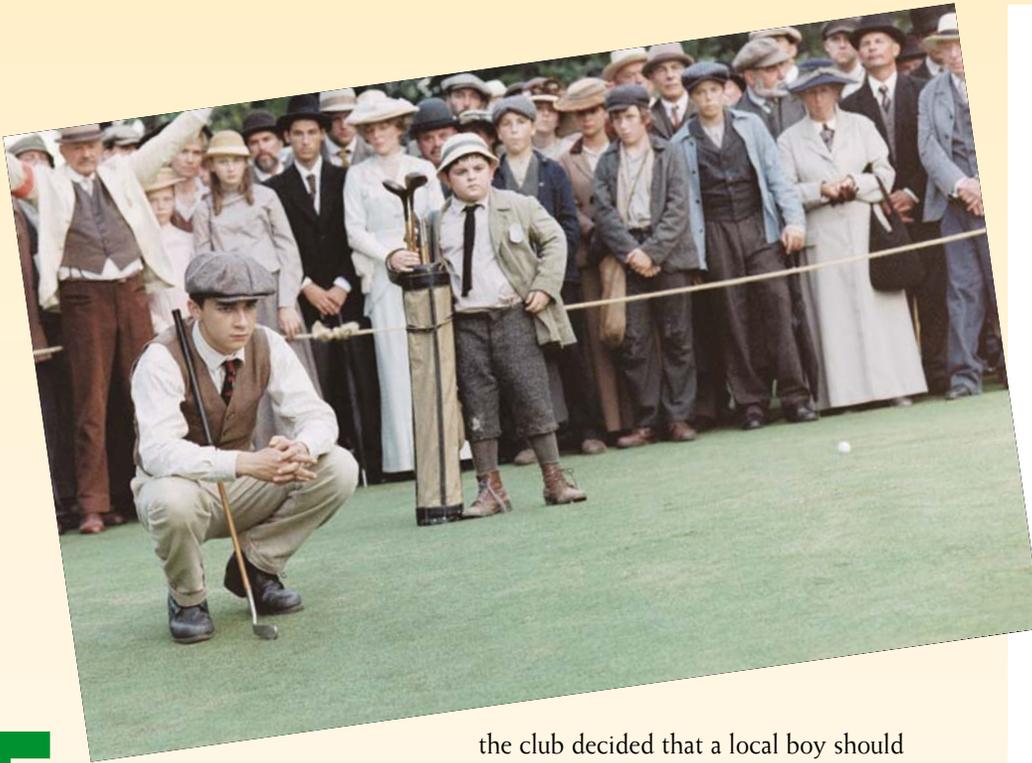


THE GREATEST GAME EVER PLAYED



Every sport celebrates one game as the greatest of all. In golf, the greatest game was played at the 1913 U.S. Open, when an American amateur named Francis Ouimet (pronounced *wee-met*) took on the all-time British champion and won. It was an amazing upset, and you can see how it all happened in **The Greatest Game Ever Played**, a new Walt Disney film coming to theaters on September 30.

The action takes place near Boston, at a golf course called The Country Club. Francis Ouimet knew this course well because he had grown up across the street and had caddied at The Country Club for years. But Francis was not allowed to play the course. In those days, golf was a sport for rich people, and Francis was poor. So even though Francis loved golf, and was very good at it, he eventually had to give up the game to take a full-time job to help support his family.

When the U.S. Open came to The Country Club, however, some members of

the club decided that a local boy should take part, so they invited Francis to play. They didn't care that he came from a poor family. They just knew he was good. For Francis, this was a dream come true. He would be competing against the world's first international golf superstar, Harry Vardon, five-time winner of the British Open, whom Francis had idolized all his life. Even though he was out of practice, Francis decided he had to play.

No one expected Francis to win the Open. In fact, they were surprised that he was only four strokes behind Vardon at the end of the first day. And they were shocked when he managed to tie Vardon at the end of the second day, forcing a playoff. Suddenly, Francis was famous, cheered as the American who might finally beat the British at their own game. Thousands crowded the golf course to see Francis play that final round – the greatest game ever played – and millions celebrated when he sank his final putt to claim the victory.

