

# A CENTURY 1900s

## OF

# HEROES, DOMINANCE, AND A LITTLE BIT OF MAGIC



*A tribute to the greatest athletes, dynasties and moments of 20th century sports*

## CENTURY'S GREATEST



# ATHLETE

5. Wayne Gretzky
4. Jesse Owens
3. Muhammed Ali
2. Babe Ruth
1. Michael Jordan

by Jason Snyder  
editor-in-chief

A lifelong question that sports fans ask themselves, yet never find an answer to is, "how do you measure greatness?" If there were some magical equation that would give a unanimous decision as to who is the greatest athlete of the century, the job of sports analysts, broadcasters and spectators would be much easier. However, the pleasure of coming up with your opinion of the greatest athlete would be much less interesting. The reason this question comes up so much is because no one really has the "right" answer. Yet everyone knows that their decision is the most accurate.

The definition of "the greatest athlete" isn't a consistent idea for everyone. Everyone defines their greatest athlete in different ways. Whether it be through the athlete's impact, talent, or various skills, people have their idea of what exemplifies the word "greatness."

Many athletes in the history of competitive sports have been very influential to their peers or to people in their society. Others just go far and beyond any other athlete that has competed in their sport. Some defy odds, and others present themselves in a respectable manner so society can see them as role models.

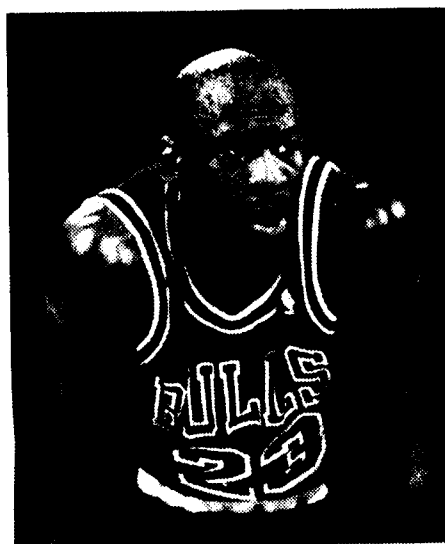
In the *Beacon's* top five countdown of the greatest athletes of this century, every athlete falls into one of these categories. Gretzky is an athlete that went far beyond any other hockey player in the history of the sport. Jesse Owens defied the odds in the 1936 Olympics, winning gold medals much to the dismay of Adolf Hitler. Muhammed Ali spoke of his greatness in great detail, becoming very influential to the black Americans of the time. Babe Ruth was the first and most storied baseball player of all-time. He set the standard of greatness that all baseball players would attempt to meet. None have.

But one athlete that meets all these standards of greatness is a man very recognizable

to everyone in the human race. Michael Jordan is the hero we can all remember. We on the *Beacon* never witnessed the days of Ali and Ruth, so it is difficult to see the impact that they made in society. Jordan's impact is immeasurable. He gave the youth of America a hero. Someone they can look at hope to be like. He consistently poured out relentless effort to be the best, as a team player and a person.

The stats will give you an idea of his talent in his sport. His video tapes will give you a sense of his creativity and desire to win. No one in the history of sports has had the competitive desire of "His Airness."

People say that Babe Ruth dominated the early 1900s. Ali, the middle of the century and Jordan the last. We believe, they saved the best for last. Michael Jordan is this century's greatest athlete, in every sense of the word.



# TEAM OF THE CENTURY

5. Dallas Cowboys
4. San Francisco 49ers
3. Montreal Canadiens
2. Boston Celtics
1. New York Yankees

by Matt Wiertel  
sports editor

The New York Yankees have dominated baseball this century and fittingly they are named the *Beacon's* team of the century. No other team compares to the Yankees when it comes to winning championships and overall history. With 25 championships to their credit in this century, the Yankees have won more championships than the Athletics, Dodgers, Red Sox, and Giants combined.

The Yankees are one of the "old time" franchises that has withstood the test of time. Players like Babe Ruth, Joe DiMaggio, Mickey Mantle, and Lou Gehrig, all have worn the fabled Yankee pinstripes. This history is what separates the Yankees from the new age teams; teams that never had a Ruth, DiMaggio, or Mantle play for them.

