100 SPORTS IDIOMS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW

WWW.LEARNLAUGHSPEAK.COM
ACROSS THE BOARD

MEANING: THE SAME FOR EVERYONE

USE: THERE IS HEFTY FINES ACROSS THE BOARD FOR ANYONE CAUGHT DRINKING ALCOHOL AT THE WORLD CUP IN QATAR.
AT THIS STAGE IN THE GAME

MEANING: AT A PARTICULAR POINT IN THE GAME

USE: WE CAN’T MANAGE AS LITTLE AS A DRAW AT THIS STAGE IN THE GAME.
BLOW THE COMPETITION AWAY

MEANING: TO WIN A CONTEST WITH SO MUCH EASE

USE: AUSTRALIA THIS YEAR IS BLOWING AWAY THE COMPETITION!
CALL THE SHOTS

MEANING: TO MAKE THE DECISIONS

USE: THE CAPTAIN OF THE TEAM WILL CALL THE SHOTS IN TOMORROW'S GAME
DOWN TO THE WIRE

MEANING: CLOSE TO THE END

USE: WE ARE ALREADY DOWN TO THE WIRE, WE CAN’T AFFORD TO MAKE ANY MISTAKES
GET INTO THE FULL SWING

MEANING: AT A STAGE WHEN THE LEVEL OF ACTIVITY IS AT ITS HIGHEST

USE: WHEN WE GOT THERE, THE PARTY WAS IN FULL SWING.

MEANING: GETTING USED TO AN ACTIVITY

USE: I NEED A WEEK TO GET INTO THE FULL SWING OF THINGS.
GET A SECOND WIND

MEANING: GETTING REENERGIZED AFTER EXHAUSTION

USE: THE OTHER TEAM LOOKS TIRED, LETS HOPE THEY DO NOT GET A SECOND WIND.
GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT

MEANING: TRY THE MUCH YOU CAN

USE: LET’S GIVE IT OUR BEST SHOT, WHO KNOWS, WE MIGHT GET A WIN THIS TIME.
THE BALL IS IN YOUR COURT

MEANING: IT'S TIME TO TAKE UP THE INITIATIVE

USE: I HAVE FULFILLED MY OWN PART; THE BALL IS IN YOUR COURT NOW
BARK UP THE WRONG TREE

MEANING: YOU ARE HOLDING ONTO THE WRONG PERSON OR IDEA

USE: I THINK YOU'RE BARKING UP THE WRONG TREE BY CASTING ASPERSIONS ON THE LEGISLATURE.
CHIP IN

MEANING: MAKING AN ADDITION TO WHAT HAS BEEN SAID OR DONE EARLIER.

USE: APART FROM HUMILITY, I WILL ALSO CHIP IN THAT DISCIPLINE IS KEY IN OUR TEAM.
FRONT RUNNER

MEANING: ONE WHO THE ODDS FAVOUR

USE: AUSTRALIA IS NOT FRONT RUNNER TO WIN BUT WE ARE ALWAYS THE UNDERDOGS.
GET A HEAD START
MEANING: STARTING BEFORE OTHERS

USE: THEY GAVE THE AGED A HEAD START IN THE RUN FOR CANCER TREATMENT.
GIVE SOMETHING/SOMEONE A FAIR SHAKE

MEANING: GIVING SOMETHING A FAIR TRY

USE: YOU NEVER GAVE THE JOB A FAIR SHAKE BEFORE QUITTING.
GO TO BAT FOR SOMEONE

MEANING: TO DEFEND SOMEONE VEHEMENTLY

USE: WOOD IS ASKING FOR A SALARY INCREASE, AND I'M GOING TO GO TO BAT FOR HIM THIS TIME AROUND.
HAVE THE UPPER HAND

MEANING: TO STAND A BETTER CHANCE OF WINNING

USE: REAL MADRID HAVE THE UPPER HAND IN THE LEAGUE THIS SEASON.
HIT BELOW THE BELT

MEANING: TO DO OR SAY SOMETHING THAT IS CONSIDERED A FOUL PLAY

USE: TYSON HIT BELOW THE BELT WHEN HE BIT HOLYFIELD.
HIT A SNAG

MEANING: TO ENCOUNTER A PROBLEM

USE: THE GAME WAS GOING IN OUR FAVOR UNTIL WE HIT A SNAG WITH THE RED CARDS.
HOLD ALL THE ACES
Meaning: Expected to win a contest

Use: The German Shepperd hold all the aces when it comes to the guarding the family entrance.
BIG SHOT

MEANING: AN IMPORTANT OR VERY SUCCESSFUL PERSON

USE: ALL THE BIG SHOTS FROM GOOGLE ARE PRAGMATIC LEADERS.
JUMP THE GUN
Meaning: Start too early
Use: I guess I jumped the gun for coming by 5 AM.
KEEP ONE’S HEAD ABOVE WATER
MEANING: TRY NOT TO FALL BEHIND IN WORK OR OTHER DUTIES
USE: MY DESK IS FULL, I HARDLY KEEP MY HEAD ABOVE WATER.
LEARN THE ROPES

Meaning: Understand new things gradually.

