



ESL Podcast 517 – Watching Competitive Sports

GLOSSARY

remote – remote control; a small device with many buttons, held in one’s hands to operate a television or stereo from a distance, changing channels or the volume

* Before people had remotes, they had to walk to the television set to change the channel.

Do you mind? – an informal way to ask someone to stop what he or she is doing, usually because it is bothering oneself

* I can’t study when you’re playing such loud music. Do you mind?

playoffs – games played toward the end of a competition among the best teams, used to determine which two teams are the very best and will play in the final championship game

* They were disappointed that they couldn’t play in the final championship game, but they were also pleased that they had made it to the national playoffs.

to root for – to cheer for a particular team or player; to hope that a particular team or player will win, usually shouting and clapping during the competition

* Are you rooting for Indiana State University or the University of Indiana?

underdog – the team that is not expected to win; the team that will probably lose

* Everyone was surprised when the underdog won the game.

victorious – the winning person or team; the person or team that wins

* The team was victorious because it has a lot of good players who know how to work well together.

to get pounded – to be beaten badly; to lose by a large number of points

* We were pounded at the game and lost 74-1.

champion – the winner

* Who is the world champion in long-distance running?

in peace – quietly and calmly, without interruptions or distractions

* I need to concentrate on this project. Can you please leave me in peace for a few hours?

season – the time of year when a sport is played

* When does the hockey season begin?



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testy – irritable; easily angered or frustrated

* Lee becomes very testy when he's under a lot of stress.

to back – to support; to root for

* Which candidate are you backing in the election?

to run scared – to be frightened or worried about something, especially while doing one's job or daily activities

* Everyone is running scared at work, worried about whether the company will be able to stay in business.

to choke – to not perform well because one is nervous, stressed, and under too much pressure

* Alberto is very intelligent, but he always chokes on exams.

to get choked – to not be able to breathe because another person's hands are held tightly around one's necks, trying to kill oneself

* She almost got choked when her necklace became caught in the fax machine.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is Bruno testy?
 - a) Because he wants Tamara to be quiet.
 - b) Because his team is losing.
 - c) Because the season is almost over.

2. What happened to the best player on Bruno's team?
 - a) He got nervous and played poorly.
 - b) He had to stop running because he couldn't breathe.
 - c) He got injured while playing the game.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

remote

The word "remote," in this podcast, means a remote control, or a small device with many buttons, held in one's hands to operate a television or stereo from a distance, changing channels or the volume: "Where's the remote? I want to turn up the volume." The word "remote" also means distant, or far away from where other people are: "Ashley grew up in a remote part of South Dakota, far from any cities." A "remote possibility" is a low likelihood or probability: "Most scientists think there's a remote possibility we'll be able to stop global warming." Finally, the phrase "remote from (something)" means very different from something: "Your experience growing up in New York City was very remote from Henry's experience, growing up on a potato farm."

to root for

In this podcast, the phrase "to root for" means to cheer for a particular team or player, hoping that it will win: "They painted their faces orange and black, because they're rooting for their favorite team: the Oregon State Beavers." The phrase "to take root" also means for the part of a plant that is underground to grow: "We planted small blueberry plants last weekend, and now we're just waiting for them to take root." The phrase "to root through (something)" means to look for something that is difficult to find: "He rooted through his briefcase, looking for his cell phone." Finally, the phrase "to be rooted to the spot" means to be unable to move, usually because one is too shocked or scared to do anything: "When she saw her favorite singer, she wanted to ask for his autograph, but she was rooted to the spot and couldn't speak."



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CULTURE NOTE

Many Americans like to follow sports on television. “Indeed” (actually), the “finals” (championship games) of “major” (very important) sports are “televised” (shown on television) and seen by millions of people.

In baseball, the finals for Major “League” (a group of teams that play against each other) Baseball “are known as” (are called) the World Series, and are held in the fall. The teams in Major League Baseball are divided into two “leagues” (groups) and the winners in each division play each other in the World Series.

