



THE PAST AND PRESENT OF PEOPLE AND SPORT

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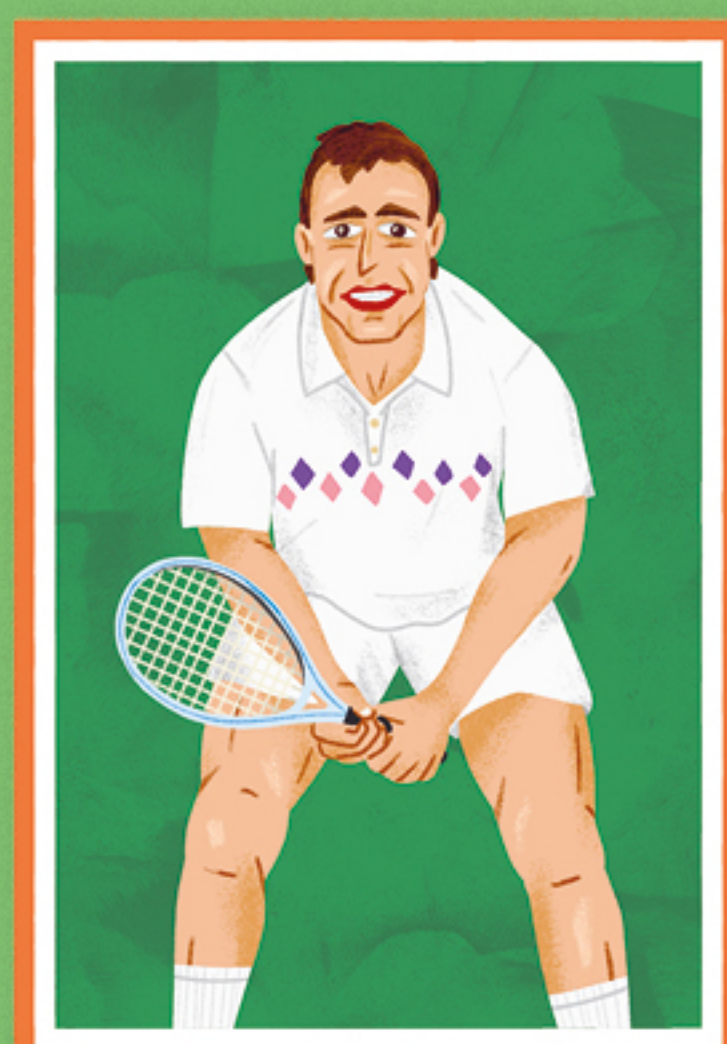


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**ŠTĚPÁNKA SEKANINOVÁ, TOM VELČOVSKÝ
& MATEJ ILČÍK**



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INTRODUCTION



were of the essence — as they were during skirmishes with neighbouring tribes who wanted your fire, food or home. In those days, it was easy to tell who was best, because the best took whatever they fancied and then drove you from your land.

Those whose limbs weren't so strong started making tools — and before long, they showed themselves to be better in other disciplines. Slowly, without even realizing it, they began to change the world around them, making it more comfortable to live in. Prehistoric folk would surely be surprised by the amount of comfort we modern folk have, however. We have to go out running just to keep our belly trim, because we sit in front of the TV for hours watching professional athletes running for a living.

These days, when we no longer have to fight nature or each other, how can we tell who is best? Is it the first to the finish, the scorer of most goals, or the one who stays underwater for longest? It is these who get the glory, fame and riches, and to whom we look up. But no one can be first all the time: people are forever trying to be better, so the winners keep changing. Some people never come first their whole life long.

For all these reasons, this book is not about the first to the finish. It is about those who started things, for whom taking part (or survival) was more important winning.

If this book were about all the winners, it might be the biggest book about sport ever. It would also be one of the most boring. We know now that being the very biggest or very best is not the main thing. Fun, laughter and pleasure are far more important.

That is why we have tried to make this book as much fun as possible. So read on and find out if we have succeeded and learn lots about the past and present of people and sport in the process! Who was the first to think of football? In this case, however, perhaps several people came first ...

We compete from a very young age: first steps, first words, first poo in the loo, first to finish lunch, best in class ... Those who come first tend to be faster and better. Coming first was already important in prehistoric times. Why? Because the first to attack usually survived; being first was a question of life and death. It's not all about speed, though. In combat, strength is a big deal too. Often, the strong ones are the biggest, and they tend not to be the quickest. Which begs the question: Who is better?

Friends and family are forever testing who is strongest, fastest, tallest, or can pee the furthest; whose hair is longest, whose hands are biggest, whose marks are best ... We do it because we can't help it. Even if the rival is our own self. Should I eat it all? Should I go? Should I stay to the end? Yes — I don't want to, but I have to.

The first people competed with nature, too — even if they didn't realize they were doing it. Again, the quickest and strongest had a better chance of survival. When hunting or fleeing from animals, quick legs and agile hands