Part 1 When you see **The Greatest Game Ever Played**, you'll meet Bernard Darwin, a British sports reporter who ends up rooting for the American underdog as Francis steadily closes in on his historic victory. Imagine that you are a sports reporter standing alongside Bernard Darwin as Francis Ouimet makes his final putt. How would you describe that moment? How would you help your reader understand how much is at stake? How would you show the intensity in Francis as he prepares to take his shot, and the joy he feels when it falls in the cup? Play the moment over in your imagination, then use the back of this sheet to write your own sports report on the climax of the greatest game ever played

Part 2 After you see **The Greatest Game Ever Played**, take another look at your description of Francis Ouimet's winning shot. What details did you notice in the film that could help bring your description to life? What did you learn about Francis



and his opponent, Harry Vardon, that might add drama to the moment? Use this new information to revise your sports report. Then compare reports with your classmates to explore how every reporter sees things a bit differently, even when they are describing the same scene.



PORTRAIT OF A CHAMPION

Part 2

Now test your sports writing talents by gathering information for a profile of an athlete in your family. You might interview a parent who plays golf, an uncle who played high school football, a grandparent who once won a bowling trophy, even that cousin who always beats you at badminton. Plan your questions, then conduct your interview in person, on the telephone, by email or instant messenger. When you've gathered your information, put it into a profile of your family's star athlete

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In *The Greatest Game Ever Played*, Francis Ouimet starts out as a lowly caddy and ends up as an American sports hero – the Tiger Woods of his time. Suddenly, people everywhere wanted to know all about him, and sports writers were there to give them the story, with profiles that offered an insider's look at Francis Ouimet and his achievement.

MEET A SELF-MADE SPORTS HERO

Francis Ouimet shocked the golf world with his victory over British champion Harry Vardon in the 1913 U.S. Open. But it was no shock to those who grew up with Francis, just the climax to a life of come-from-behind victories.

The son of a French-Canadian immigrant, Francis started life one stroke down in the eyes of Boston society, where families who can't claim an ancestor on the Mayflower are considered latecomers. To make matters worse, Francis grew up across the street from a high society stronghold, The Country Club, whose members were all well-born and wealthy. "My father was head gardener there," Francis recalled, "until one day they just fired him. No reason. No warning. Just collect your pay and be on your way. He was never very fond of golf after that."

Francis, on the other hand, was fond of golf from the time he was a toddler. "When I was four years old, I would stand in my backyard and watch them play across the street for hours." Those first lessons eventually led Francis to build his own two-hole course in a pasture behind his home, where he taught himself the game. In time he even ventured across the street, to work as a caddy. "I'd talk golf with the club pro and try to learn by watching the club members play, but it was against the rules for caddies to play the course – though I'll admit I snuck in a few holes over the years, playing at daybreak when no one would see me."

In 1911, Francis finally got the chance to play The Country Club course straight through, when he competed in the National Amateur Championships. Many of the club's members thought it disgraceful for a caddy to trade shots with true amateurs, but Francis believed that his talent entitled him to a place in the tournament. In fact, he was so confident in his abilities that he persuaded his family to loan him the \$50 entry fee – a fortune in his father's eyes, who forced Francis to promise that he would give up golf if he didn't win. Not surprisingly, despite his talent, Francis cracked under all this pressure and failed to make the cut. True to his word, he packed up his dreams of a golf career and took "a respectable job," as his father called it, working as a stock boy at a sporting goods store.

And that's where a friendly member of The Country Club found him two years later when the organizers of the U.S. Open asked if there was a local boy good enough to go up against the world's best golfers. Despite his promise to his father and lack of practice, Francis knew this was his last chance to live out his dream. He took the chance, took on the game's toughest professionals, and to the cheers of a nation, made that dream come true.

What questions did the sports writer ask?

What questions would you have asked?



Part 1

Sports profiles are usually based on interviews. The sports writer prepares questions to gather information from the athlete, and sometimes from the athlete's family and friends. But it takes experience to ask the right questions.

