
World Olympics

Preparing Students for a
Multicultural and Multireligious World

A CURRICULUM DEVELOPED BY TANENBAUM FOR GRADES K-6



Imagine... a more peaceful world that respects difference.
We are committed to making that vision a reality.

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Unit IV – Learning About Being an Athlete

Olympic Diversity

This unit introduces children to the diversity of athletes and builds skills that prevent stereotyping.

Lesson One – Put Me in Coach, I’m Ready to Play!

Children explore assumptions we make about people based on appearance.

Lesson Two – Who is an Athlete?

Children further explore their stereotypes about athletes.

Lesson Three – Open Mind Portraits

Children read about the Jamaican Bobsled Team and explore ideas of who is good at sports.

Who is an Athlete?

Unit 4, Lesson 2

Objectives: Students will learn about stereotypes through examining their perceptions about athletes' gender and ability status.

Skills: Preventing Prejudice, Awareness of Stereotypes, Graphing

Grades: K-6

Recommended Resources: *Wilma Unlimited* and *Lives of the Athletes* by Kathleen Krull

<http://espn.go.com/sportscentury/athletes.html>

http://espn.go.com/blog/high-school/girl/post/_id/2471/40-greatest-female-athletes-mia-hamm

<http://www.olympic.org/athletes>

Materials:

- Multicultural Crayons, Paints or Markers
- Profiles of Famous Female Athletes (included at end of lesson)
- Media Images of Athletes, Including Sports Magazines or Sports Section of the Newspaper

Preparation:

In preparation for the discussion, collect information about famous female athletes and athletes with disabilities.

Some recommended resources are included for your convenience.

PROCEDURE

Part I – Stereotypes of Athletes

Step One: Ask the children if they know what an athlete is. Have the children offer definitions. If necessary, explain that an athlete is a person who is skilled in exercises, sports, or physical games. In the Olympics, athletes from many different countries compete against each other.

Step Two: Ask students to name a famous athlete. Have the children describe their athlete and identify what sport they play. Have students draw a picture of the athlete they chose.

Step Three: Ask the children for a show of hands: How many of you thought of a male athlete? How many of you thought of a female athlete? How many of you thought of an able-bodied athlete? How many of you thought of an athlete who is differently-abled?

Ask students to count the number of responses for each question. With older students, you can have the class create a bar graph to show the number of responses for each question.

Step Four: Ask the children: *What makes an athlete? Are all athletes the same? Who are some famous women athletes? Who are some famous athletes with disabilities? Are there child athletes? Older athletes? What are some qualities that all athletes have? Are you an athlete? Why or why not?*

Step Five: Using this discussion, ask the children to draw an athlete and discuss why they drew their picture.

Alternately, put students in small groups and have each group come up with an ideal athlete. Have each group draw a picture of this ideal athlete on large paper, then present their athlete and discuss why they drew the picture. Facilitate a group discussion with the same questions from Steps Three and Four.

Part II – Researching Famous Female Athletes

Step One: Ask students if they know any famous female athletes. Ask students if they know any famous disabled athletes. Record the students' suggestions. Tell students that they will be looking at some world-famous athletes who are at the top of their chosen sports.

Step Two: Read out the profiles of women athletes included at the end of this lesson. With older children, you can have students read independently. The athletes include: Lisa Leslie (Basketball); Courtney Paris (Basketball); Mia Hamm-Garciaparra (Soccer); Bethany Hamilton (Surfing); Michelle Wie (Golf); and Laila Ali (Boxing).

If there are particular female athletes that the students have mentioned earlier in the lesson, you can bring in some information on them as well.

Step Three: After students have had a chance to read about the female athletes, have a discussion: *What are some things that are similar about these athletes? What are some things that are different? What are some qualities that make an athlete? What qualities of athletes are similar to those you have?*

Part III – Media Images of Athletes

Step One: Provide the children with media images of athletes. Depending on the resources available and your teaching style you can:

- Have the children surf the internet and look at sports sites for kids (for example, Sports Illustrated for Kids has a website at <http://www.sikids.com>).
- Provide printed out internet sports resources
- Provide sports magazines

Step Two: Divide the children into small groups. Make sure each group has their material (whether it be internet print-outs, magazines, or collected images from the sports section of the newspaper). Instruct the groups to cut out all of the pictures they see of athletes.

Step Three: After the groups have finished cutting out all of the pictures, have them count how many of their athletes are male and how many are female. Come together as a whole group and have each group report their numbers so the entire class knows how many women athletes and how many men athletes were cut out. Depending on the math skill level of the children you can:

- Have each group create a bar graph representing the number of male and female athletes or create one as a whole class.
- Have the class figure out the male to female ratio of the pictures or the percentage of women athletes in the media that they observed.