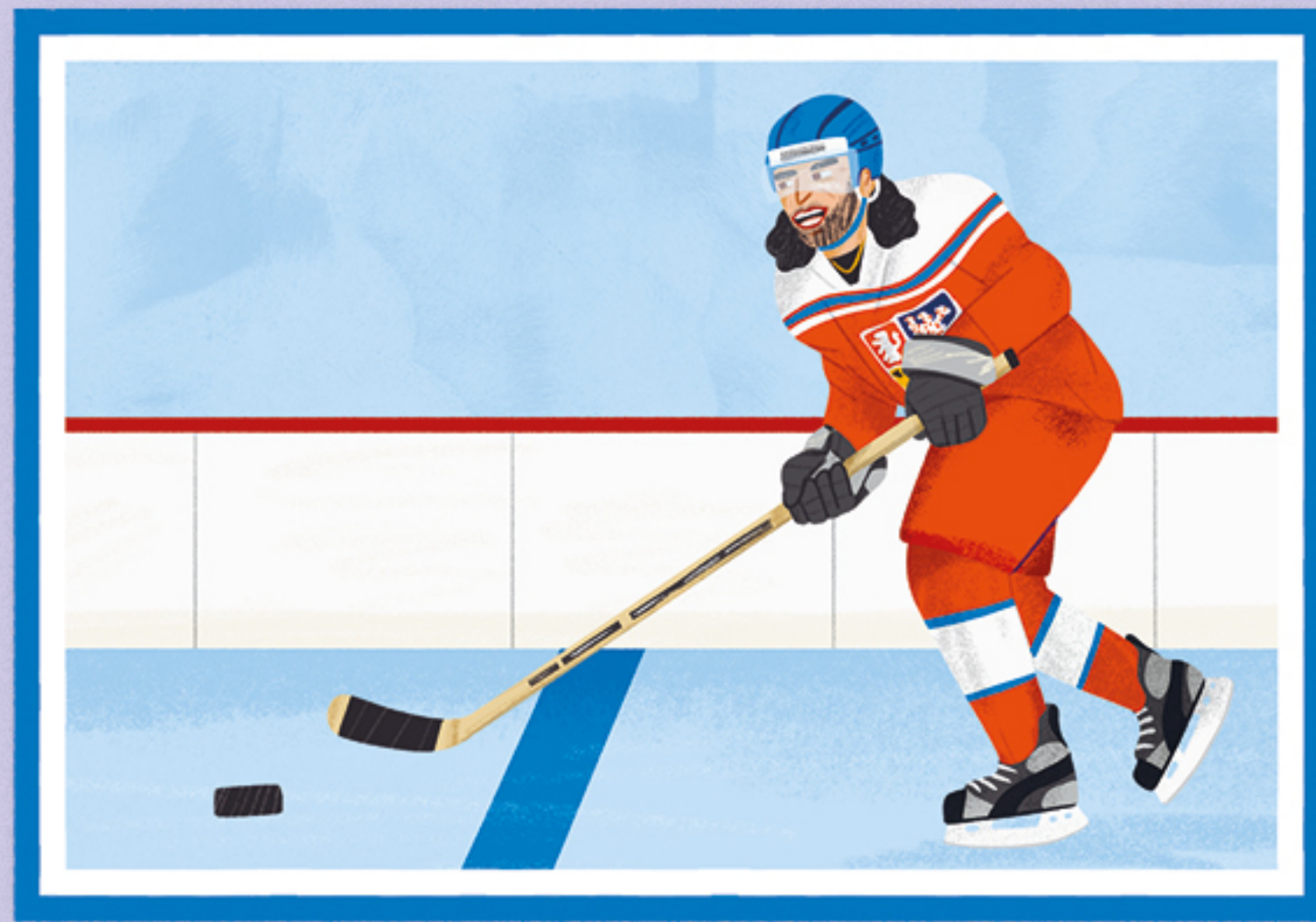
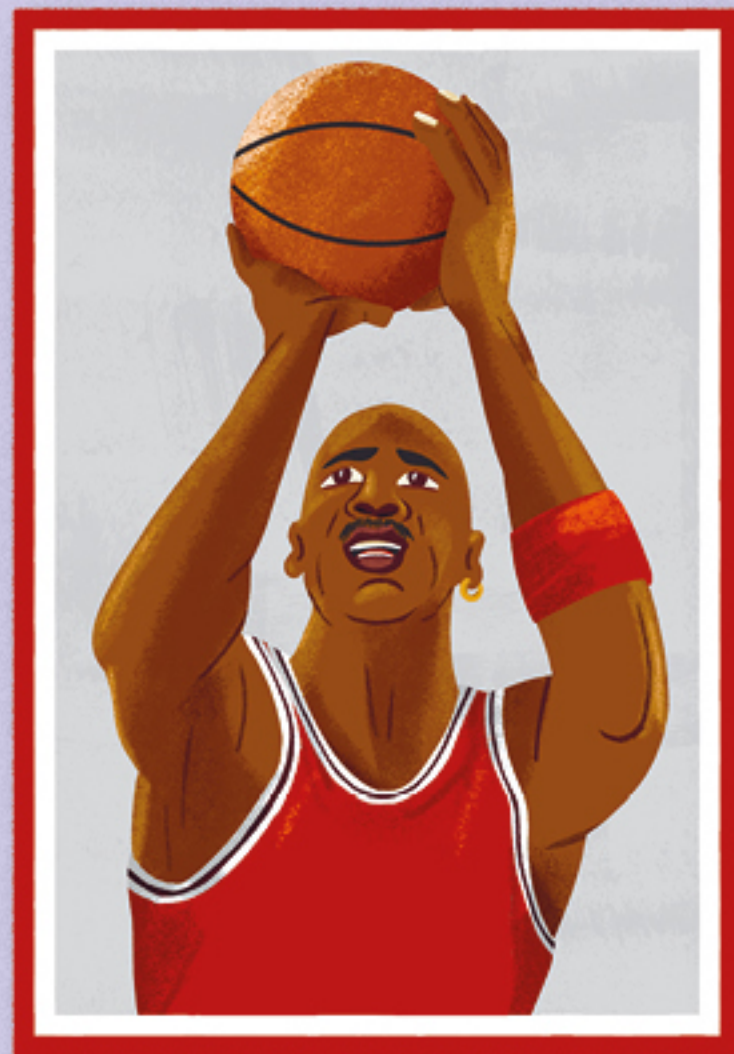


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PREHISTORY

WINNING IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN EATING

Movement is a manifestation of life. And regular movement is a manifestation of an active life. People who do sport are among the healthier members of our society; they are strong, well-trained and resilient. The word “sport” has been used in the meaning of physical activity for entertainment and burning off of energy since the 14th century, i.e., the Middle Ages. But people have always gone in for sport, of course. In prehistoric times, people used regular man-to-man combat to hone the strength they needed to hunt huge animals. Peoples of Antiquity liked to compete in equestrian events and chariot races, the main purpose of which was to prepare competitors for genuine combat in the numerous wars and skirmishes of the times.

