

Remember the dark-haired boy and the blond boy from the situation *Good or Bad Luck*? One of their favorite things to do in their free time is to play or watch sports. Sports such as basketball, baseball, football, and hockey are very popular in the United States. And many expressions that people use in everyday situations come from the world of sports.

Baseball was once considered the most popular sport and was called the *national pastime*, which means it was the nation's favorite thing to do for fun. Today, however, football and basketball are equally popular.

Each sport has its own way of making points. In basketball, you throw the ball through a basket to make points. In hockey, you push a puck, which is a round black disc with two flat sides, into a net to make goals. These attempts are called shots. **To take** or **to have a shot at something** and **to give something a shot** are expressions from sports that are used in many situations meaning *to make an attempt at something*.

Let's see some examples:

"I've taken my computer to every store in town, and no one can fix it." "Let me **take a shot** at it. I'm pretty good with computers."

I'd like to **have a shot** at playing electric guitar with David's rock group. I think I could do it.

"I don't know if I should study biology. I hear that it's really difficult."
"You should **give it a shot**. You might find out that you like it."

In baseball, football, and basketball, it is important to hold on to the ball and not drop it. The expression **to drop the ball** is used in many situations when people don't do something they should have done or when they make a mistake.

FYI

Take a look at these examples:

I asked Pete to clean the house before I got home with our friends, but he **dropped the ball**. When we arrived, the house was filthy.

The boss is going to be really angry with me. He wanted me to have this ready for his meeting on Friday, but I **dropped the ball**. It won't be ready until Monday.

Another expression with the word ball is **to play ball**. When you **play ball with** someone, you agree to do what the person wants you to do. Many times it is used when the person who is **playing ball** is at a disadvantage or is letting the other person get away with something.

Let's see some examples:

The association is trying to raise the prices each company is charging, and they expect all of us to **play ball**.

I found out that the bank manager was stealing from the bank, but he told me that if I didn't **play ball**, I would lose my job.

If you learn a little bit more about American sports, you will find more words and expressions from the world of sports that are commonly used in everyday situations.

Until next time, keep up the good work and have fun with English!