

Babe Didrikson Zaharias (1911-1956)

(CD 2 TRACK 30) ♦ [FULL TEXT 201]

Introduction ✿

Mildred Ella “Babe” Didrikson Zaharias was an American athlete who excelled in every sport she tried. She was a track and field champion, an All-American basketball star, a record-setting golfer, and all-around force in everything from baseball to bowling. Here is a short biography of a woman who was named one of the greatest athletes of the 20th century.

Prediction Dictation ✿

In this activity, you are not going to listen first. Work with a partner or alone, and fill in each blank with a word you think is correct. When you are finished, listen and do the dictation on the next page. Then compare your answers.

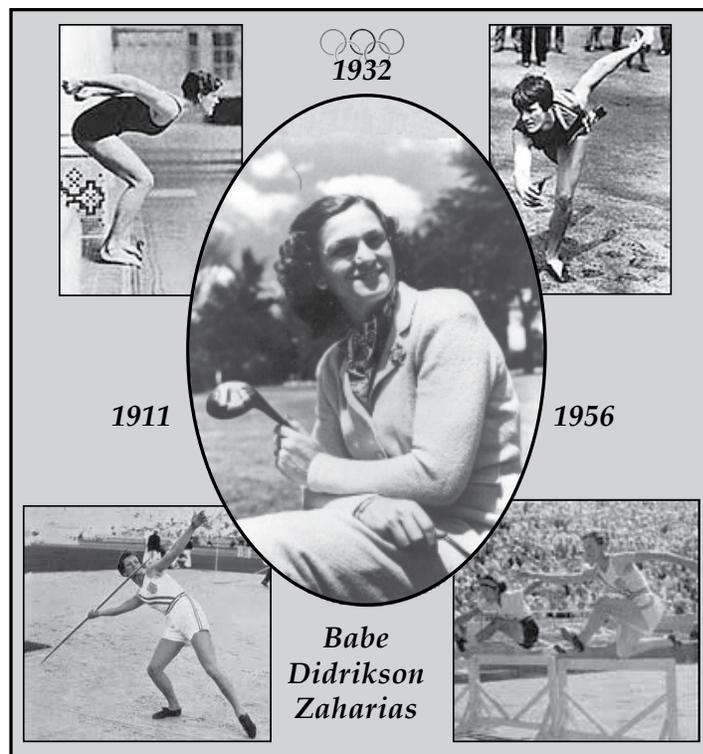
When Babe Didrikson was ___ teenager in 1925, she knew her life’s ambition. “My goal was to be the _____ athlete who ever lived,” she said.

Her parents _____ hard-working immigrants _____ Norway, and Babe grew up in a tough working-class environment that helped shape her independent _____ self-reliant spirit. A tomboy, she was strong and driven _____ assert herself. In elementary school _____ was dubbed “Babe” after Babe Ruth because of her athletic _____ on the baseball field.

In school, she dominated _____ sport she tried: volleyball, tennis, baseball, swimming, and especially basketball, which was very _____ among young women at the time. At _____ 18, she was recruited to _____ a company’s professional basketball team, where she quickly _____ the star. Soon after, she amazed audiences _____ many track and field events as well. In the 1932 Olympics she won several gold _____ for track and field.

While Babe was a natural athlete, it was _____ incredible determination that made her a champion. Her next _____ to tackle was golf, where she _____ an

unstoppable force, winning 82 tournaments _____ the 30s and 40s. She co-founded the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), a world-wide_____.



On the golf course she _____ George Zaharias, a Greek-American, in 1938. They married and Babe took and _____ her husband's name, but by then the Didrikson name _____ famous.

Didrikson was at _____ top of her career in the early 50s, and with all her tour winnings _____ endorsements, she was _____ over \$100,000 a year, an incredible _____ for a woman athlete of that time. But in 1953, she faced a major _____ she couldn't overcome – colon cancer. After the surgery, _____ said she'd be too weak to _____ sports, but four months later she was _____ in golf tournaments. And in 1954 she _____ winning again. She continued playing until 1955, when _____ the cancer returned. She held on for another year. Didrikson, arguably _____ greatest athletes of the twentieth century, _____ on September 27, 1956.

Listening Dictation ❁ *Listen and fill in the blanks with the words you hear. Then, with a partner, compare your prediction to the dictation.*

When Babe Didrikson was ___ teenager in 1925, she knew her life's ambition. "My goal was to be the _____ athlete who ever lived," she said.

Her parents _____ hard-working immigrants _____ Norway, and Babe grew up in a tough working-class environment that helped shape her independent _____ self-reliant spirit. A tomboy, she was strong and driven _____ assert herself. In elementary school _____ was dubbed "Babe" after Babe Ruth because of her athletic _____ on the baseball field.

In school, she dominated _____ sport she tried: volleyball, tennis, baseball, swimming, and especially basketball, which was very _____ among young women at the time. At _____ 18, she was recruited to _____ a company's professional basketball team, where she quickly _____ the star. Soon after, she amazed audiences _____ many track and field events as well. In the 1932 Olympics she won several gold _____ for track and field.

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Discussion ❁

Here are some sports Babe played. Can you guess what each sport is?

1. After she knocked down all the pins for a strike, she won the game.
2. All the fans had their eyes on the mound, waiting to see what the nervous pitcher would do.
3. She dribbled as she ran down the court.
4. She did 20 laps in the pool every day.
5. She and her friend picked up their racquets and went to the court.
6. She swung her driver, and the ball sailed in the air and landed on the green.
7. She ran down the track, leaned on her pole, and flew over the bar.
8. She liked to do three miles a day. It usually took her about 20 minutes.

Follow up ❁

*Here are some other outstanding female athletes. Choose **one** and find out more information about her. Report back to the class.*

Jackie Joyner-Kersey

Annika Sorenstam

Michelle Wie

Althea Gibson

Wilma Rudolph

Venus Williams

Michelle Kwan

Lorena Ochoa

Mia Hamm

Babe Didrikson Zaharias

Note to teachers: Accept any logical or grammatically correct answers.

Prediction Dictation ❁ page 109 (CD 2, track 30)

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In school, she dominated every sport she tried: volleyball, tennis, baseball, swimming, and especially basketball, which was very popular among young women at the time. At age 18, she was recruited to join a company's professional basketball team, where she quickly became the star. Soon after, she amazed audiences in many track and field events as well. In the 1932 Olympics she won several gold medals for track and field.

While Babe was a natural athlete, it was her incredible determination that made her a champion. Her next sport to tackle was golf, where she was an unstoppable force, winning 82 tournaments in the 30s and 40s. She co-founded the Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA), a world-wide organization.

On the golf course she met George Zaharias, a Greek-American, in 1938. They married and Babe took and used her husband's name, but by then the Didrikson name was famous.

Didrikson was at the top of her career in the early 50s, and with all her tour winnings and endorsements, she was earning over \$100,000 a year, an incredible feat for a woman athlete of that time. But in 1953, she faced a major problem she couldn't overcome – colon cancer. After the surgery, doctors said she'd be too weak to play sports, but four months later she was back in golf tournaments. And in 1954 she started winning again. She continued playing until 1955, when unfortunately the cancer returned. She held on for another year. Didrikson, arguably one of the greatest athletes of the twentieth century, died on September 27, 1956.