Years passed, times changed, and technology evolved so that people no longer had to go on long expeditions in search of food, nor did they forever need to be on their guard against others wishing to fight them. Strength and athleticism ceased to be essential for survival; cleverness became more important. Life became concentrated around towns, and it was more comfortable. The human desire for movement, competition and prizewinning was refocused to sport and games. Come and join us on an exploration of the origins of the sports we know so well and see how people learned that taking part is more important than winning!



NO PAIN, NO GAIN

Prehistoric man was a sportsman even though he didn't know it. Think of the miles he walked every day in search of food! Whether this food was from plants or hunts, still he had to seek it out. Along the way, he was sometimes forced to run away from dangerous animals. Fear for his life made him a record-breaking sprinter, too ...



HUNT ↑

At other times, it was he — hairy prehistoric man — who did the chasing, as he went after his prey. And by throwing his weapon at it, he expanded prehistoric sports disciplines to include the javelin and stone-throwing, so unwittingly laying the foundations of the decathlon. The main purpose of prehistoric sport was to train and prepare for a life of trials, not entertainment.



PREHISTORIC GEAR →

Well-trained, strong legs, resilient feet, a strip of leather around and hanging from the waist; later, primitive shoes made from the skin of a powerful animal, such as a bear, so that this power would be passed on to the athlete.

mammoth
hunterbaseball
playerHello, Monica
speaking ...Hi Monica, it's
me Stacy ...

ATHLETICS



HOORAY, A RACE AT LAST!

The ancient Greeks were a tremendously competitive people. For them, winning a race meant becoming a hero — and how ancient Greece loved her heroes! (There is not a single Greek myth without heroes in it.) As you can imagine, the



That's not fair!



I'm sorry, but it's the only way I know how.

UP AND OVER ...

Have you ever been over the vaulting horse, vaulting buck or jump box in the school gym? Not easy, is it? But this gymnastic discipline is a piece of cake compared with what they did many years ago on the island of Crete. They vaulted over running bulls, and they had several ways of doing it.

One of the easier vaults was as follows: the gymnast approached the bull from the side, grabbed him by the horns and hurled himself over the animal's body in a single movement. One of the more difficult vaults was as follows: the gymnast stood face to face with the bull and grabbed him by the horns. The animal jerked his head, tossing the gymnast into

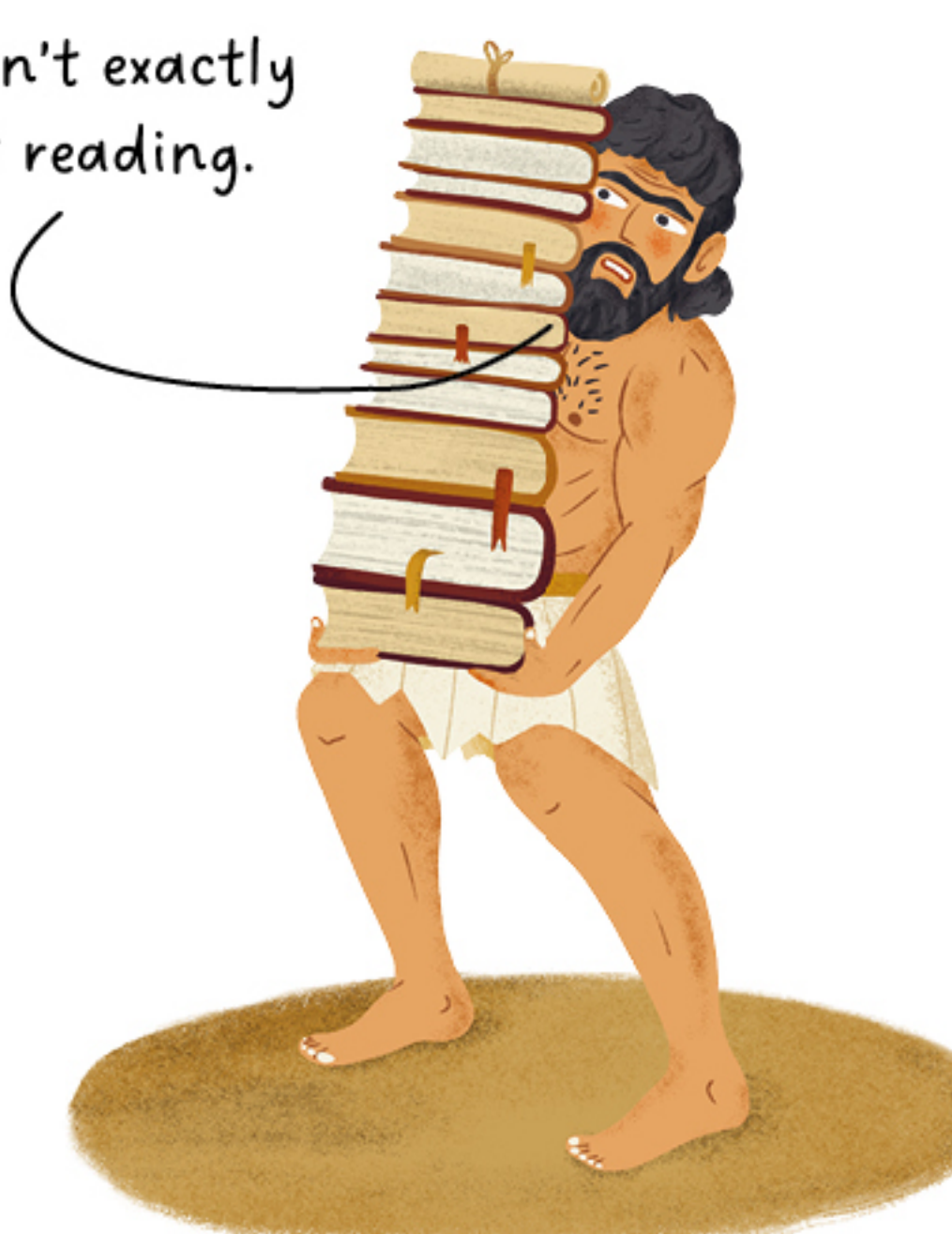
a graceful loop over his back. The animal jerked his head, tossing the gymnast into a graceful loop over his back. Sometimes there was an intermediate phase: after being tossed, the gymnast would land on his hands or feet on the animal's back, before going into the much-admired loop that all were waiting for. →

