

# FIERLJEPPEN

A Great Big Story Video Lesson



Watch and learn about a unique Dutch sport.

## **Includes:**

- \*Full Video transcript and activities.
- \*Comprehension Questions. Answer key.
- \*How To Play A Sport template.
- \*Generic template to turn any Great Big Story video into an instant lesson!



**Teaching  
Resources** 

# The Sport Of Fierljeppen



GREAT  
BIG  
STORY

In the Netherlands, a land sculpted by water and rich history, a thrilling sport **leaps** across canals, capturing the heart of a nation. This is Fierljeppen: the Dutch art of canal vaulting.

My name is Ruben Van Eijk. My name is Mark Van Der Horst. And we are fierlieppens. Fier, I think it means “far” and lieppens means “jump”. Makes sense? I don’t know ...

Once a practical tool for navigating **marshlands**, Fierljeppen has transformed into a competitive sport, testing athletes' limits through strength, **precision**, and courage, while facing off against waterways turned arenas with a sprint, a leap, and a quick **ascent** up the pole,

Each jumper seeks the perfect **trajectory** to land on the distant sand bed, a daring display where each jump can make or break a champion.



**[Mark]** “Fierlieppen is a sport basically done only in the Netherlands, where people jump over the water with a pole and land as far as possible in the sand.”

**[Ruben]** “There are not a lot of people doing the sport right now, but I think it’s important to keep the tradition going.”

**[Mark]** “Each jump has its own factors which can make a jump good or bad. Do I run fast enough? Do I keep my body straight? But there are also a few external factors like the weather, the wind, the depth of the water and the height of the platforms. The black thing we wrap around our feet is the inside of a tire of a bicycle. This will make sure we don’t lose **grip** on the pole. So when we put pressure on the pole, we can easily let our hands go and go up again.”

Mark and Ruben are pushing the sport to new heights. They're **rivals** and friends. However, this hasn't always been the case.

**[Mark]** “Well, I got to know Ruben when I got into my first few trainings. when I was like, 7 years old. At first I really didn’t like Ruben because Ruben was very, yeah ... he wasn’t training and I wanted to be better. And he was just like, throwing with sand and all things like that.”

**[Ruben]** “I got to know Mark at a young age at our first training together. He was really focused on the sport and I was just, you know, joking around. There we kind of ... yeah, we kind of found each other.”

**[Mark]** “He got to the big **platforms** a few years earlier than me. Although we are the same age. So then, I wasn’t really a lot with him. But when I got to the bigger platforms and we got also the same trainings, and the same matches, then friendship would go a lot better.”

**[Ruben]** “I think we push each other as friends and as jumpers to become the best part of ourselves. To get the best jump, you need to, you know, you need to have advice from all the jumpers, better jumpers than you. And that way we can help each other get the best jump.”

Today, Mark and Ruben are celebrated champions having **secured** multiple national titles. But what's their secret to success?

**[Ruben]** “To become a good jumper you need a lot of physical strength and a lot of **technique** training. That’s why we train 3 times a week. On and off the field.”

**[Mark]** “The perfect jump doesn’t exist. The closest to a perfect jump is sprinting as fast as possible, jumping as far as possible to the pole, having enough time to climb all the way to the top and the moment you feel you’re falling, you just stretch your legs and you kick them into the air and you try to fly as far as possible in the sand.”

**[Ruben]** “The **pole** we compete with is 30 m and 75 cm long. It stands freely in the water and it’s just, if you get to the top, it’s a great feeling because you feel like you are flying. And then you can just go as far as you want. It’s great.”

Fierljeppen competitions are divided into several categories. Boys, girls, juniors, seniors, and ladies, matches are held from May to August with the best jumpers qualifying for the national championships, 25 which have been held in Grijpskerk Arena since the 1930s.

**[Ruben]** “In the competition, you have the chance to jump 3 times. And the furthest distance counts. If you have the furthest distance, the best 3 jumpers from your category get to jump two other times in the finale. Before the competition, I’m always a bit nervous on how it’s going to go. But when it starts, I always feel excited and eager to compete and become the best because we’re all looking for that one great jump.”