LEARN THE ROPES

Use: The first week on the job demands that you learn the ropes.
LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

MEANING: EVERYONE HAS AN EQUAL CHANCE

USE: OUR ACADEMY IS A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD FOR TEENS WHO WANT TO DEVELOP IN SPORTS
LONG SHOT

MEANING: A VERY DIFFICULT GOAL TO ATTAIN

USE: GETTING A SPORTS CAR NOT IS A LONG SHOT.
NECK AND NECK

MEANING: TO BE IN A CLOSE TIE WITH SOMEONE

USE: RONALDO AND MESSI ARE NECK AND NECK IN THE GAME OF FOOTBALL.
NO SWEAT

MEANING: NO PROBLEM/CHALLENGES

USE: I TOLD LIZY IT WAS NO SWEAT FOR US TO ENROLL IN THE GYM
NOT UP TO PAR

Meaning: Not good enough for a job or position.

Use: You won’t get a call because your CV isn’t up to par for the coding position.
TO BE OFF BASE

MEANING: NOT MAKING THE RIGHT REMARK

USE: YOU WERE WAY OFF BASE WHEN YOU INSULTED HER FATHER.
ON TARGET

Meaning: Following the right track

Use: We are pretty much on target to meet our goals this month.
ON THE BALL
MEANING: BEING CAPABLE

USE: THE NEW WRITER IS REALLY ON THE BALL WHEN IT COMES TO SPORTS ARTICLES.
OUT OF SOMEONE’S LEAGUE
MEANING: NOT GOOD ENOUGH

USE: WE WOULD HAVE EMPLOYED YOU BUT YOU ARE OUT OF OUR LEAGUE.
PAR FOR THE COURSE

Meaning: Something that is expected

Use: Waiting in line is par for the course in the bank these days.
PLENTY OF OTHER FISH IN THE SEA

MEANING: THERE ARE MANY OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

USE: I KNOW YOU LOVE YOUR JOB, BUT REMEMBER THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER FISH IN THE SEA
RACE AGAINST TIME

Meaning: When you are behind schedule/time

Use: Trying to get at him right now is a race against time
SETTLE A SCORE WITH SOMEONE

MEANING: TO SETTLE YOUR DIFFERENCES WITH SOMEONE.

USE: MY BROTHER WANTS TO SETTLE THE SCORE WITH THAT GUY WHO KICKED MY BALL INSIDE THE BUSH YESTERDAY.
SHOT IN THE DARK

MEANING: A GUESS WORK

USE: I YOU CAN’T LAND THE JOB, YOUR ANSWERS WERE SHOTS IN THE DARK
SKATE ON THIN ICE

MEANING: TO TAKE A RISK

USE: YOU’RE SKATING ON THIN ICE BY NOT GOING FOR REHEARSALS AS OUR MASTER INSTRUCTED.
GET THE BALL ROLLING
MEANING: BEGIN SOMETHING

USE: EVERYONE MUST BE IN ATTENDANCE TOMORROW SO WE CAN GET THE BALL ROLLING.
STEP UP TO THE PLATE

MEANING: TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

USE: WHEN YOU GET THINGS WRONG, STEP UP TO THE PLATE AND APOLOGIZE.
TAKE THE BULL BY THE HORN

MEANING: ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE AND TRY TO CONQUER

USE: I CAN’T AFFORD NOT TO TAKE THE BULL BY THE HORN IN NEW YORK CITY.
THROW IN THE TOWEL

MEANING: TO SUCCUMB TO A CHALLENGE

USE: IF THEY CONTINUE THEIR LINE OF ARGUMENT, WE WILL HAVE TO THROW IN THE TOWEL
TIME OUT
MEANING: BREAK TIME
USE: LET’S TAKE SOME TIME OUT AND GRAB SOME REST, THEN CONTINUE AFTERWARDS
TWO STRIKES AGAINST

Meaning: You only have one chance remaining.