We file the bull's horns to make them safe, lad.



When they said to vault over the buck, I thought...

This isn't exactly light reading.



KALOKAGATHOS →

Crete is just a stone's throw from mainland Greece. Although the ancient Greeks left the bull-vaulting to the Cretans, they cultivated sport on a large scale. For the Greeks, sport meant cultivation of a healthy body and a healthy mind. So they insisted that the mind as well as the body should be trained and exercised. Not only did they train the body, but they worked hard on their education. As practiced by the ancient Greeks, this principle is known as *kalokagathos*.

That horn-playing is driving me mad!



What a nice piece of papyrus ...

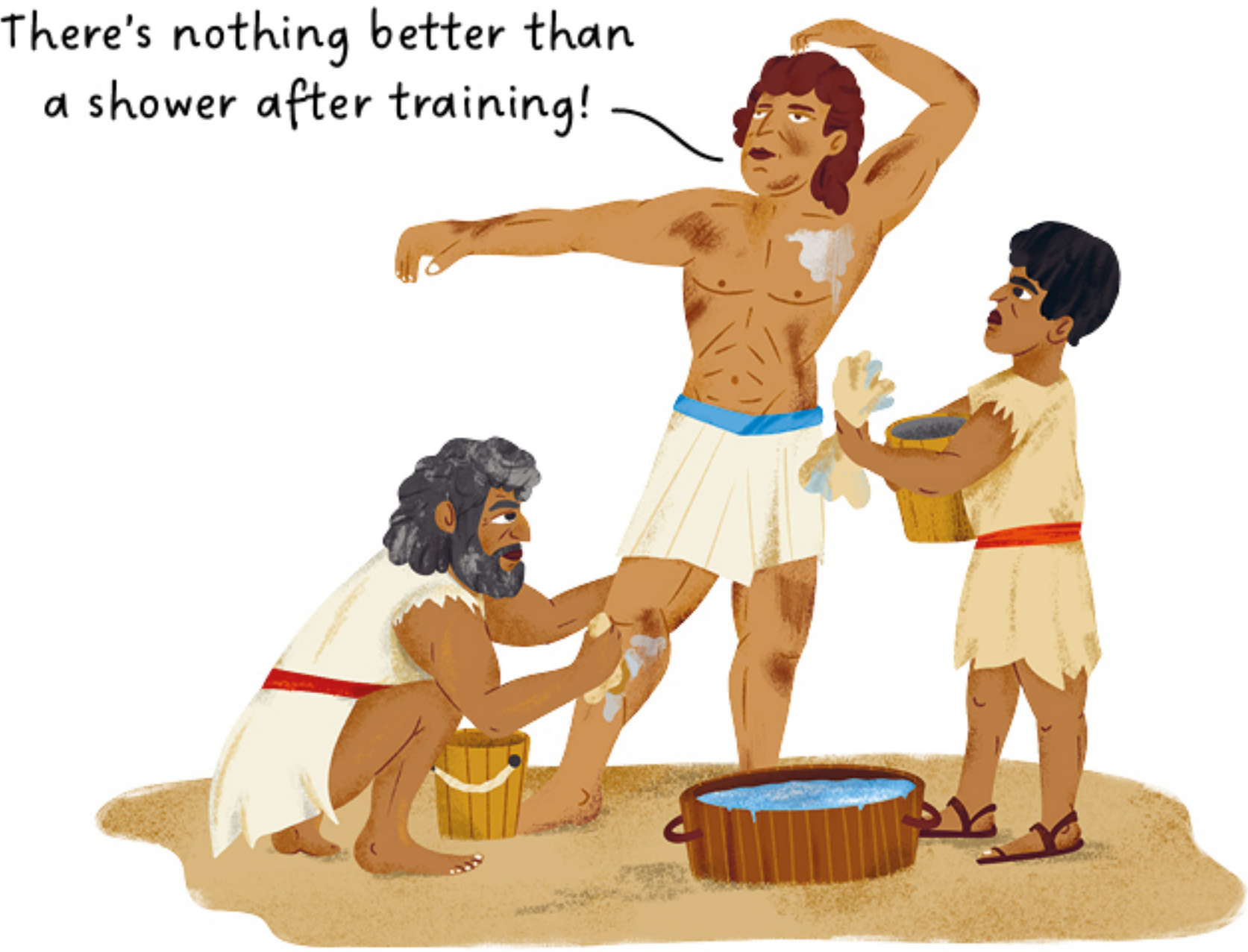
RUNNING DISCIPLINES

Today's athletes could test their strength and abilities in a competition with the athletes of ancient Greece. One course was one length of the racetrack within a stadium, about 200 metres. A second course was the length of two racetracks. There was even a discipline for endurance runners, over 4,500 metres — a piece of cake for today's long-distance runners. Today's athletes wouldn't like having to run naked, however. That's right, the ancient Greeks competed in their birthday suits. This had one big thing in its favour — their kit cost them nothing!