Step Four: Facilitate a discussion with the children: How many pictures of women athletes did we see? How many pictures of disabled athletes? Why do you think that we didn't observe more pictures of these athletes?

Continue the discussion to cover sports often stereotyped as "girl's sports" (like figure skating) or "boy's sports" (like boxing or weightlifting): *In which sports are the most women shown? The least men? Why do you think this is? Can both men and women participate in these sports?*

Students may be interested to learn that both men and women participate in figure skating as well as weightlifting in the Olympics. Women's boxing was first included in the Olympics at the 2012 London Games. Prior to that, it had been the only Olympic event without female participants.

Step Five: Ask students if they know what stereotyping is. If they don't, explain that a stereotype is an oversimplified idea about a whole group of people. For example, all boys like sports is a stereotype. There are some boys who like sports, and some who don't. Saying all boys like sports simply isn't true!

Step Six: Now that the children have experienced some lessons and activities about stereotyping in sports, have the children reflect further. Using the examples of people like Wilma Rudolph, Curtis Pride and other athletes the children have been introduced to, facilitate a discussion about stereotyping in sports. Ask the children:

*What are some stereotypes about athletes?
Who are stereotypically considered good athletes?
What racial and ethnic groups are sometimes stereotyped as good athletes?
Are these stereotypes always true?
Is it a good idea to use these stereotypes? Why or why not?*

Step Seven: Have the children write letters to the editors of the magazines and/or web pages they looked at. You may need to review the mechanics of letter writing with the children (date, address, salutation, body of the letter, signature). Have the children include their thoughts and feelings about the images of athletes they saw represented as well as what they have learned about who an athlete is and what an athlete may look like. Have the children mail the letters.

Lisa Leslie



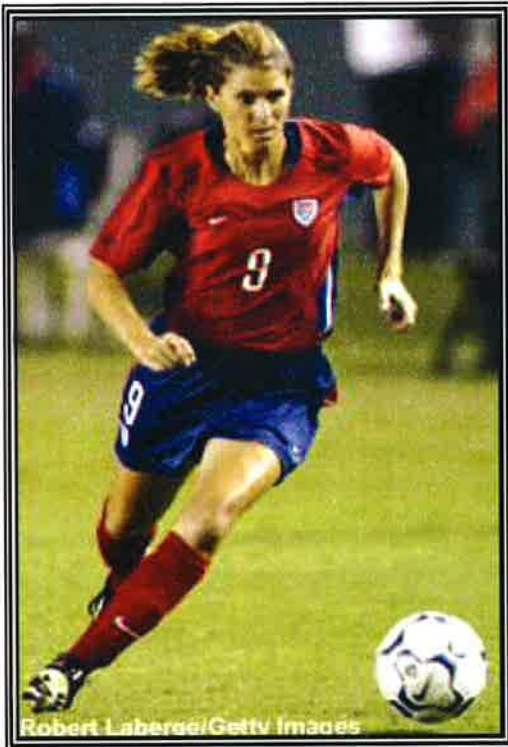
Lisa Leslie played basketball for the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) team, the Los Angeles Sparks. When she was young, Leslie was slightly embarrassed of her height, standing very tall at 6 feet, 5 inches. Yet, she grew to become an amazing player. She was not only one of the first WNBA players, but also one of the most popular because of her stellar performance!

Leslie has won four Olympic gold medals (1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008), as well as the World Championship Most Valuable Player Award in 2002. Leslie is no longer shy about being so tall!¹

1 Information from: http://archive.usab.com/bios/leslie_lisa.html

Image from: <http://www.eobx.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Lisa-Leslie-Photo-Gallery.jpg>
(as of 2012)

Mia Hamm-Garciaparra



Mia Hamm-Garciaparra has been a hard-working star from a young age; at 15, she was the youngest player to ever play for the U.S. women's national soccer team.

She competed with the team for seventeen years, winning two World Cups (1991 and 1999) and two Olympic gold medals (1996 and 2004). Hamm was named the **Fédération Internationale de Football Association** (FIFA) World Player of the Year two times in a row!

Until June of 2013, she held the record for most number of international goals scored among all players, men and women.

Still, her talents don't stop at soccer. She is also the author of [Go for the Goal: A Champion's Guide to Winning in Soccer and in Life.](#)¹

¹ Information from: <http://www.biography.com/people/mia-hamm-16472547#early-life-and-career>

Image from: <http://legacydirect.files.wordpress.com/2009/01/mia-hamm.jpg>

Zahra Nemati



Zahra Nemati is an archery champion who, at the London 2012 Paralympics, became the first Iranian woman to win a gold medal at an Olympic or Paralympic Games.

