

Sport Taxonomy: Types of Sports, Definitions, and Examples

Volley sports - Sports where a ball (or other object) is batted back and forth over a barrier (like a tennis net). Points are won when an opponent cannot return the object.

ex: tennis, badminton, volleyball, racquetball, squash

Bat & ball - In bat and ball games, the defense is on the field and holds the ball. They try to get the batters out by getting the ball past them. The batter tries to strike the ball in such a way that avoids the defense, so that the batter's team scores by moving while the defense is not in control of the ball.

ex: baseball, cricket, kickball

Goal sports - A team tries to move the ball past the opposing team and into a goal or zone to score points. The opposing tries to stop the team from moving the object into their goal, while also trying to move the ball into the goal or zone behind that team.

ex: soccer, football, basketball, hockey, lacrosse, olympic handball, polo, water polo, ultimate frisbee

Races - Competitors move between points on a designated course. Fastest time wins.

ex: track, swimming, horse racing, the Tour de France

Judged choreography - Individuals or teams compete to best perform a routine. They are then judged on their success in execution and the difficulty of the routine.

ex: figure skating, gymnastics, diving, synchronized swimming, skateboarding

Combat - Combatants compete to pin, knock-out, or strike the opponent, demonstrating their physical superiority. A winner is determined by either completely controlling their opponent, or by points awarded by a judge or referee

ex: boxing, wrestling, arm wrestling, fencing, judo, tug-of-war

Accuracy - Participants compete to most accurate throw, shoot, or otherwise hit a target.

ex: darts, bowling, archery, horseshoes, golf, cornhole