WHY WERE THE ATHLETES NAKED? ↑

Their beautiful, muscular, suntanned bodies gave the Greeks a sense of superiority over other peoples and their surroundings, so why not parade them for all to see at Olympic Games? Long, long ago, competitors at one of the earliest Olympics wore a short loincloth around the waist. Then, in 720 BCE, at the 15th Olympic Games, the loincloth worn by one of the runners fell off. Not wishing to stop and tie it back on, he finished the race naked. Other competitors followed his example, with the result that from the 6th century BCE, running naked was the rule!



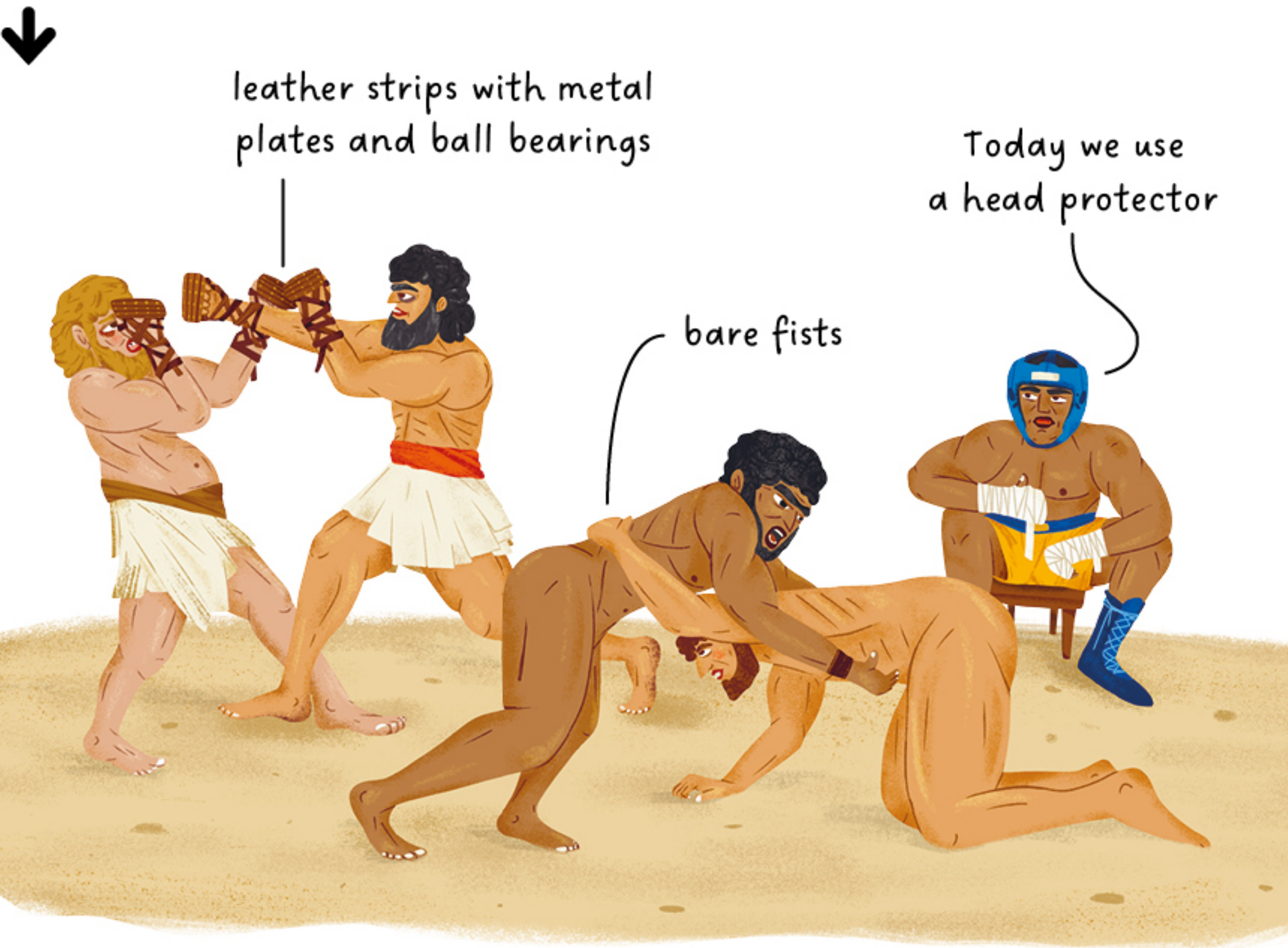
SPORTING STARS ↑

As time passed, Greek athletes became true stars who practised their sport professionally. Like their modern counterparts, athletes in ancient Greece were surrounded by a team of doctors, with professional coaches to manage their training programmes and tell them what to eat and when to go to bed. Training in ancient times was more than tough; on rare occasions, the athlete even died. On the other hand, winners of competitions became rich and were invited into high society. Does this remind you of anything?



SMACK, BANG, WALLOP

Boxing of some kind or other has been popular since prehistoric times. We know already that it helped young men keep in shape and prepared them for fighting for real. So it will come as no surprise to learn that the ancient Greeks were keen on boxing. At first, they pounded away with bare fists; later, boxers began to bind their hands with leather straps fitted with metal plates and ball bearings. Blows were directed at the hand and face only. Although boxers wore a helmet to protect the head and ears, a landed fist was pretty painful. Ow! Fortunately, as well as being remarkably dexterous, boxers knew how to perform many evasive and defensive manoeuvres. There were no breaks during the match.



