

Forget what you know about sports.

You watch a football game. 22 players run after a ball. People shout. That is the game you see. But there is another game. You cannot see it.

Tennis

A tennis player waits. The ball comes fast. Her brain works very fast. It thinks: Where is the ball going? Then her body moves. She runs. She hits the ball. Good shot!

Running

A runner is very fast. He does not think about winning. He only feels his breath. He feels his feet on the ground. He wants to be faster. He runs to be better than before.

Basketball

In basketball, players do not need words. A player passes the ball. He does not pass to where his friend is. He passes to where his friend will be. Five players work like one person. The best part is not the big jump. The best part is the small passes before it.

Gymnastics

A gymnast walks on a long, thin board. She fights fear. She thinks: "What if I fall?" Her heart beats fast. But she stays calm. That is hard to do.

The Real Game

The scoreboard shows who wins. But the real game is inside the player. Next time you watch sports, look closely. Do not just see the goal. See all the small choices to make the goal.

Writing Activity

Choose one sport from the reading: football, tennis, running, basketball, or gymnastics.

Write 3–5 sentences answering these questions:

- What does the player think about?
- What does the player feel inside?
- Why is this hard to see?

Example:

In tennis, the player thinks about where the ball is going. She feels her heart beat fast. This is hard to see because only she knows what her brain is doing.