

“Linsanity”

Even if you’re not a fan of the NBA, you may have heard of the term “Linsanity”. The person behind this phenomenon is Jeremy Lin, the first American-born Taiwanese to play in the NBA. His presence has raised the popularity of the sport in Taiwan, where his parents are from. Lin grew up in the States, and has therefore not needed to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings or learn a new language to communicate with his team. His fans look up to him as a symbol of an Asian succeeding in a Western-dominated sport.

Like many Asian athletes in American or European sporting associations, Lin was not the top choice for recruiters at the start of his career. He was captain of his high school’s basketball team, leading them to win all but one game in his final year, and was named Northern California Division II Player of the Year. In spite of his successes and awards, he struggled to find a university that would offer him a basketball scholarship. But, eventually, his outstanding academic performance earned him a place at Harvard and he started to play on the university’s basketball team. With time, he became a better player, improving more and more. Yet, in his final year, he was not selected by any NBA teams (although, to be fair, it is over 50 years since a player from Harvard played in the NBA). Finally, after being spotted in the NBA Summer League¹, he received offers from several teams and was able to begin his career.

So, how did the phrase “Linsanity” come to be? Over the course of several weeks while playing for the New York Knicks in 2012, Lin impressed both the crowds and the league with his fierce performance, which helped the team to win seven games in a row. The term “Linsanity” was created at the time and has been following him around ever since.

1 Read the text and check the sentences True (T) or False (F).

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| a Lin’s parents are from Taiwan. | T <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b It is difficult for Lin to communicate with his teammates. | T <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c Lin was captain of his high school’s basketball team. | T <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d Lin was offered a basketball scholarship by Harvard. | T <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e Harvard is known for its skilled basketball players. | T <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> |
| f The term “Linsanity” was created before Lin joined the New York Knicks. | T <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/> |

¹ The NBA Summer League is a series of basketball games where the NBA teams try out players including first-year and second-year players, and those who are not signed to any teams.

2 Talk to a partner and answer the questions.

- a** What is your favorite sport and why?
- b** What do you think of playing a sport as a career?
- c** How do you think a successful sportsperson can influence people?