PENTATHLON →

First included at the 18th Olympic Games, in 708 BCE, the pentathlon became very popular. The pentathlon comprised: **Running**, of course — although there was no timekeeping: the aim was to finish first! **Long jump**: The long-jumper of the time jumped with special weights in each hand called *halteres*, which he tossed behind him as he made his jump. **Throwing a discus** — which weighed between 1.5 kg and 6 kg. Experts still can't agree on which technique was used; some claim that it was like today's, others that the throw was made from a standing start with a forward bend. **Throwing a javelin** — an ancient Greek spear between 120 cm and 150 cm in length, with a looped strap in the middle in place of the grip, presumably to ensure accuracy of flight. In those days, javelin throwing was about accuracy as well as distance. The last discipline of the pentathlon was **wrestling**, the aim of which was to throw the opponent to the ground three times.



SKATING

FOR THE FIRST TIME ON ICE

Have you ever glided along a frozen puddle on your way home from school? If you have, you will know how fast you can go, and what great fun it is (as long as you don't end up on your bottom). The idea of doing it intentionally

originates from 3,000 BCE, when the first bone skates were developed. Some archaeologists claim that skates were first used as a means of transport to enable people to cover frozen surfaces over long distances.



Come on Jebediah,
come on!



I'm sorry boy, but the
future is on its way.

REAL ICE SKATING ↑

Until the 13th century, skates were for gliding on ice only. But then the first steel blades were developed in the Netherlands. Unique in shape, they cut into the ice, so making a new way of skating possible. And so the foundations of speed skating were laid. Although in its early days speed skating must have looked like a game of tag on a frozen lake, today it is an Olympic sport.

FROM BALLEY TO HOCKEY

In the 19th century, ballet dancer and skater Jackson Haines attached the blade firmly to the boot — for he longed to dance as gracefully on ice as he danced ballet. In so doing, not only did he originate a new kind of skate, but he also laid foundations for the discipline of figure skating. Haines's idea underwent several alterations. The first hockey skates appeared in the early 20th century.

Your grandad may
have worn these
old skates.



You may have
worn these new
skates already.



ICE HOCKEY



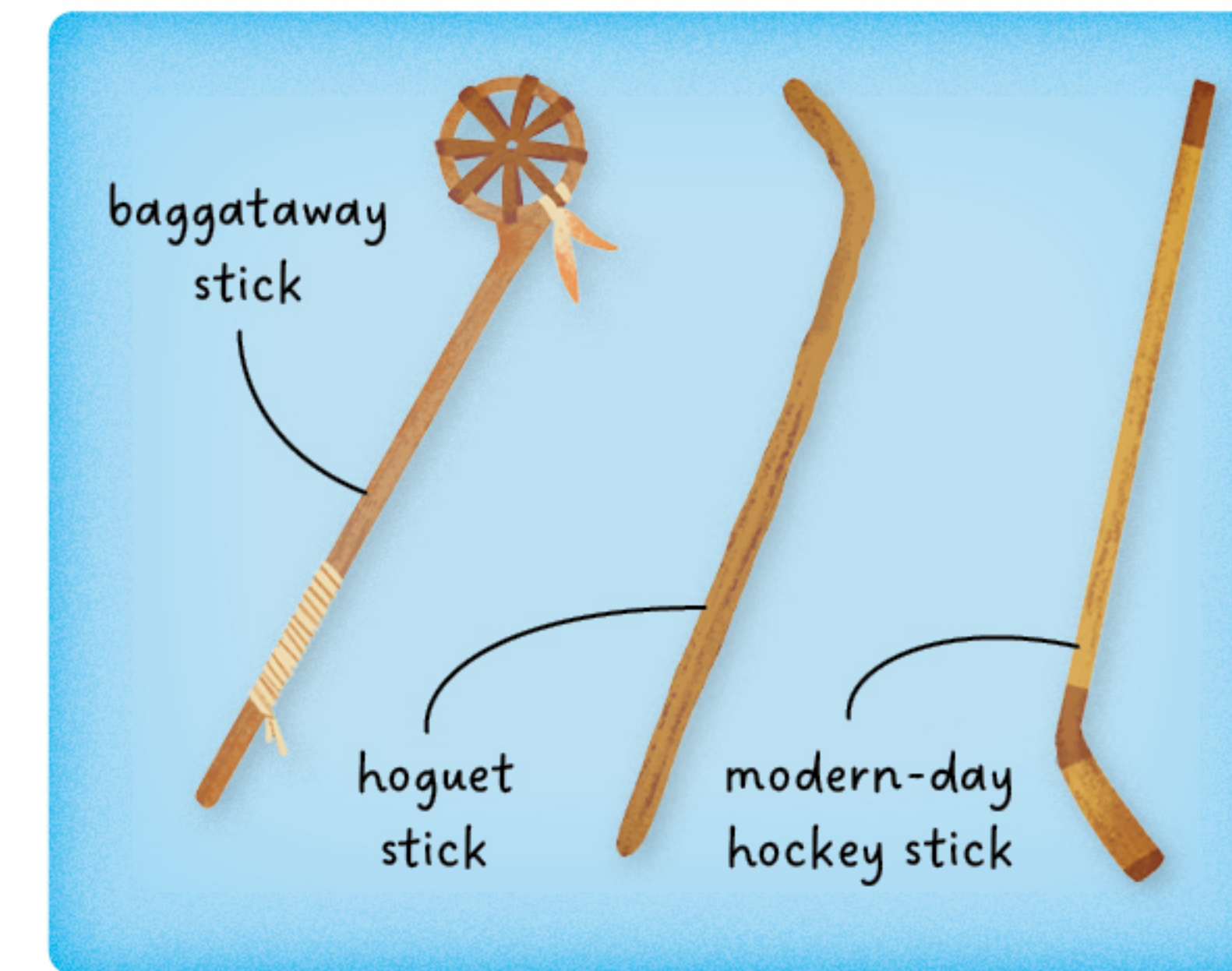
BEGINNINGS OF HOCKEY →

Although hockey is a winter sport for many, we can trace its beginnings to ancient Egypt and Greece. A game with sticks and a primitive ball was played on the other side of the world, too. In Canada, Native Americans crossed sticks with French soldiers, so giving rise to the shape of today's hockey stick.



