

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

## **Dedicated to the Goal**

*Soccer standout Carli Lloyd is not afraid of hard work.*

By Marty Kaminsky  
2016

*In this informational text, Marty Kaminsky discusses Carli Lloyd's journey to becoming an important player on the women's national soccer team. As you read, take notes on what actions Lloyd took to succeed in soccer.*

- [1] More than 53,000 soccer fans, waving flags and banners, fill BC Place stadium in Vancouver, British Columbia. They await the start of the 2015 Women's World Cup final between Japan and the United States. The U.S. has not held the cup since 1999 and is determined to take it back. Japan is set on keeping the cup, which they won in 2011.



*"This month, Lloyd and the U.S. team are going for the Olympic gold once again." by Xinhua / Alamy is used with permission.*

But Japan isn't ready for this year's U.S. team and their starting center midfielder, Carli Lloyd. Less than three minutes into the game, midfielder Megan Rapinoe directs a corner kick to Lloyd, who taps it into the goal, making the first score of the game. A minute and a half later, Lloyd collects a pass from teammate Julie Johnston and flips it into the net. Soon, midfielder Lauren Holiday breaks free and scores.

The game is barely fifteen minutes old, and Japan, stunned by the U.S. team's lightning strikes, faces a score of 3 – 0.

As if three unanswered goals are not enough, the unthinkable happens. In a burst of energy, Lloyd steals the ball. She sees that Japan's goalie is out of position. The crowd roars as Lloyd launches a high, arcing shot from 55 yards out. The goalkeeper can only stumble backward and swat at the ball as the improbable<sup>1</sup> shot sails over her head and into the net.

- [5] The game is not even one quarter over, and Carli Lloyd has already completed a hat trick<sup>2</sup>—scoring three goals in one game. Team U.S.A. leads with a score of 4–0, well on their way to a 5–2 victory and the World Cup championship.

Before the World Cup began, Lloyd described her knack<sup>3</sup> for shining in big games. "There's a switch that kind of goes off inside of me when there's a big match," she said in an interview with U.S. Soccer. "Those are the moments that I live for, you know — the blood, the sweat, the tears. Everything that goes into my training, it's for those big moments."

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1. **Improbable (adjective):** not likely to happen
  2. a way to describe scoring three times
  3. **Knack (noun):** a special ability to do something

Born in 1982, Lloyd lived to play sports as she grew up in Delran, New Jersey. Her parents tried to interest her in three d's — dance, dolls, and dress-up. Instead, she was drawn to basketball, baseball, hockey, and most of all, soccer.

Soon, she could outcompete her younger siblings, Stephen and Ashley. She searched the neighborhood for tougher challenges, playing anyone who was willing. In a nearby soccer field, she practiced for hours.

Her practice paid off in high school. Twice, her team made it to the state finals. Twice, she was chosen for the all-state team. And she was named to Parade magazine's All-America Team, also twice.

- [10] In 2001, she went to Rutgers University, where she became an award-winning standout. Coaches at the national level noticed her, and in 2003 she was invited to try out for the under-21 U.S. team.

To her surprise, she was cut from the team.

"I was devastated,"<sup>4</sup> Lloyd recalls. "There was lots of crying and wondering what I should do. I felt that I let a lot of people down. I was about to quit the game for good."

Her father convinced her to work with soccer trainer James Galanis. Soon, she was in six-hour practice sessions, year-round, in all kinds of weather. "Her will to learn was high and her sacrifices were great," Galanis explains. "Carli turned her weaknesses into her strengths. Endurance,<sup>5</sup> mental toughness, and determination are now her strengths."

Lloyd's play improved, and so did her attitude. When she was benched for poor play, she did not blame others. Instead, she cheered on her teammates, then she worked even harder on her skills. Finally, a spot opened up on the under-21 team. This time, she made the roster.<sup>6</sup>

- [15] Since then, Lloyd has started more than 200 games with the women's national team. Despite injuries and setbacks, she has become the highest-scoring midfielder in U.S. women's soccer history.

She scored the game-winning goals for the U.S. women's team in the 2008 and 2012 Olympics. In the 2015 World Cup, she was awarded the Golden Ball, recognizing her as the best player in the tournament. This month, she and the U.S. team are going for gold again at the Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Through it all, she has learned to stay positive. "If you have a goal, there will always be challenges, but if you work hard, you can do it," she says. "Believe in yourself, dedicate yourself to that goal, and make it come true."

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4. **Devastate (verb):** to cause someone serious shock or grief  
5. **Endurance (noun):** the ability to withstand hardships  
6. a list of members of a team

## Text-Dependent Questions

**Directions:** For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which statement identifies the central idea of the text?
  - A. From a young age, Lloyd was encouraged to pursue sports and other activities uncommon for young girls.
  - B. Lloyd worked hard and overcame many challenges to become one of the top women in soccer.
  - C. Soccer is a sport built on teamwork, a skill that Lloyd had to develop before being accepted on the women's national team.
  - D. Lloyd was a natural athlete, and found the journey to succeeding in sports to be easy.
  
2. PART B: Which detail from the text best supports the answer to Part A?
  - A. "A minute and a half later, Lloyd collects a pass from teammate Julie Johnston and flips it into the net." (Paragraph 2)
  - B. "She searched the neighborhood for tougher challenges, playing anyone who was willing. In a nearby soccer field, she practiced for hours." (Paragraph 8)
  - C. "Her father convinced her to work with soccer trainer James Galanis. Soon, she was in six-hour practice sessions, year-round, in all kinds of weather." (Paragraph 13)
  - D. "Despite injuries and setbacks, she has become the highest-scoring midfielder in U.S. women's soccer history." (Paragraph 15)
  
3. How does the author introduce the United States' women's soccer team in the text?
  - A. The author describes the women's team as surprising Japan with how quickly and easily they scored.
  - B. The author portrays the women's team as impressed by the size of the crowd.
  - C. The author describes the women's team as being able to beat Japan, only because of Lloyd's talent.
  - D. The author portrays the women's team as working harder than the Japanese team.
  
4. How does paragraph 8 contribute to the development of ideas in the text?
  - A. It shows that Lloyd's siblings gave up playing soccer because Lloyd was better than them.
  - B. It shows Lloyd's love of soccer and how she was willing to work hard to get good at it.
  - C. It reveals that Lloyd's parents gave her a lot of freedom as a child.
  - D. It emphasizes Lloyd's interest in many types of activities, not just sports.

5. What is the relationship between Lloyd's setbacks and later successes?

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## Discussion Questions

**Directions: Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.**

1. In the text, the author describes Carli Lloyd's parents trying to get her interest in "dance, dolls, and dress-up." How did Lloyd challenge gender stereotypes by pursuing sports? What obstacles do women in sports often face?
2. Carli Lloyd is one of the top players in women's soccer in the United States. What did she need to do in order to achieve this status? Describe a time when you had to work hard to accomplish something important to you.