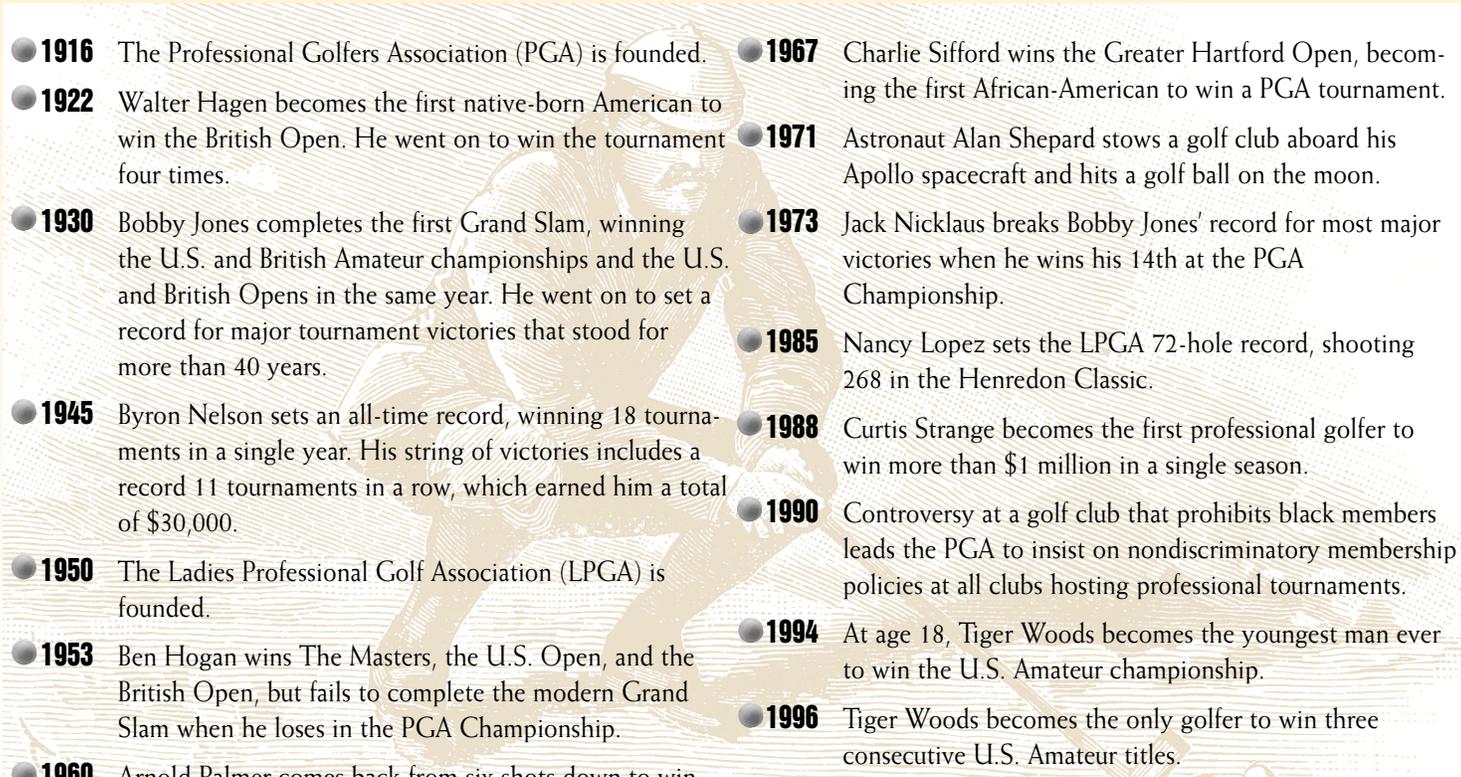
Read this profile of Francis Ouimet. See if you can figure out what questions the sports writer asked to get the information in the profile. Write those questions in the space provided. Then write at least two more questions you would have asked if you had been doing the interview.



MAKING HISTORY

The *Greatest Game Ever Played* takes us back to a turning-point in the history of golf. Before Francis Ouimet won the 1913 U.S. Open, golf had been seen as an upper class sport, played almost exclusively by members of the social elite. And in the United States, it was considered a British sport, since all the best players came from there. But Francis Ouimet changed all that. He showed that golf was a sport for everyone, no matter what your family background, and he made it an American sport, paving the way for future superstars like Jack Nicklaus, Nancy Lopez, and Tiger Woods.

How has golf changed in the years since Francis Ouimet won his place in history? Read the timeline below to find out. Then make sports history yourself – as a sports writer. Research one event on the timeline using Internet and library resources. Write a short history of the event in the space provided, or on a separate sheet of paper.

