

Who is Your Hero?



My First Thoughts

Think about the TV shows and movies you like to watch. With a partner, make a "Top Ten" list of your favorite heroes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Refer to your list of heroes to answer the following questions:

► **What are the three most important qualities that a person must have to be a hero?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

► **How many of the heroes you listed are male and how many are female?**

Male:

Female:

► **Do you think this occurred? Did you list more of one gender than the other? If so, why?**

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My New Thoughts

When you think about your favorite sports heroes, are they mostly male or female? Read the excerpt on the following page from USA TODAY's article: *His sports hero might be a she* to find out more about how young males look up to great female athletes. As you read, add the following symbols to the article:

- ✓ Place a check mark next to two examples of female sports heroes.
- ? Place a question mark next to a word that is unfamiliar to you.
- ★ Place a star next to the sentence or paragraph you like the most. (Be prepared to explain "why?")

Now that you have read about professional male athletes who have female sports heroes, do you think you will consider more females as heroes in your life? Explain your answer.

My Reflective Thoughts

Think about the qualities that matter most to you when you look up to someone as a hero.

Write six words or phrases that describe the most important qualities of a hero. Use the letters of the words "MY HERO" to start each word or phrase. Be prepared to share your words. (examples: Must be honest; Honesty)

M:

Y :

H:

E:

R:

O:

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"I always wanted to be like her." [PGA Championship winner Keegan] Bradley had just been asked about how his family had influenced him in golf: his father, Mark, a PGA club pro, and his aunt Pat, an LPGA Hall of Famer.

"I grew up going to Pat's tournaments and totally idolizing her and wanting to be like her out there," Bradley said. "I remember watching her. I remember as a kid going to her tournaments and literally staring her in the face... and she was so into it she would not even recognize me. And I thought that was cool. I always wanted to be like her."

Although Bradley already had made his share of sports history that day by winning the last of the four men's majors of 2011, the words he said when he stepped off the golf course might end up being the most memorable of all.

Have we ever heard a man in his position — the most visible and successful male athlete in the world at that moment — be so completely at ease in saying that his sports idol was a woman?

Are we on to something new here: Top young male athletes thinking nothing of giving athletic credit to their sports-playing mother, or aunt...?

Pam McGee was a member of the U.S. basketball team that won Olympic gold medal, in Los Angeles in 1984. Four years later, she had a son, and she raised him while playing professionally overseas, then in the WNBA. Her little boy, JaVale, grew to be 7 feet tall. He now is a center with the Washington Wizards thanks in large part to his mother's influence.

"I grew up playing not with dolls but playing basketball with the boys in the neighborhood," she said. "I was 6-2 and a tomboy, so as my son grew up, I understood what he was going through and was able to share my own experiences with him."

When JaVale would hit a deep shot as a youngster, he'd chant, "Cooooop," then pretend he was raising the roof. It would be natural to assume that "Cooooop" was Michael Cooper, the former Los Angeles Laker. But he was retired by that time. No, JaVale was doing what most kids do, mimicking a favorite player. It was his mother's teammate, a Cooper, all right — Cynthia.

Source: *His sports hero might be a she*, August 18, 2011. USA TODAY

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Extend Your Learning

Want to find out more about great female sports heroes? Check out the following websites:

- ▶ Find out more about Ashley Fiolek, the youngest WMA champion and a leader in women's motocross:
ashleyfiolek.com/#/post/12
- ▶ Find out more about C. Vivian Stringer, head coach of the Rutgers University Women's Basketball team and 2009 Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame inductee:
www.scarletknights.com/basketball-women/coaches/stringer.asp
- ▶ Find out more about Bethany Hamilton, professional surfer who overcame great odds after losing her arm to a shark attack: bethanyhamilton.com/about/bio
- ▶ *SheHeroes* tells the stories of extraordinary women who are role models in diverse careers. Explore the videos and other interactive elements of this website: sheheroes.org
- ▶ Find out more about the Women's Sports Foundation, dedicated to advancing the lives of girls and women through sports and physical activity. <https://www.womenssportsfoundation.org>