Read the passage and answer the questions:

**The Most Popular Sports in the World**

What are the five most popular sports in the world? Some of the answers may surprise you!

Football (“soccer” in the U.S.) is the world’s most popular sport. Today, about 3.5 billion people watch or play football. Football is popular in Europe, Asia, South America, Africa, North America, almost everywhere! Do you know that players run about five miles (eight km) in a professional football game?

The world’s number two sport is cricket. Cricket is originally from the UK, but today it is also popular in Australia, New Zealand, some African countries, and some Caribbean countries. In India and Pakistan, cricket is more popular than football. About three billion people around the world watch or play cricket each year.

Field hockey is number three. Approximately two billion people play or watch field hockey, mostly in Asia, Europe, Australia, and Africa. In the United States, field hockey is mainly for high school girls. Field hockey is a very old sport. In Egypt, 4,000-year-old drawings show people playing field hockey. Of course, the rules of the game are different today.

Next is tennis. Today the audience for tennis, including players is about one billion around the world. Tennis is originally from France, but today it is very popular in the United States, Asia, Australia, and Europe. The longest tennis game lasted eleven hours and five minutes!

Table tennis (ping-pong) is popular around the world, with about 900 million players and spectators. Today, table tennis is especially popular in China, Korea, and Singapore.

There are many popular sports around the world, but these are the top five. What is similar about all of these sports? They’re fun, they’re fast, and they use a ball. Is that why the expression “have a ball” means “have a lot of fun?” Maybe.