

**DEMOCRACY AS SPORT**

(45 minutes)

**OBJECTIVE**

Students internalize the meaning of democracy by connecting it to their favorite sport.

**MATERIALS**

*Democracy As Sport* handout

**GET READY**

- ✓ Copy the *Democracy As Sport* handout for each of your students.

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- ✓ Have your students read the *Democracy As Sport* handout.
- ✓ Have your students write their own analogy comparing their understanding of democracy to a sport of their choice.
- ✓ Make sure your students identify who they are in the game. Have them indicate what democratic roles some of the other athletes are playing.
- ✓ Remind your students that democracy is the process of participation, not the product of it. In other words, it is how the game is played that matters to democracy, not who wins!

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

- ★ *What sport did you choose and why?*
- ★ *How did you use this sport to represent a democracy?*
- ★ *What did you learn about the democratic system through this activity?*



## DEMOCRACY AS SPORT

“A democracy must ask itself a series of questions. What if we held an election and no one showed up at the polls? What if problems emerged and no one took the initiative to put them on the public agenda? What if everyone simply said ‘let somebody else do it’ and no one did? Abandoning the political arena does not mean that nothing will be done but rather that the agenda and preferences of others will dominate. Politics are controlled by those who take initiative to guide it.

“Democracy is a participatory game of contact and blocking, not a spectator sport. It may be able to survive with some of the population simply cheering from the sidelines or even blissfully unaware that the game is being played. But the number of participants can decline to the degree that democracy exists in name only, since the level of participation declines, so does its representativeness. The fewer the people who get involved, the less likely they are to reflect the concerns of the general population.”

– Steven E. Frantzich

*Citizen Democracy*

NY: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999.

### Directions:

Write your own analogy comparing your understanding of democracy to the sport of your choice. Indicate who you are in the game! Indicate what democratic roles some of the other athletes are playing. And remember that democracy is the process of participation, not the product of it. In other words, it is how the game is played that matters to democracy, not who wins!