

## Be a Good Sport

After months without sports, we're itching to hear the crack of the bat, the ring of the puck off the goal post, and the squeaks of sneakers on the hardwood. To celebrate the (tentative) return of the MLB, NHL, and NBA, we're using this issue of *KB CommEntary* to explain the sportsy origins of common words and phrases.

## What's Up at KB COMM?

At KB COMM, we provide mission-critical communication and learning services to clients in a variety of industries. Thanks to our established and new clients for keeping us busy. Recent and ongoing projects include:

- Writing and editing numerous information products for a healthcare diagnostics manufacturer, including employee communications, customer presentations and letters, product marketing brochures and data sheets, and training materials
- Writing and editing marketing and employee communications for an academic research organization
- Formatting and revising technical reports and manufacturing standard operating procedures, work instructions, forms, logbooks, and batch records for a pharmaceutical company
- Revising and maintaining GMP facility drawings
- Drafting, reviewing, and editing for consistency and accuracy response documents and associated modules for electronic submission to health authorities on behalf of pharmaceutical companies

KB COMM LLC is a certified Women's Business Enterprise. We are officially qualified to participate in corporations' woman- and minority-owned vendor programs.

Please keep us in mind for your communication or training projects.

## Tips and Tales

### The Sporting Type

Idioms—common phrases that are more figurative than literal, like “raining cats and dogs”—often have surprising origins. In English, many of our quirky bits of lingo come from the world of sports. Get your head in the game with some lesser-known idiom etymology (of the athletic persuasion).

*Down to the wire* and *under the wire* mean “at the last possible moment” or “right at the very end.” Both originate from horse racing, where, believe it or not, an actual wire used to be strung across the finish line about eight feet up. Heads down, jockeys!

*Stumped*, among other things, means “baffled” or “totally unsure.” It originates from cricket; without trying to explain all the rules of cricket (time is money), we can share that the stumps are the three vertical posts that make up the wicket, and a batter can be out if he gets too far from the wicket while swinging and the opposing wicket-keeper knocks the stumps over. Most stumped batters aren't aware they're out until the umpire tells them, leading to confusion and befuddlement.

*Gambit* means “tactic” or “scheme.” It originates from the Italian *Gambetto*, which is a type of tripping move in wrestling. From there it found its way to both chess and boxing, and now it's common enough to be used by strategists of all types.

*Right in their wheelhouse* and *in the same wheelhouse* refer to comfort zones or similarities between two or more things. While “wheelhouse” is slang for the area on a boat that contains the steering wheel, the idiom actually comes from baseball, where it refers to the batter's strike zone. According to one 19th century source, the nautical phrase made its way to the baseball diamond by combining descriptions of batters twisting (“wheeling”) to hit the ball using “roundhouse” (bonus: a boxing term!) swings.

Now you know. Hut, hut, hike!

And please remember, *when it has to be right*, KB COMM is here to help.

Sincerely,

*Kathy*

Kathy Breuninger

**KB COMM**

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