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## America's Favorite Sport is Transitioning from Baseball and Football to Soccer

*As you read the text below, pay attention to how the author transitions between ideas and how the ideas are tied into the larger thesis, or claim, of the essay. You will notice that certain words (transition words) are used like glue or like bridges between thoughts. Underline the transition words that you find.*

Many Americans believe that American football and baseball will always be the most popular sports in the United States, yet soccer's popularity is on the rise. Will it surpass football or baseball? Time will tell, but if trends continue, the answer is yes. There are some simple reasons for soccer's elevation in America. Most importantly, the game can be played without a lot of equipment and there are very few rules. You only need a field, a ball, and the overall aim of the game is simple: put the ball in the opposing net. Additionally, it's an exciting, fast-paced game that's fun to watch.

Soccer is a sport that is loved around the world. It is very popular in Europe, Latin America, South America, Africa, and Asia. Why? First, it is a sport that only requires a ball and some space to play. In some countries where kids don't have access to soccer balls, they can use cans or other round items found in the trash. In the 1600s, Italians used pig bladders for soccer balls! Unfortunately, they were not uniform in shape and easily punctured. Consequently, they began to wrap them in leather to make them more sturdy. In addition, soccer can also be played without expensive shoes, pads, or other equipment. For instance, many kids in low-income neighborhoods play barefoot!

The second reason why soccer is a popular sport around the world is because it requires only a simple, medium-sized area. Conversely, because baseballs can travel a long distance, a baseball diamond requires a large space, with room for the infield and outfield. A football field is even more complicated since you need at least some rudimentary markings for the end zone and a method to mark the yardage.

The third reason why soccer is on the rise is the simplicity of the game. Kids can start playing this game at a young age because they don't need to understand a lot of complex rules. Basically, each team just has to get the ball in the opposing goal. Of course there are a few other rules, such as "offsides," but those can be fudged or disregarded with younger players. The structure of the game of football, in contrast, is mind boggling for young children. The pace of the game is marked by "downs" and yards rotating between teams and then quarters as well, whereas soccer only has a halftime. Furthermore, baseball's rules are perhaps just as complicated as football. There are nine innings. Each team gets three outs per inning and then everyone switches places. As you can see, football and baseball would be more challenging for a young child to learn.

Last, soccer is a fast-paced sport without structured breaks, which makes it very engaging to watch. With football and baseball, you have breaks in the middle of the game and between innings. In addition, the action can be very slow when a pitcher scans the bases for the third time, searching for base stealers before finally pitching the ball. In football, most professional teams pause to huddle between every single play. Rarely, a team will play a "no-huddle" offense, which helps to keep the action flowing.

In conclusion, football and baseball may soon be a sport of the past. Soccer is accessible in all kinds of neighborhoods around the world as it requires very little equipment. With its simple rules, kids can start playing at a very young age. It is evident that the simplicity of the game does not keep the youngest players from joining in. Also, the fast-paced rhythm of the game makes the matches more exciting to watch. With more and more professional soccer teams popping up around the United States, it's likely you can catch a game near you and enjoy America's new pastime: soccer.