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21 The Origin of Sports  
When did sport begin? If sport is, in essence, play, the claim might be made that sport is much older than humankind, for, as we all have observed, the beasts play. Dogs and cats wrestle and play ball games. Fishes and birds dance. The apes have simple, pleasurable games. Frolicking infants, school children playing tag, and adult arm wrestlers are demonstrating strong, transgenerational and transspecies bonds with the universe of animals - past, present, and future. Young animals, particularly, tumble, chase, run wrestle, mock, imitate, and laugh (or so it seems) to the point of delighted exhaustion. Their play, and ours, appears to serve no other purpose than to give pleasure to the players, and apparently, to remove us temporarily from the anguish of life in earnest. Some philosophers have claimed that our playfulness is the most noble part of our basic nature. In their generous conceptions, play harmlessly and experimentally permits us to put our creative forces, fantasy, and imagination into action. Play is release from the tedious battles against scarcity and decline which are the incessant, and inevitable, tragedies of life. This is a grand conception that excites and provokes. The holders of this view claim that the origins of our highest accomplishments ---- liturgy, literature, and law ---- can be traced to a play impulse which, paradoxically, we see most purely enjoyed by young beasts and children. Our sports, in this rather happy,

nonfatalistic view of human nature, are more splendid creations of the nondatable, transspecies play impulse. 100Test 下载频道开通, 各类考试题目直接下载。详细请访问 [www.100test.com](http://www.100test.com)