Use: Henry is going to be fired in no time. He already has two strikes against her for coming in late.
UNDER THE TABLE
MEANING: TO DO SOMETHING ILLEGALLY
USE: I DON’T HAVE A WORK PERMIT, SO I OPERATE UNDER THE TABLE.
WIN HANDS DOWN

MEANING: EASY VICTORY

USE: THEIR KEY PLAYERS WERE MISSING SO WE WON HANDS DOWN
DOWN AND OUT

MEANING: LACKING IN ENERGY, Deflated and Defeated

USE: A LOT OF FANS THOUGHT GARCIA WAS DOWN AND OUT BUT HE RALLIED BACK TO WIN THE BOUT.
MEANING: TO START A FIGHT

USE: IN THE MIDDLE OF THE GAME, ROONEY DROPPED THE GLOVES AND KNOCKED ROSE OUT COLD.
PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS

Meaning: Used when someone does everything they can possibly do to achieve the result they want.

Use: I'm determined to pull out all the stops this time. I want my wedding day to be absolutely perfect.
KEEP ONE’S EYE ON THE BALL

Meaning: To remain alert and keep one’s attention focused on the task or matter at hand.

Use: Stop thinking about what he wants, this is an important stage in your career and you need to keep your eye on the ball!
DROP THE BALL
MEANING: MAKE A MISTAKE, DISAPPOINT EVERYONE.
USE: I THOUGHT SHE'D BE ABLE TO COPE, BUT WHEN THE TIME CAME TO PRESENT THE RESULTS, SHE JUST DROPPED THE BALL....REALLY BADLY.
JUMP FOR JOY

meaning: to jump up because one is happy.

use: I’m so excited about my promotion, I could jump for joy.
ALL HANDS ON DECK
MEANING: USED TO INDICATE THAT THE INVOLVEMENT OF ALL THE MEMBERS OF A TEAM IS REQUIRED.

USE: WE HAD ALL HANDS ON DECK TO GET EVERYTHING PREPARED FOR JENNY’S SURPRISE PARTY.
THE BALL IS IN ONE’S COURT

MEANING: USED TO EXPRESS WHEN IT IS SOMEONE ELSE’S DECISION TO DO SOMETHING.

USE: YOU KNOW HOW HE FEELS ABOUT IT; THE BALL IS IN YOUR COURT NOW. YOU HAVE TO DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT TO DO.
IN FULL SWING

MEANING: AT THE PEAK OF AN ACTIVITY, MOVING FAST AND EFFICIENTLY.

USE: WE GOT TO SARAH'S HOUSE A BIT LATE AND THE PARTY WAS ALREADY IN FULL SWING.
GET OFF THE HOOK
MEANING: ESCAPE, HAVE RESPONSIBILITY REMOVED.

USE: I THOUGHT I MIGHT HAVE TO STAY IN AND BABYSIT THIS WEEKEND BUT LUCKILY, ANGELA’S PLANS CHANGED, SO I GOT OFF THE HOOK!
JUMP OFF THE PAGE

Meaning: Something that is visually pleasing or someone who is intellectually sharp, and stands out above the rest.

Use: That was such an eye-catching newspaper advertisement. It really did jump off the page!
GET A SECOND WIND

MEANING: HAVE A SUDDEN BURST OF ENERGY AFTER BEING TIRED.

USE: I WAS EXHAUSTED AFTER THE 10TH MILE OF RUNNING, BUT I
      GOT A SECOND WIND AFTER I SAW THE SIGN FOR THE FINAL LAP.
GIVE (SOMETHING) ONE’S BEST SHOT

MEANING: TO TRY YOUR ABSOLUTE HARDEST TO SUCCEED.

USE: DON’T THINK ABOUT WHETHER YOU WILL WIN OR LOSE, JUST GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT.
PLAIN SAILING

MEANING: A STRAIGHTFORWARD OR SIMPLE TASK THAT HAS NO PROBLEMS, AND IS VERY EASY TO COMPLETE.

USE: I DON'T EVER WANT TO CHANGE MY JOB. IT'S JUST PLAIN SAILING AND I GET
IN A LEAGUE OF ONE’S OWN

MEANING: SOMEONE WHO IS MUCH BETTER THAN THE REST.

USE: MOST OF THE APPLICANTS WERE QUITE STRONG; THEY ALL SEEMED TO HAVE SOME GOOD QUALITIES, BUT CHARLIE BROWN WAS IN A LEAGUE OF HIS OWN.
JUMP OFF THE DEEP END
MEANING: TO TAKE IMMEDIATE AND DRASTIC ACTION.

