

## **Athlete Achieving Greatness**

### **Both Past and Present**

By: Ben Dhiman

Perfection is defined as an unsurpassable degree of accuracy or excellence in a particular art. The specification of perfection in the world of sports is nearly impossible, and rarely heard of.

Looking through the thousands of years sports have existed, there seems to be only a few names that come about when considering a perfect athlete two of which are **Tiger Woods** and **Muhammad Ali**.

They play different sports, live different lifestyles, and have different attitudes, but both have been able to reach the top. Their great differences are paralleled by unbelievable similarities.

We are currently witnessing an athlete who looks flawless in the eye and attacks it full throttle. Ever since he was a boy, Woods has been striving to be the best, winning tournaments as a youth, and through college.

Now on the international setting, winning an astounding 61 PGA tour events, and 13 major championships, Woods has won just about every golf trophy out there.

His ability to control the leader board throughout any event allows him to succeed in any event. Earning just over an approximate \$100 million this past year from winnings and endorsements puts him at an unbeatable level.

His very presence on the course causes his opponents, time after time, to crumble beneath him. It seems almost a curse for those who must play with him on a Sunday. His dominance and intimidation give him an opportunistic edge.

“Tiger Woods seems almost unbeatable on most Sundays, when he is anywhere near the lead,” said **Ivan Cornell**, 10.

His excellence is the product of an intense work ethic and mental strength. Working out in the off-season three to five times a week, while playing round after round contributes to his prosperity.

Putting for four hours straight on a hot summer afternoon would be punishment for just about anyone, with the exception of Woods.

This relentlessness supported him in winning this year's new Fed-Ex Cup, and the first ever play-offs in golf.

Although he rested during the first week of the play-offs, and coming in second the following weekend, Woods went on a two week winning streak propelling him to the top of the leader board.

Woods represents a degree of perfection in the current day, applying technology, skill, work ethic, and excellence thrusting him to be the number one golfer in the world, and perhaps history.

## **Ali Knocking out competition**

### **Punch by Punch**

By: Ben Dhiman

“Float like a butterfly and sting like a bee, your hands can't hit what your eyes can't see,” said **Muhammad Ali** to **Sonny Liston** before an upcoming fight between the two.

Ali's unbelievable achievements in sports can be described as nothing short of a legendary mark on history.

Ali was an athlete who managed to fight not only any boxer in the world, but the court system, racism, and religious tolerance. His astonishing efforts in the ring brought a phenomenal 56 wins, five losses, and zero draws.

“When I consider the best athlete in the world, the name of Muhammad Ali appears, right away,” said **Alex Schatz**, 10.

Most famous for his brawls with Liston, **Joe Frazier**, and **George Foreman**, Ali was able to retain gold medal after gold medal, and heavyweight championship after heavyweight championship.

Ali's in-the-ring-tactics included intense foot speed and agility combined with blazing quick jabs to the face, jarring his opponents. Standing six foot three inches, Ali used a revolutionary new pose for boxing, letting his hands hang low, away from his face. His speed, strength, endurance, and toughness served him only five losses, none of which came from a knockout.

Not only were his in-the-ring-tactics, new, but his showboat mentality was a cutting edge mind-set, as well. His constant taunts, and ranting speeches concerning upcoming matches, were subject to entertainment for the media, but, in addition, vital tools to get into the opponents head.

Comments by Ali, such as, "It'll be a chilla, and a killa, and a thrilla, when I get the gorilla in Manila," which references to an upcoming fight against Frazier in Manila, were used to psych out opponents, and serve as attention grabbers to fill stadiums, and create pre-match hype over the fight.

Ali struggled with off the ring controversy in aspects of his life, such as his association with **Malcolm X**, and converting to Islam, as well as his neglect to join the army, when requested in the draft.

Ali's racy, but realistic take on life, religion, and boxing made him more memorable than any other boxer in history. He was able to talk a big game, and then exhibit it in the ring.

His dominance is portrayed in his record at 56-5-0, just in his professional career. He was able to win countless gold medals at the Olympics, as well as, boxing titles in WBA/WBC heavy weight division, and NABF heavyweight titles.

Ali's dominance in boxing matched up with Tiger Woods's dominance in golf, can be looked at in various angles.

It is fair to say that boxing and golf are in opposite spectrums of sports, and that there is an enormous difference in sports past and present.

Ali, himself, represents a new era in sports for all of those athletes who love to brag, and also demonstrates a dominant force of the past.

Though there are vast differences between the two great athletes, in terms of personality, religion, sports, and life style, both share one point in common.

This point is the paramount of all sports and of all careers in general; to become the culmination of the most spectacular, the most dominant, and closest to perfection, to become the greatest.

Both Woods and Ali share a similar set of guidelines when facing any kind of adversity, from a two hundred and fifty pound giant, or the eighteenth hole at Augusta, both these athletes refuse to buckle in any high-pressure situation.