Nemati was a blackbelt in taekwondo before a car accident in 2008 caused severe damage to her spine and left her legs paralyzed.

Overcoming great disappointment, she was determined to excel in archery. “The pinnacle of my disappointment in taekwondo was the start of my happy days in archery,” she said.

Nemati has won multiple medals and set numerous world records, often competing with--and beating--able-bodied archers. She takes pride in the fact that her success has broken down stereotypes and encouraged more Muslim women to pursue sports.¹

¹ Information from: <http://www.rio2016.com/en/news/paralympic-archery-champion-zahra-nemati-inspires-women-across-muslim-world>
Image from: <http://www.rio2016.com/en/zahra-nemati>

Laila Ali



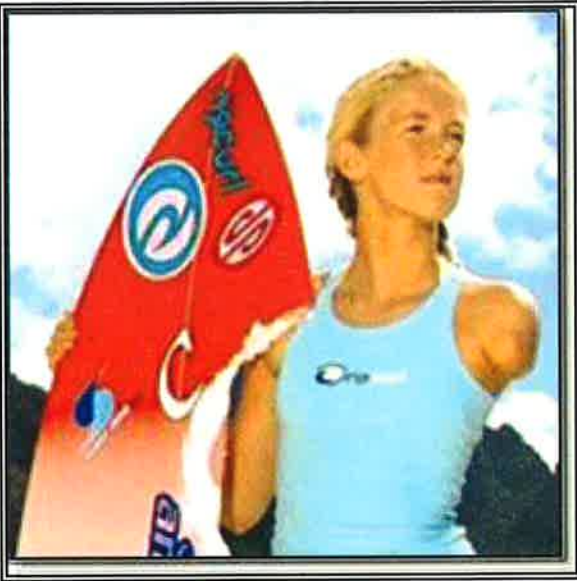
Laila Ali surprised many people when in 1999 she announced that she would give women's boxing a try. Ali was a personal trainer in Los Angeles, CA, but she was also the daughter of boxing legend Muhammad Ali. People were even more surprised when in the first round of her first fight, she knocked out her opponent!

Ali has had some famous fights. There were many, many people watching her fight with Jackie Frazier, daughter of world-famous boxer Joe Frazier! After eight rounds, Ali was declared the winner. Since that time and prior

to retiring in 2007, Ali has had twenty-four fights and has won every single one, winning twenty-one of them by knock outs. As a result, Ali was a multi-World champion in Super-Middleweight.¹

¹ Information from: <http://www.womenboxing.com/lailaali.htm> and <http://www.lailaali.us/>
Image from: http://sportsmed.starwave.com/media/box/2003/0207/photo/a_ali_i.jpg (as of 2012)

Bethany Hamilton



Bethany Hamilton is no ordinary surfer. She began to surf when she was five years old and by age twelve, she had already won First Place in the Haleiwa Menehune Championship! But life has presented challenges for Hamilton, who at age thirteen was viciously attacked by a 14-foot tiger shark, which took a huge bite of her board and tore her left arm off.

Hamilton remained strong despite the tragedy and returned to surfing after just one month. Although surfing with one arm is very difficult, Hamilton taught herself to do it. In 2004, she was awarded the Excellence in Sports Performance Yearly (ESPY) Award for Best Comeback Athlete of the Year, as well as a Special Courage Award at the 2004 Teen Choice Awards. She wrote an autobiography, Soul Surfer, that came out that same year and was later made into a movie.

Bethany realized her dream of becoming a professional surfer in 2007. She is involved in many charities, including her own foundation, which offers hope and support to people who have experienced limb-loss or other difficult situations.¹

¹ Information from: <http://bethanyhamilton.com/profile/> and <http://www.friendsofbethany.com/about/who-what-why/>

Image from: http://www.hourofpower.org.hk/data/livesofpower/013_Hamilton.jpg (as of 2012)

Michelle Wie



Michelle Wie is an American professional golfer on the LPGA tour. The daughter of South Korean immigrants, Wie was born in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1989 and started playing golf at age 4 under her father's mentorship.

Wie achieved several golf milestones at an early age. For example, when she was 13, Wie became the youngest golfer ever to qualify for an LPGA tour event, where she finished in the top ten. The following year, she shot the lowest round of any female golfer in a men's PGA tour event.

Over the course of her career, Wie has won three events on the LPGA tour and earned ten top-ten finishes in Major competition. Michelle's exceptional golfing ability and magnetic personality have placed her in the international spotlight and made her one of the most influential athletes in women's sports today.¹

¹ Information from: <http://www.michellewie.com/bio>

Image from: <http://blogs.suburbanchicagonews.com/sportsbeacon/michelle-wie-1.jpg> (as of 2012)