USE: I'VE DECIDED TO JUMP OFF THE DEEP END AND QUIT MY JOB. I WANT TO COMPLETELY CHANGE MY LIFE AND TRAVEL THE WORLD.
JUMP THROUGH HOOPS

MEANING: TO GO TO EXTREME LENGTHS TO GET SOMETHING DONE, OR TO PLEASE SOMEONE.

USE: HAZEL JUMPED THROUGH HOOPS FOR HER EX-BOYFRIEND, BUT HE DIDN'T APPRECIATE HER EFFORTS ENOUGH.
TO JUMP OUT OF ONE’S SKIN

MEANING: TO BE BADLY FRIGHTENED.

USE: I NEARLY JUMPED OUT OF MY SKIN WHEN I SAW A MAN STANDING BY THE WINDOW.
JUMP AT SOMETHING
(A CHANCE OR OPPORTUNITY)

Meaning: To seize the opportunity to do something.

Use: I jumped at the chance to do an internship placement with Google.

I would jump at any opportunity to work within that law firm, even if it was a low-paid position, but it's really hard to get any work with them.
JUMP TO CONCLUSIONS

MEANING: TO MAKE AN ASSUMPTION WITHOUT CONSIDERING ALL THE FACTS.

USE: NO, THAT’S NOT THE REASON WHY I WAS THERE. YOU’RE JUST JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS BECAUSE YOU SAW ME WITH HELEN.
HIT IT OUT OF THE PARK

MEANING: TO HAVE ENORMOUS SUCCESS.

USE: ROB HAS REALLY HIT IT OUT OF THE PARK WITH HIS NEW ENTREPRENEURIAL IDEA!
STAY AHEAD OF THE GAME

Meaning: To be leaders in a particular field/business environment.

Use: You have to stay ahead of the game if you want to be successful in the media business.
A TWO HORSE RACE / NECK AND NECK

Meaning: A close contest between two groups/companies.

Use: It was a two horse race between the enterprises for quite some time.

It was neck and neck between the two enterprises for quite some time.
APPROACHING THE FINISH LINE/ THE HOME STRETCH

MEANING: GETTING QUITE CLOSE TO THE END.

USE: WE’VE ALMOST DONE IT, WE’RE APPROACHING THE FINISH LINE NOW. YOU CAN’T GIVE UP AT THIS STAGE.

WE’VE ALMOST DONE IT, THIS IS THE HOME STRETCH NOW. YOU CAN’T GIVE UP AT THIS STAGE.
JUMP OFF THE SHELVES

Meaning: To sell really well, a popular product.

Use: Those homemade pies are jumping off the shelves; we’ll have to make some more.
JUMP / GET ON THE BANDWAGON

Meaning: To join a cause, follow or copy a popular trend or activity.

Use: I’ve noticed that most people in this office seem to have jumped on the bandwagon and started wearing those skinny jeans.
GIVE (SOMEONE) A RUN FOR THEIR MONEY

Meaning: To make it really hard for someone else to succeed over one’s self.

Use: You really gave that property developer a run for his money! Well done.
A WHOLE NEW DIFFERENT BALL GAME

meaning: A NEW SET OF CIRCUMSTANCES, A COMPLETELY NEW SITUATION.

use: I’M USUALLY QUITE GOOD WITH COMPUTERS, BUT THIS SOFTWARE YOU’VE INSTALLED IS A WHOLE NEW BALL GAME.

MR. GROVE IS VERY STRICT. WHEN HE STARTS TEACHING THIS CLASS NEXT YEAR, IT WILL BE A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT BALL GAME.
GO OVERBOARD

Meaning: Do or say too much, more than is necessary.

Use: My mum always goes overboard when it comes to preparing for Christmas time.
JUMP DOWN (SOMEONE’S) THROAT

Meaning: To criticise or become angry with someone.

Use: My boss jumped down my throat as soon as I mentioned booking another holiday.
HOT SHOT

Meaning: Used to describe someone who thinks they are the best. This could also be used in a positive way to compliment someone who is very skilful.

Use: That new hot shot in the marketing team just talks about himself all the time.
JUMP AT ONE’S OWN SHADOW

Meaning: When someone is afraid of everything around them.

Use: Sally jumps at her own shadow; I don’t think she’ll want to watch that new horror movie!
MEET ONE’S MATCH

MEANING: TO ENCOUNTER ONE’S EQUAL.

USE: JOHN HAD DEFINITELY MET HIS MATCH WHEN A NEW PLAYER JOINED THE TENNIS CLUB.
Off and running / off to a running start / off to a flying start

Meaning: Start something with a good, smooth beginning and progressing well.