PRIDE OF CANADA →

As you see, hockey has something from the French, something from the English, and something from the Native Americans. And where did it come into being? In Canada, of course! Canada can claim to be the cradle of hockey with full justification. From the very beginning, Canadians were so taken with hockey that they played it everywhere, even on frozen city streets, using whatever was at hand. If there was no ball to play with, they would use a tin can, a pine cone, even a frozen horse dropping.

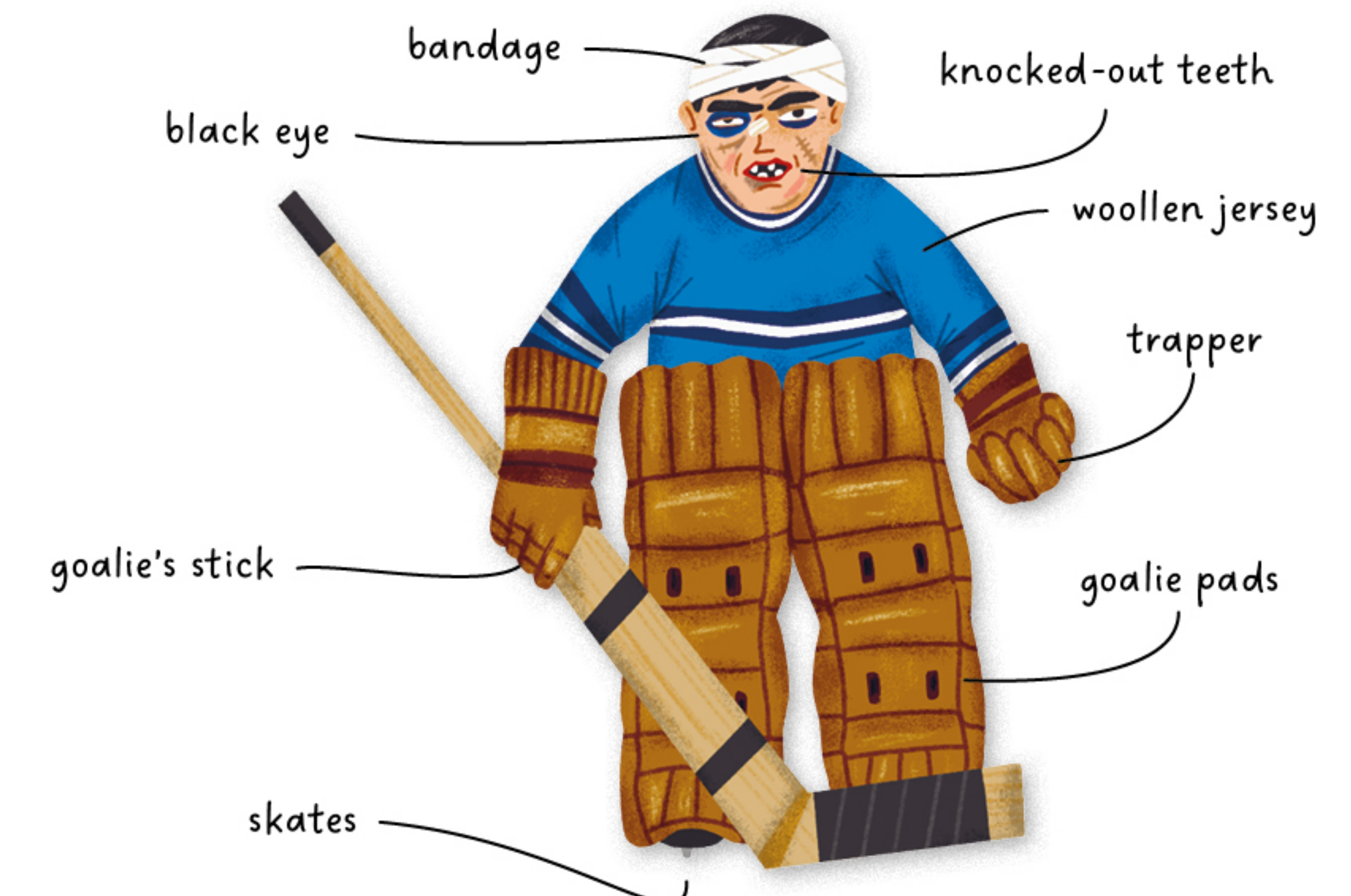


← BACK TO ENGLAND

In the 17th century, the English first arrived in Canada, where they fought hard against the French ... and won. The victorious army introduced another game played with sticks and a ball, known as shinney, the aim of which was to shoot a ball into a goal with a stick. It sounds like field hockey, doesn't it? Well, it is, rather. In the 19th century, military garrisons transferred this game to the ice—and ice hockey was born!

GOALIE FROM MONTREAL →

Can you guess who enjoyed hockey most? That's right, young men — notably students at Canada's universities (there's a parallel with football here). It was still the 19th century when students in Montreal came up with the idea of the goaltender. After that, hockey was even more fun ...



ORDER MUST BE ENFORCED! →

The first hockey match took place on 3 March 1875, at McGill University in Montreal. At one point, seemingly out of the blue, a flat block of wood appeared on the ice and the first puck was invented. Its rubbery appearance became reality in 1877. A year after that students from Montreal finally devised the first set of hockey rules which prohibited grabbing, kicking and blocking.



MASKS

As the first masks for hockey players were far from pleasant to wear, a cage and protective edging were added. Even so, being struck on the head by a puck is less than fun.

goaltender mask, first worn by Jacques Plante



mask with protective cage



modern mask



NO NETS

To bring hockey to its present-day perfection, all that was needed were nets in the goals. Just imagine that you are watching a match when the puck hits you between the eyes. How painful that would be! That very thing happened to a certain spectator in 1900. The scorer of the goal was so cut up about it that straight after the game he ran to the port, where he bought a fisherman's net. At the next match, the spectators were protected, and the puck ended up in the net.