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- **1916** The Professional Golfers Association (PGA) is founded.
 - **1922** Walter Hagen becomes the first native-born American to win the British Open. He went on to win the tournament four times.
 - **1930** Bobby Jones completes the first Grand Slam, winning the U.S. and British Amateur championships and the U.S. and British Opens in the same year. He went on to set a record for major tournament victories that stood for more than 40 years.
 - **1945** Byron Nelson sets an all-time record, winning 18 tournaments in a single year. His string of victories includes a record 11 tournaments in a row, which earned him a total of \$30,000.
 - **1950** The Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) is founded.
 - **1953** Ben Hogan wins The Masters, the U.S. Open, and the British Open, but fails to complete the modern Grand Slam when he loses in the PGA Championship.
 - **1960** Arnold Palmer comes back from six shots down to win the U.S. Open, then wins the Masters. Halfway to the Grand Slam, he enters the British Open, but finishes second. Still, his run at the record books revives worldwide interest in the game.
 - **1961** The "Caucasians-only" clause is stricken from the PGA constitution, opening the organization to all golfers regardless of their ethnic background.
 - **1963** Arnold Palmer becomes the first professional golfer to win more than \$100,000 in prize money in a single year.
 - **1967** Charlie Sifford wins the Greater Hartford Open, becoming the first African-American to win a PGA tournament.
 - **1971** Astronaut Alan Shepard stows a golf club aboard his Apollo spacecraft and hits a golf ball on the moon.
 - **1973** Jack Nicklaus breaks Bobby Jones' record for most major victories when he wins his 14th at the PGA Championship.
 - **1985** Nancy Lopez sets the LPGA 72-hole record, shooting 268 in the Henredon Classic.
 - **1988** Curtis Strange becomes the first professional golfer to win more than \$1 million in a single season.
 - **1990** Controversy at a golf club that prohibits black members leads the PGA to insist on nondiscriminatory membership policies at all clubs hosting professional tournaments.
 - **1994** At age 18, Tiger Woods becomes the youngest man ever to win the U.S. Amateur championship.
 - **1996** Tiger Woods becomes the only golfer to win three consecutive U.S. Amateur titles.
 - **2000** Tiger Woods wins the U.S. Open by 15 strokes, the largest margin of victory ever recorded in any major tournament.
 - **2001** Tiger Woods becomes the first golfer ever to win all four major tournaments in a row: the 2000 U.S. Open, the 2000 British Open, the 2000 PGA Championship, and the 2001 Masters.
 - **2005** With victories in the Masters and the British Open, Tiger Woods becomes the first golfer to win more than \$50 million in prize money over his career.

My Piece of Golf History



THE GREATEST UPSET

In *The Greatest Game Ever Played*, we see Francis Ouimet score one of the biggest upsets in sports history when he outplays the British champion, Harry Vardon. At the time, however, this victory was probably not called an "upset," since that term did not become popular until 1919, when the great race horse Man O' War lost the only race of his career to a longshot named Upset.

Since then, there have been many memorable upsets in the world of sports, and many arguments about which was the most amazing, most incredible, most inspiring of all. Some favorites in this debate are described below. Choose one event and use your sports writing skills to get into the debate yourself. In the space provided, list the reasons why you think your chosen event was the greatest sports upset of all time. Then, on the back of this sheet or a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph that persuades your reader of your point of view.

At the 1980 Winter Olympic Games in Lake Placid, New York, the U.S. hockey team was a collection of college kids with little world-class experience. In the semi-final round, they faced the Soviet Union, which had won the gold 8 times before and had already beaten the Americans 10-3 in an exhibition game. No one gave the U.S. any chance, but somehow they managed to tie the game in the final period, and in the final minutes, U.S. team captain Mike Eruzione fired a wrist shot to win it 4-3. Two days later, the Americans capped this "miracle on ice" by defeating Finland for the Olympic gold.

When Rulon Gardner was growing up on his family's dairy farm, other kids made fun of his weight. But Gardner grew up strong and could wrestle a steer to the ground. He took this wrestling talent to the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney, Australia, where he faced Alexander Karelin, a Russian champion who had not lost a match in 13 years. Gardner was the underdog – inexperienced, untested – but he turned the tables on Karelin in a grueling contest and pinned him to win the gold medal.

In 2004, it had been 86 years since the Boston Red Sox had won a World Series, and they seemed destined to wait yet another year when they fell behind the New York Yankees 3 games to none in the Championship Series. No team had ever beaten those odds, but the Red Sox were determined to try. Two runs down in the ninth inning of Game 4, they staged a rally to tie the game and won it with a walk-off home run. Then they won another game, and another, until finally they had come all the way back to beat the Yankees, 4 games to 3. And the magic continued in the World Series, where they extended their string of consecutive victories by sweeping the St. Louis Cardinals in four games and ending an 86-year-long record of defeat.

The Villanova Wildcats were an eighth-seed underdog when they met the defending champion Georgetown Hoyas in the 1985 NCAA Basketball Finals. On paper, they just couldn't match up to their bigger, taller, stronger opponent. But on the court Villanova combined tough defense with brilliant shot-making to stay in the game. Then in the second half they improved their shooting to an almost impossible 90 percent, winning the championship 66-64.



The Greatest Sports Upset was

My reasons
