

Introduction

The most important thing in the Olympic Games is not to win but to take part, just as the most important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.

–The Olympic Creed

Motivational Moments in Women's Track and Field is designed to inspire, encourage, motivate, and teach us valuable life lessons. The stories are written for those who are currently competing, coaching, have participated in track and field, or are simply a track and field or sports fan. The questions at the end of the stories are designed to challenge, teach and enable you to grow as you apply these principles to athletics and to the bigger game of life. All of the athletes are ordinary people who used extraordinary desire to accomplish extraordinary things. Each athlete began simply with a dream, which developed into a belief in themselves. They personify the Olympic philosophy – “there are no great people, rather there are great challenges that ordinary people are forced to meet.” Their stories offer hope that we can dream and reach beyond our perceived abilities and achieve personal satisfaction.

The stories are rich in history and designed to be read in a few minutes. The stories pay honor to all the young men and women who enter the arena, who make the attempt, and pursue excellence. These stories of great athletes teach us how to eliminate negative thinking, to focus our attention on what is important, and how to overcome obstacles to reach our goals.

Athletes throughout the past century have entered the competitive arena and competed with honor. Although not all athletes are fortunate to catch an Olympic star, all athletes can valiantly reach for the heavens. Their stories of inspiration should be read and remembered. For it has been written, “*The honor should not alone go to those who have fallen; rather all honor to those who fall and rise again.*”

This book was designed to be enjoyed by anyone with an interest in track and field, but the author, who has over thirty years of experience in coaching track and field at both the high school and collegiate level, wrote this book especially with track and field coaches in mind. If you are a coach, you are encouraged to use these stories to motivate and inspire your athletes. Coaching is one of the most influential professions in our society. Coaches work with young people on a daily basis and have a tremendous opportunity to make a difference. Athletics is about more than just playing a game. It is the responsibility of the coach to develop not only the physical component, but to develop the heart and mind of each athlete they coach.

Our young people need strong role models. The athletes profiled display the drive, motivation, and dedication to train for years to reach a goal. Their stories teach the values of self-discipline, responsibility, accountability, and loyalty. They demonstrate the qualities necessary to be successful in life—good character, integrity, a strong work ethic, dedication, and perseverance. You're bound to find motivation and encouragement, no matter what your experience or relationship to track and field. Hopefully you receive pleasure and inspiration from these pages,