

Inspiring Olympic Athletes - Some Examples

#1 Wilma Rudolph (USA)



Wilma Rudolph was an Olympic runner. As a child, she contracted polio and had to wear a leg brace until age 12. Thanks to her family, she overcame her illness, became a talented athlete and went on to win 3 gold medals at the 1960 Olympics. When asked about her illness, she said, *"My doctor told me I would never walk again. My mother told me that I would. I believed my mother."*

#5 Yusra Mardini (Syria)



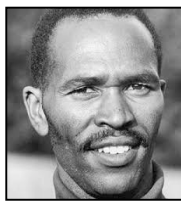
Yusra Mardini was a promising young swimmer living in Damascus. When the Syrian Civil War broke out, her house was destroyed. She and her sister fled the fighting and finally managed to reach Germany. In 2016, she was chosen as a member of the Olympic Refugee Team and took part in the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro. In 2017, she was appointed a UNHCR Ambassador.

#2 Abebe Bikila (Ethiopia)



Abebe Bikila was an unknown runner from Ethiopia when he shocked the world's sports experts by winning the marathon at the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome. It was Bikila's first competition outside his hometown of Addis Ababa. What was surprising was that he ran the entire marathon barefoot – without shoes – yet set a new Olympic record for the event!

#6 Kip Keino (Kenya)



Kip Keino grew up in a farming village in Kenya and became a policeman. Due to his talent as a runner, he was sent to the 1968 Olympics in Mexico. On the way to the 1,500 meter track, his taxi got stuck in a traffic jam. To avoid being late, he got out of the taxi and jogged the last mile to the stadium. Despite this, he went on to beat the world's best runners and win the gold medal.

#3 Jesse Owens (USA)



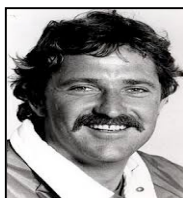
Jesse Owens, a Black American, was the grandson of slaves. His talent for sports earned him a place on the US Olympic team and he was sent to Berlin for the 1936 Games in Nazi Germany. Hitler had hoped that these Olympics would prove the superiority of the white Aryan race. He was shocked when Owens publicly disproved his racist theories by winning 4 gold medals.

#7 Sohn Kee-Chung (S. Korea)



Sohn Kee-Chung was a talented runner during the occupation period when Korea was a colony of Japan. Due to his speed, he was sent to the 1936 Olympics on the Japan team and was forced to use a Japanese name. When he won the marathon, his victory was celebrated with the flag and anthem of Japan. Finally, at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, he was honored – as a Korean – for his achievement.

#4 Lawrence Lemieux (Canada)



Lawrence Lemieux of Canada was in second place in the sailing competition at the 1988 Olympics when he noticed that Joseph Chan of Singapore had fallen in the water behind him and was drowning. He quickly turned around and saved Chan's life. When asked why he didn't ignore Chan and keep racing, he replied "I'm not *that* intense!" He was later given a special award.

#8 Gertrude Ederle (USA)



Gertrude Ederle competed in the 1924 Olympics on the US women's team. At that time, many people were against women taking part in sports since they were "too weak." To prove them wrong, Ederle set out to swim across the English Channel from France to England in 1926. To everyone's surprise, she set a world record of 14 hours 34 minutes – 2 hours faster than the fastest man's time!