 site for the 2012 Games was in Stratford, East  
15 London. The British team was very successful,  
16 across a wide range of Olympic sports, finishing third  
17 in the medal table.

18 The Paralympic Games for 2012 were also hosted in  
19 London. The Paralympics have their origin in the  
20 work of Dr Sir Ludwig Guttman, a German refugee,  
21 at the Stoke Mandeville hospital in Buckinghamshire.  
22 Dr Guttman developed new methods of treatment for  
23 people with spinal injuries and encouraged patients  
24 to take part in exercise and sport.



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**Cricket**

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Cricket originated in England and is now played in many countries. Games can last up to five days but still result in a draw! The idiosyncratic nature of the game and its complex laws are said to reflect the best of the British character and sense of fair play. You may come across expressions such as 'rain stopped play', 'batting on a sticky wicket', 'playing a straight bat', 'bowled a googly' or 'it's just not cricket', which have passed into everyday usage. The most famous competition is the Ashes, which is a series of Test matches played between England and Australia.

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**Football**

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Football is the UK's most popular sport. It has a long history in the UK and the first professional football clubs were formed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland each have separate leagues in which clubs representing different towns and cities compete. The English Premier League attracts a huge international audience. Many of the best players in the world play in the Premier League. Many UK teams also compete in competitions such as the UEFA (Union of European Football Associations) Champions



51 League, against other teams from Europe. Most  
52 towns and cities have a professional club and people  
53 take great pride in supporting their home team.  
54 There can be great rivalry between different football  
55 clubs and among fans.

56 Each country in the UK also has its own national  
57 team that competes with other national teams across  
58 the world in tournaments such as the FIFA  
59 (Fédération International de Football Association)  
60 World Cup and the UEFAFA European Football  
61 Championships. England's only international  
62 tournament victory was at the World Cup of 1966,  
63 hosted in the UK.

64 Football is also a popular sport to play in many local  
65 communities, with people playing amateur games  
66 every week in parks all over the UK.

## 67 **Rugby**

68 Rugby originated in England in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century  
69 and is very popular in the UK today. There are two  
70 different types of rugby, which have different rules:  
71 union and league. Both have separate leagues and  
72 national teams in England, Wales, Scotland and  
73 Northern Ireland (who play with the Irish Republic).  
74 Teams from all countries compete in a range of  
75 competitions. The most famous rugby union



76 competition is the Six Nation Championship between  
77 England, Ireland, Scotland, Wales, France and Italy.  
78 The Super League is the most well-known rugby  
79 league (club) competition.

## 80 **Horse Racing**

81 There is a very long history of horse racing in Britain,  
82 with evidence of events taking place as far back as  
83 Roman times. The sport has a long association with  
84 royalty. There are racecourses all over the UK.  
85 Famous horse racing events include: Royal Ascot, a  
86 five day race meeting in Berkshire attended by  
87 members of the Royal Family; the Grand National at  
88 Aintree near Liverpool; and the Scottish Grand  
89 National at Ayr. There is a National Horseracing  
90 Museum in Newmarket, Suffolk.

## 91 **Golf**

92 The modern game of golf can be traced back to 15<sup>th</sup>  
93 century Scotland. It is a popular sport played socially  
94 as well as professionally. There are public and  
95 private golf courses all over the UK. St Andrews in  
96 Scotland is known as the home of golf. The Open  
97 Championship is the only 'Major' tournament held  
98 outside the United States. It is hosted by a different  
99 golf course every year.



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**Tennis**

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Modern tennis evolved in England in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first tennis club was founded in Leamington Spa in 1872. The most famous tournament hosted in Britain is The Wimbledon Championships, which takes place each year at the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club. It is the oldest tennis tournament in the world and the only 'Grand Slam' event played on grass.

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**Water Sports**

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Sailing continues to be popular in the UK, reflecting our maritime heritage. A British sailor, Sir Francis Chichester, was the first person to sail single-handed around the world passing the Cape of Good Hope (Africa) and Cape Horn (South America), in 1966/67. Two years later, Sir Robin Knox-Johnston became the first person to do this without stopping. Many sailing events are held throughout the UK, the most famous of which is at Cowes on the Isle of Wight.

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Rowing is also popular, both as a leisure activity and as a competitive sport. There is a popular yearly race on the Thames between Oxford and Cambridge Universities.



123      **Motor Sports**

124      There is a long history of motor sport in the UK, for  
125      both cars and motor cycles. Motor car racing in the  
126      UK started in 1902. The UK continues to be a world  
127      leader in the development and manufacture of  
128      motor-sport technology. A Formula 1 Grand Prix  
129      event is held in the UK each year and a number of  
130      British Grand Prix drivers have won the Formula 1  
131      World Championship. Recent British winners include  
132      Damon Hill, Lewis Hamilton and Jensen Button.

133      **Skiing**

134      Skiing is increasingly popular in the UK. Many  
135      people go abroad to ski and there are also dry ski  
136      slopes throughout the UK. Skiing on snow may also  
137      be possible during the winter. There are five ski  
138      centres in Scotland, as well as Europe's longest dry  
139      ski slope near Edinburgh.

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