Use: She was off to a flying start when her course began, I don't understand why she was nervous at all before.
KEEP ONE’S HEAD ABOVE WATER

MEANING: TRYING NOT TO FALL BEHIND IN WORK, OTHER DUTIES OR FINANCIALLY.

USE: THESE LAST FEW WEEKS HAVE BEEN TOUGH AT HOME; I’VE ONLY JUST ABOUT MANAGED TO KEEP MY HEAD ABOVE WATER! HOPEFULLY THINGS WILL BEGIN TO GET BETTER NOW THAT I HAVE MONEY TO PAY THE BILLS.
MAKE THE CUT

MEANING: BE CHOSEN TO BE PART OF A GROUP OR TEAM.

USE: UNFORTUNATELY, JANE DIDN’T MAKE THE CUT....BUT YOU DID! CONGRATULATIONS.
JUMP THE SHARK

MEANING: A TERM USED TO DESCRIBE A MOMENT WHEN SOMETHING THAT WAS ONCE GREAT HAS REACHED A POINT WHERE IT WILL NOW DECLINE IN QUALITY AND POPULARITY.

USE: I THINK THAT TV SERIES HAS JUMPED THE SHARK NOW. THEY'RE RUNNING OUT OF IDEAS AND IT'S NOT EVEN FUNNY ANYMORE.
WIN HANDS DOWN / BEAT (SOMEONE) HANDS DOWN

MEANING: AN EASY VICTORY.

USE: I DON’T THINK YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT THE NEW TEAM, YOU HAVE A BETTER SQUAD AND WILL DEFINITELY BEAT THEM HANDS DOWN.

THERE WAS NO COMPETITION BETWEEN THEM AT ALL. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN HER PLAY, SHE WON HANDS DOWN.
BAT A THOUSAND
Meaning: to be successful in everything that you do.
Use: Gareth seems to be batting a thousand with his online business this year.
TO THROW IN A CURVEBALL

Meaning: To surprise someone by doing something unexpected.

Use: They threw in a curveball halfway through my interview and said I had to take part in a role-play situation. I think they wanted to test how well I could work under pressure.
TEAM PLAYER

Meaning: Someone who works well with others to achieve a common goal.

Use: I see myself as an excellent team player; someone who can be relied upon.
TACKLE A PROBLEM

MEANING: TO ATTACK A PROBLEM WITH A LOT OF EFFORT, IN ORDER TO RESOLVE IT.

USE: DON’T WORRY JANICE, WE CAN TACKLE THIS PROBLEM IF WE WORK TOGETHER.
WILD CARD

MEANING: SOMETHING OR SOMEONE THAT ADDS AN UNEXPECTED TWIST TO AN ACTIVITY OR SITUATION.

USE: THEY ADDED OUR TEAM AS A WILD CARD AT THE VERY LAST MINUTE, TO MAKE THE GAME A BIT MORE INTERESTING.
SINK OR SWIM
MEANING: TO FAIL OR SUCCEED BY ONE’S OWN EFFORTS.

USE: THIS INDUSTRY IS VERY COMPETITIVE, YOU EITHER SINK OR SWIM – YOU CANNOT BE AVERAGE.
SET THE PACE

MEANING: TO ESTABLISH THE PACE OR SPEED OF SOMETHING.

USE: THE FASTEST RUNNER SET THE PACE FOR THE OTHER RUNNERS DURING THE MARATHON.
DIVE RIGHT INTO (SOMETHING)

Meaning: To begin to do something without hesitating, getting started immediately.

Use: Some of the students decided to dive right into their studies when they started university.
A FIGHTING CHANCE

Meaning: A good possibility of succeeding if you try hard.

Use: You have a fighting chance of getting that job, I know you can do it.
DIVE IN HEADFIRST

Meaning: To do something impulsively, without thinking about the consequences.

Use: I just decided to dive in headfirst, and it was one of the best decisions ever.
CLEAR A HURDLE

MEANING: TO OVERCOME AN OBSTACLE.

USE: WE’VE CLEARED A BIG HURDLE BY GETTING ALL THE LEGAL PAPERWORK COMPLETED FOR OUR NEW BUSINESS.
BOUNCE (SOMETHING) OFF (SOMEONE)

Meaning: To test someone’s reaction to an idea, in order to get their opinion about it.

Use: Do you mind if I just bounce a couple of ideas off you about next quarter’s marketing strategy?
JUMP SHIP
Meaning: To leave or abandon something that is not doing well.

Use: The football manager did not jump ship, instead he decided to stay and support his struggling team.