In football, the Super Bowl is the championship game for the National Football League. In most years, the Super Bowl is the most-watched television “broadcast” (something shown on television). It has become almost like a holiday, with many people planning special parties for Super Bowl Sunday. Even people who don’t follow football like to go to Super Bowl parties, because they are a good opportunity to eat food and spend time with friends. Many people also like to watch the “commercials” (advertisements on TV), many of which are especially made for the Super Bowl broadcast. Because so many people watch the Super Bowl, advertising during the game is extremely expensive and companies “invest” (spend money to make money) millions of dollars to create interesting commercials, most of which are very funny or entertaining.

Other championship games include the Stanley Cup for the National Hockey League and the World Cup for soccer. Neither of these championships are as popular among Americans as the World Series and the Super Bowl, but they are very important to people who follow those sports.

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – a; 2 – a



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 517: Watching Competitive Sports.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 517. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

You can go to our website at eslpod.com and download a Learning Guide for this episode. The Learning Guide is an 8- to 10-page guide we provide for all of our current episodes that helps you improve your English even faster.

This episode is a dialogue between Bruno and Tamara about watching sporting events that are "competitive," meaning someone wins and someone loses. That's a pretty broad category, but we'll talk about some vocabulary that you would use in a sporting event such as a football game or a baseball game. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Bruno: Hey, what are you doing? Give me back that remote!

Tamara: The movie I want to watch is on right now. Do you mind?

Bruno: Of course I mind! I'm watching the playoffs. Can't you see that?

Tamara: The playoffs? Oh, I'll watch with you.

Bruno: You? You don't know anything about sports.

Tamara: It doesn't matter. I always root for the underdog. Our team will be victorious! Go team!

Bruno: Fine, but I'm rooting for the other team. Let's just watch the game, okay?

Tamara: Your team is going to get pounded. We will be the champions!

Bruno: Please, can I just watch this game in peace? I've been waiting for it all season.



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Tamara: Oooh, somebody is a little testy. I think it's because you know you're backing a losing team. You can't stand being on the losing side. Am I right? Your players are running scared already. I can tell.

Bruno: I'm just trying to follow the game.

Tamara: Look at that! Your best player just choked. How could he have missed such an easy shot?

Bruno: If you don't be quiet, I'll show you what it feels like to get choked!

[end of dialogue]

Bruno says to Tamara, "Hey, what are you doing? Give me back that remote." "Hey" is used to get someone's attention; sometimes it just means "hi." But if you say it with the right intonation like "hey!" then usually it's because you're angry or upset. Bruno is upset with Tamara because she took away his remote. "Remote," here, stands for remote control; it's a small device you use to control, for example, your television set or your cable or satellite TV box. That is what "remote" means here, but there are other meanings of this word in English, so take a look at the Learning Guide for some more explanations.

Tamara says, "The movie I want to watch is on right now." "Is on" meaning is currently showing on the television. "Do you mind?" meaning is it okay; that's an informal way of asking someone to stop what they are doing, usually because it is bothering you. So for example, you may be eating at a restaurant and the person next to you is talking loudly on their cell phone, which I absolutely hate. I could turn to them and say, "Excuse me, do you mind? We're trying to eat here." I probably wouldn't do that, especially if they were bigger than I am, but that's the idea. You would probably only say it to someone you know; it's not something you would say to, say, your boss – unless you don't mind losing your job!

Bruno says, "Of course I mind!" meaning no, I'm not going to stop what I'm doing; I am bothered by your request. He says, "I'm watching the playoffs." The "playoffs" are games that are played at the end of a season. For example, in baseball the season begins in April and it ends in late September. Then after, in October we have the playoffs; the best teams play against each other for the championship.

Tamara says, "The playoffs? Oh, I'll watch with you." Bruno says, "You!" He's very surprised that Tamara wants to watch sports with him. He says, "You don't know anything about sports." Tamara says, "It doesn't matter (it's not important



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that I don't know). I always root for the underdog." "To root (root) for a team" means to cheer for them. That is, to be in favor of them, want them to win: "I'm going to root for the University of Minnesota." That's my university, so when they play a football game, I am rooting for them. In baseball, of course, I root for the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Well, Tamara says that she always roots for the underdog. By the way, "root" has a couple of different meanings in English as well. Once again, take a look at that Learning Guide for some more explanations. She's rooting for the underdog. The "underdog" is the team that is not expected to win, the team that you believe is the weakest. So when the United States plays soccer in the World Cup, they're probably the underdog, meaning no one really expects them to win the championship. She says, "Our team will be victorious!" "To be victorious" means to be the victor, the winner. "Go team!" she says. Often if you are at a game and you want to cheer, that is, you want to express your support for your team out loud, you use the verb "go," like "Go Dodgers," means I want the Dodgers to win. You are telling them to play well, if you will.