Even today the Yankees still radiate that aura of excellence and tradition, only now it's with different players. But they still play the game in the "house that Ruth built." If you were to ask an individual who their favorite baseball legend was, 9 times out of 10 they would name a former Yankee. Every person has their own special memory of a Yankee moment. Some are old enough to remember the Babe, others remember the "iron horse," Lou Gehrig, and his infamous speech during his bout with a disease that would later carry his name. Still other generations can relate to the Yanks. More recent heroes include "Mr.

October," Reggie Jackson, who dazzled the world with his three homer game during the World Series. These are the Yankees that have and will be remembered as the greats of the game. Their spirit and the memories of past successes drive the new batch of players. Due to the fact that all Americans can relate to one Yankee player or another, the Yankees more or less are America's team. They, in a sense, put the past into the national pastime.

The spirit of the Yankees is what keeps baseball alive. The entire soul of baseball resonates from beyond the outfield at Yankee Stadium. There you will find shrines erected in the name of the greats who competed there. This soul will never die. Rather it will remain with the game until the game is no more.



# MOST MEMORABLE EVENT

5. Lou Gehrig Day: "Today, I consider myself..."
4. Ice Bowl: Green Bay defeats Dallas in the "Frozen Tundra"
3. U.S. hockey team defeats USSR on way to Olympic Gold in 1980
2. McGwire vs. Sosa : Homerun chase of 1998
1. Jesse Owens wins 4 gold medals in Hitler's presence

by Craig Hazelwood  
assistant sports editor

The 1936 Olympics will always be remembered around the world as one of the greatest sporting events in history. Traditional Olympics games display competitiveness, sportsmanship and fellowship of the athletes. The '36 games were very different. They were held in Berlin while Germany was under the rule of Adolf Hitler. Hitler, known for his

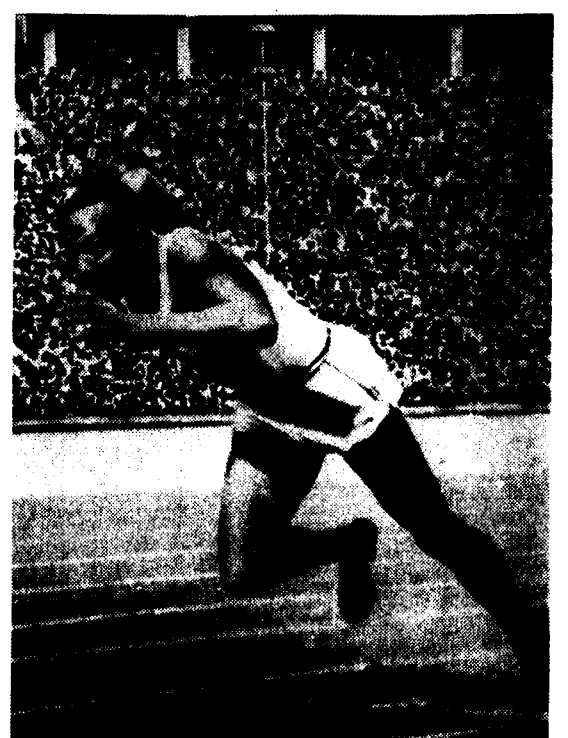
proclamation of Aryan supremacy, expected to dominate the Olympics and show the world his "superior" German athletes. Der Fuhrer had not planned on the emergence of a young black athlete from Alabama, Jesse Owens.

Owens played a huge role in putting Der Fuhrer in his place. Days before Owens' first event, Hitler publicly congratulated the Finns, the Germans and other white European gold medalists. When Owens won his first gold medal, in the 100 meters, Hitler was nowhere

to be seen. The sprinter would win a total of four gold medals. He set a world record in the 200 meters, jumped over 26 feet for the Olympic record, and he ran the opening leg of America's world record 4 x 100 meter relay team. He was sensational. Der Fuhrer was stunned and silenced.

Owens was so great everyone was pulling for him. This marked the first time that American whites rooted for blacks in sports history. It led to the breaking down of the color-bar-

rier of athletes. This was a long process in America, but this was the first step. Owens even won the support of the German fans. Owens became a world hero and an American legend. Jesse Owens put on his spectacular display at such a crucial time that the '36 Olympics became known as the Jesse Owens Olympics.



Jesse Owens