**[Mark]** “I have been Holland’s champion one time at the boy’s category. I have been Holland’s champion one time at the junior category. Last year, I have been an event champion at the junior category. And I would really like to be the Dutch champion.”

**[Mark]** “I think if you chose to do fierljeppen, you must be a little crazy. You need to like adrenaline, you need to like a little bit of fear.”

**[Ruben]** “I like to do this sport because there is no sport like it. It’s a full body sport and there is just an adrenaline rush to it, when you get high to the pole and you get far and it’s just the competition. It’s great. It’s just one big family. Almost everybody knows everybody. It’s fun to look at other games too.”

**[Mark]** “Well, for me, fierljeppen isn’t really, like I’m trying to keep it alive. We’re just really trying to make it bigger because it deserves to be bigger. It’s really a crazy sport. The best way to promote it, is with things like this. People are really seeing things for the first time and they are like, “Wow, what is this?” And just like I had when I was 6 years old, like, totally **obsessed** with it. And that’s what I want others to have also.

Match these words with their synonyms.

marshlands	precision	ascent	tragedy	grip
rivals	platforms	seured	pole	obsessed

1. long piece of wood

2. climb up

3. swamp, wetlands

4. made safe, locked

5. accuracy, exact

6. hand pressure

7. direction, way

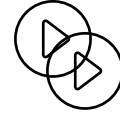
8. crazy about

9. competitors, enemies

10. flat ground, area

# ***FIERLJEPPEN***

The sport of canal vaulting



***After watching, answer these questions about fierljeppen***

1. What does the word “fierljeppen mean?

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2, What counries participate in this sport?

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3. What do the athletes try to do?

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4. How long is the pole? How many jumps does each competitor get?

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5. .What are some external factors athletes must contend with?

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6. In your own words, what things must a good “fierljeppener” do well?

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Title \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_



# GREAT BIG STORY



Video report

## Summary

It's about

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I learned ...

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My favorite part of the  
Great Big Story ...

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Did you like the video?  
Why or why not?

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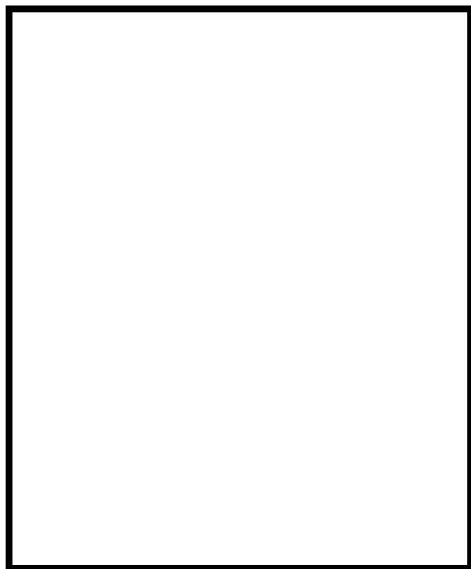
I rate this story ....  
out of 5



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# HOW TO PLAY

**Sport:** \_\_\_\_\_



**Equipment, Things Needed**



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**Who? Where?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Aim, goal?**  \_\_\_\_\_

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**The winner is**  \_\_\_\_\_

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# ***FIERLJEPPEN***



The sport of canal vaulting

***After watching, answer these questions about fierljeppen***

1. What does the word “fierljeppen mean?

It means “far” “jump” (leap).

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2, What counries participate in this sport?

It is only held in the Netherlands (Holland).

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3. What do the athletes try to do?

They try to jump the farthest across a canal, using a pole.

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4. How long is the pole? How many jumps does each competitor get?

The pole is 30.75 m long. Each competitor gets 3 jumps.

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5. .What are some external factors athletes must contend with?

The weather. The wind. The depth of the water. Height of the platform.

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6. In your own words, what things must a good “fierljeppener” do well?

Strength. Agility. Speed. Ability to climb with hands, feet.

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Power. Leaping ability. Hand - eye co-ordination. Timing.

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Social skills (learn from others). Discipline to train every day.

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Courage, little fear.

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