Bruno then says, "Fine (okay), but I'm rooting for the other team. Let's just watch the game, okay?" Tamara says, "Your team is going to get pounded." "To get pounded" is an informal expression meaning to get beaten badly; they're going to lose by many, many points. Tamara is doing what a lot of sports fans do, she's saying something negative about the other team. "Your team is going to get pounded," they're going to be defeated by a large score. Tamara says, "We will be the champions!" The "champions" are the winners, the victors.

Bruno says, "Please, can I just watch this game in peace?" "To do (something) in peace" means to do it quietly, calmly, without other people making noise or talking or shouting. I was in the library – public library this afternoon and there was a woman there sitting next to one of the computers, and she starts talking very loudly on her cell phone. Did I mention that I really hate people who talk loudly on their cell phones in public? Well, I'm sure that the other people in the library wanted to read in peace, meaning without being disturbed by loud noises. Unhappily, that is almost impossible nowadays. But now I'm sounding like an old man, aren't I?

Bruno says, "Please, can we just watch this game in peace. I've been waiting for it all season." The "season" is the time – the months in the year when the regular games are played; that's called the "regular season." After that, when you have the playoffs, that's called, at least in baseball, the "post season," after the regular season.



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Tamara says, “Oooh, somebody is a little testy.” “To be testy” (testy) means to be easily angered or frustrated. We might use the word “irritable,” someone who gets irritated, who gets bothered by something. Tamara says, “I think it’s because you know you’re backing a losing team.” “To back (something or someone)” is to support them. It could mean here to root for them. In business, if you are backing someone, you are giving them money for their business. You are an investor; you would be called a “backer,” someone who backs a business. Here, Tamara means that Bruno is rooting a team that she says is going to lose. Tamara says, “You can’t stand (meaning are very bothered by; you are unable to tolerate or put up with the fact that you are) on the losing side. Am I right? Your players are running scared already. I can tell (I can see).” “To run scared” means to be frightened or worried that something is going to happen – something bad is going to happen, especially with your job or perhaps in a competition like a sporting event.

Bruno says, “I’m just trying to follow the game.” “To follow the game” means to pay attention to what is happening. Tamara says, “Look at that! Your best player just choked.” In sports, or in any competition, when you say someone “chokes” (chokes), you mean they do not perform well, usually because they’re nervous or under too much pressure, and they are not able to do what they would normally do. That’s to choke. “To choke” also means not to be able to breathe. If you eat something and it gets stuck in your throat, you could choke; you would perhaps pass out, even die because you were not getting oxygen into your lungs – into your body. But here, it’s simply means that someone is not performing very well.

Tamara says, “How could he have missed such an easy shot?” How was it possible? Because it was so easy, the player should have made this shot. “Shot,” here, would refer to, for example, in a basketball game when you throw the ball up, that’s called a shot.

Bruno says, “If you don’t be quiet, I’ll show you what it feels like to get choked!” “To get choked” means that someone grabs you by the neck and squeezes so that you are unable to breathe. We can say that the person is “choking,” that’s usually because they eat something, for example, that gets stuck in their throat and they can’t breathe. Or if you want to kill someone, you may choke them: “The person was getting choked by his friend, because he was angry.” Of course, that’s very dangerous; you should probably not choke anybody today! Bruno, of course, isn’t serious; he’s not actually going to choke Tamara. We don’t approve of that on ESL Podcast!

Now let’s listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.



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[start of dialogue]

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Bruno: If you don't be quiet, I'll show you what it feels like to get choked!

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by somebody who never chokes when she has an important dialogue to write, Dr. Lucy Tse. Go Lucy!

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.



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