

## Lecture 4: Sports Terminology and Vocabulary Acquisition

Vocabulary in sports is vast, encompassing equipment, rules, venues, and scoring. It also includes a layer of “jargon” or slang that acts as a shibboleth for insiders. This lecture categorizes this vocabulary to facilitate retention.<sup>26</sup>

### 4.1 Venues and Equipment

The place where sport is played determines the noun used. This is a common source of error for non-native speakers who might overuse “field.”

**Table 3: Sports Venues and Associated Equipment**

Sport	Venue Name	Equipment Vocabulary
Football (Soccer)	Pitch / Field	Boots (cleats), shin pads, goal posts, net, whistle.
Tennis	Court	Racquet, ball, net, baseline, umpire’s chair.
Basketball	Court	Hoop, backboard, rim, high-tops (shoes).
Golf	Course	Clubs (driver, putter, iron), tee, green, bunker.
Athletics	Track (running) / Field (throwing)	Spikes, baton (relay), hurdle, starting blocks.
Ice Hockey	Rink	Puck, stick, skates, helmet, pads.
Swimming	Pool	Goggles, cap, lane rope, starting block.
Boxing	Ring	Gloves, mouthguard, ropes, canvas.

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### 4.2 Collocations: Play, Do, and Go

In English, you cannot simply “practice sport.” Specific verbs collocate with specific sports.<sup>30</sup>

- **PLAY:** Used for team sports, ball sports, or games involving competition between two sides.
  - *Examples:* Play football, play tennis, play chess, play rugby.
- **GO:** Used for activities that end in “-ing” and usually involve moving from one place to another.
  - *Examples:* Go swimming, go running, go cycling, go skiing, go surfing.

- *Exception:* “Go boxing” is rare; usually “box” or “do boxing.”
- **DO:** Used for recreational activities, martial arts, or individual exercises that stay in one place.
  - *Examples:* Do yoga, do judo, do karate, do aerobics, do gymnastics, do athletics.

*Exercise:* Students should practice classifying a list of 20 sports into these three categories.

### 4.3 The Language of Scoring and Results

Describing the outcome of a match requires precise verbs to indicate the nature of the victory or defeat.<sup>31</sup>

- **To Win:** To be victorious. “They won the match.”
  - **To Beat:** To defeat an opponent. “Algeria **beat** Nigeria.” (Note: You cannot say “Algeria won Nigeria”).
  - **To Draw/Tie:** To finish with equal scores. “The game ended in a draw.”
  - **To Score:** To get a point/goal. “Mahrez scored a goal.”
  - **To Concede:** To allow a goal against you. “The goalkeeper conceded a penalty.”
  - **A Thrashing/Routing:** A very large victory margin. “A 5-0 thrashing.”
  - **A Narrow Victory:** Winning by a small margin. “They edged out the opponent 1-0.”
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