

No grassroots but lots of scaffold: a peek inside New York's cricket scene

Level 2: Intermediate

1 Warmer

a. Match the sports with the countries in which they originated.

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. water polo | a. Canada |
| 2. cricket | b. USA |
| 3. ice hockey | c. China |
| 4. polo | d. Scotland |
| 5. kayaking | e. England |
| 6. triathlon | f. Greenland |

2 Key words

a. Find the following words in the text. The paragraph numbers are given to help you.

1. a noun meaning *the money you get from a business* _____ (paragraph 2)
2. a noun meaning *people who come to live in a country from other countries*
_____ (paragraph 3)
3. a noun meaning *everything you can see behind the main thing you are looking at*
_____ (paragraph 4)
4. a noun meaning *the places where activities or events happen* _____
(paragraph 4)
5. a noun meaning *flat areas of ground on which sports are played* _____
(paragraph 4)
6. an adjective that means *the opposite of permanent* _____ (paragraph 4)
7. an adjective meaning *involving the ordinary people* _____ (paragraph 5)
8. a verb meaning *arranging a special event and providing the area, buildings, equipment or services needed for it* _____ (paragraph 6)
9. a verb meaning *working with someone to produce something* _____
(paragraph 6)
10. a noun meaning *the start of a new project* _____ (paragraph 7)

b. Use the words from task A to complete the following sentences. You may have to change the form of the word.

1. The match was postponed because the _____ was in terrible condition after the heavy rains.

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- Professional sports teams get some of their _____ from ticket and merchandise sales.
- The main objectives of _____ football are having fun and making friends instead of making money.
- Mexico, The US, and Canada are _____ the 2026 football World Cup.
- Taylor Swift is so famous that she has sold out several concerts in different _____.

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Andy Bull

5 June, 2024

- 1 Out on Long Island, New York, the International Cricket Council has spent \$30 million to build a cricket stadium. It is impressive, especially as it was built in six months. But then this is the city where they managed to build the Empire State Building in a year and 45 days.
- 2 The only problem is that the ICC is not just paying for facilities; it is trying to buy America's attention too. It wants to develop new markets. Right now, 85% of its revenue comes from India, and it has identified the US as its target market – which makes sense. It already has an audience here among the 5.5 million South Asian people who live in the US, but they are scattered across the country.
- 3 Overall, the US TV sports rights market is more than 10 times the size of India's, but, if the ICC is going to get some of that market, it needs to prove cricket is not just for immigrants. The big World Cup game between India and Pakistan is supposed to be the game that makes the locals sit up and notice.
- 4 If the USA is going to be anything more than a backdrop for Indian TV, what cricket here really needs is infrastructure and facilities. Even the Chair of USA Cricket, Venu Pisike, described his job as "doing the best I can with the little resources and funding available". The Nassau County ground may not have permanent seats, but the other venues in New York, in the Bronx, do not even have pitches that are up to standard. In the beginning, the temporary stadium was supposed to be there too, until the local players pointed out that, if it was, they would not have anywhere to play this season.
- 5 "The first thing they need to do is create one good cricket field," one local club player told me. "Even one on a par with even the worst cricket field in London. You could play for the worst club in London and your field is better than the best one we have in New York. We just need any kind of facility, where people can practise but there's no investment at all at a grassroots level." What they have got instead is a \$30m temporary stadium and a promise from the ICC that, when it is all gone and the show has moved on, there will still be a cricket pitch there.
- 6 Major League Cricket managed to develop its ground in Grand Prairie, which is also hosting games in this tournament, for \$21m. They are already developing plans for permanent venues in each of their existing host cities. You wonder whether cricket would not have got a lot more for its money by collaborating on a project like that. As it is, any New Yorkers who started liking cricket during the World Cup are going to have to travel out of state to watch another game when the tournament is over.
- 7 Still, it is a large project, and everyone agrees is that it is going to take a lot of time to get right. MLC is already expanding, and its investors say its success should be measured over decades. The ICC, too, is treating this tournament as a launch. It is only supposed to be the beginning. The big question is how many people here want it to continue.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Are these statements true (T) or false (F) according to the article? Correct any that are false.

1. The Long Island cricket stadium was built in a year and 45 days.
2. 5.5 million South Asians live in New York.
3. Most of the ICC's revenue comes from India.
4. India's TV sports rights market is more than 10 times the size of the US TV sports rights market.
5. Cricket in the USA has a lack of infrastructure and facilities.
6. The Long Island stadium is a permanent stadium.
7. The stadium cost \$30 million to build.
8. It is the only venue in the USA where cricket World Cup games are being played.

4 Key language

a. Fill the gaps in the phrases from the text using prepositions.

1. _____ a par with
2. _____ to standard
3. _____ a grassroots level
4. collaborate _____ a project
5. the game _____ two rival teams
6. get more _____ your money

b. Complete the sentences using expressions from task A.

1. The cricket World Cup is not _____ the football World Cup, but it is very important in many countries.
2. Many times, you _____ buying groceries at the farmers' market than at the supermarket.
3. We are considering changing suppliers because the quality of work of our current ones is not _____ .

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5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- "There is too much sport on TV. Who needs another sport?"
- "You can't understand a sport unless you have played it yourself."

6 In your own words

a. Use an internet search engine to find more information about these sports from the warmer: ice hockey, polo and triathlon. Find out:

- where they are played or where people do these sports
- how many people participate in them

Add any other information you find about them.

b. Report your findings to the class.