Willie O'Ree first African American player



Manon Rhéaume first woman goaltender



NHL

The most prestigious league today is the National Hockey League (NHL), founded in 1917. It comprises teams from the United States and Canada. As every hockey player wishes to play in the NHL, it attracts the world's very best.

Teemu Selänne best rookie ever



Gordie Howe aka Mr. Hockey

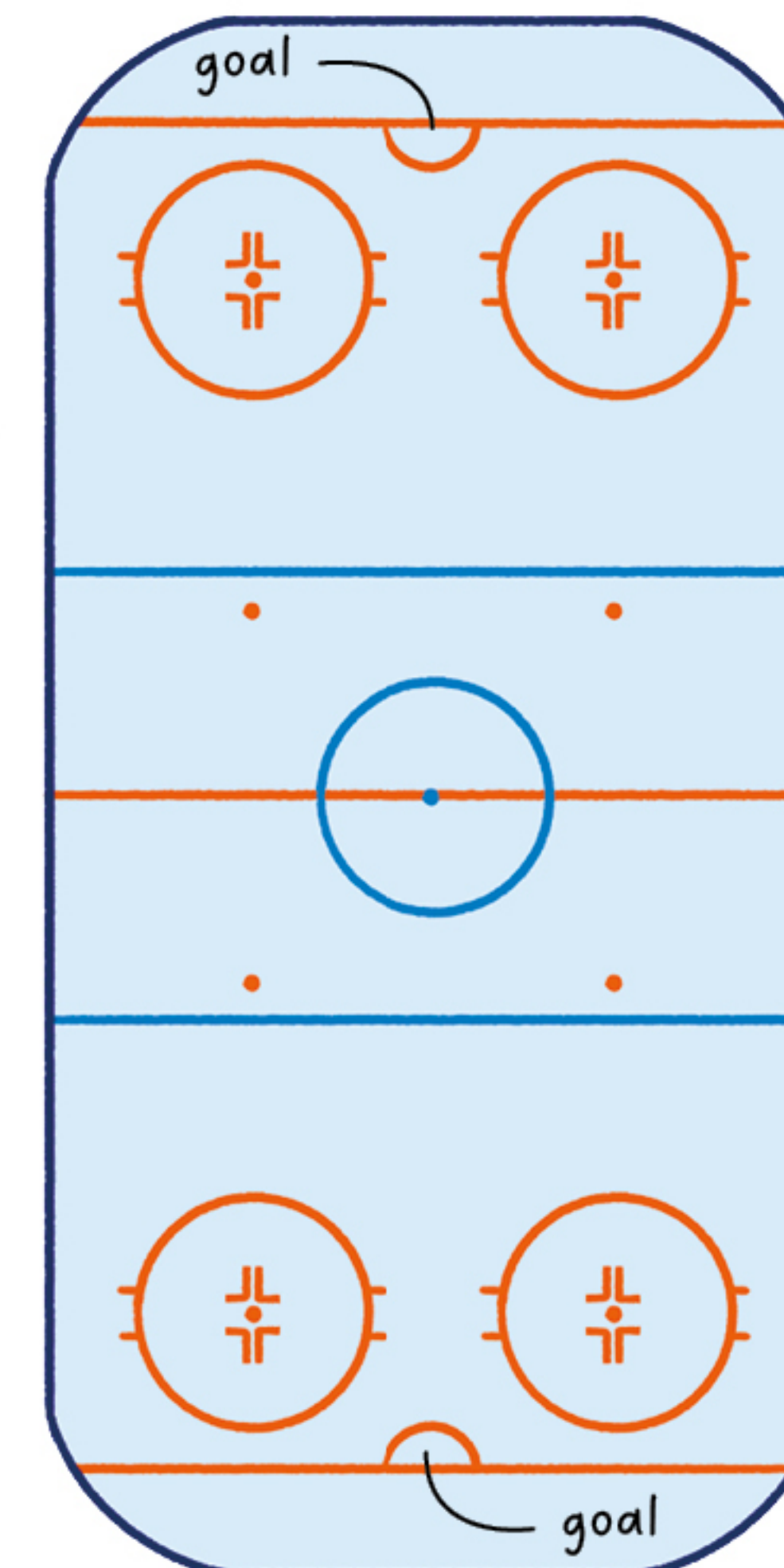


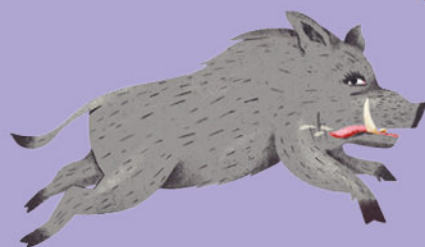
I'M A PRO, YOU KNOW

Hockey became so popular that it spread all over the United States in the 20th century. It began to professionalize, too. The International Professional Hockey League (IHL) — the world's first professional ice hockey league — was established in 1904. Before long, hockey became as much about money as about entertainment.

HOW TO PLAY ICE HOCKEY

Your team's aim is to shoot the puck into your opponent's goal, so scoring a goal. The playing time consists of three periods of twenty minutes. To win the game, you must score more goals than you concede. Each team has a goaltender to protect its goal. If at the end of the playing time both teams have scored the same number of goals, the game continues until one of them scores again.





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The attacker takes the ball, rounds the defender and fires into the net. It's a goal! But where did the idea of a goal come from, and what is the origin of the ball? And why do we kick it rather than carry it in our hands? Because if we did it would no longer be football, but rugby, or maybe even American football... If these questions have ever occurred to you, or the fact that hockey was played in ancient Egypt is news to you, The Past and Present of People and Sport is right for you.



ISBN + EAN

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