



Mia Hamm

Largely considered the best female soccer player in history, Hamm played with the United States women's national soccer team for 17 years, building one of the biggest fan bases of any American athlete. She was named FIFA World Player of the Year in both 2001 and 2002.

The daughter of an Air Force pilot, Hamm moved often with her family throughout her childhood and credits her brother, Garrett, for encouraging her in sports. At age 15, she was the youngest soccer player ever to play for the national team. Hamm attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she helped take the team to four consecutive NCAA women's championships.

In 1991, at age 19, she was the youngest teammember in history to win the World Cup. Five years later, Hamm and her teammates, including Michelle Akers, Brandi Chastain and Kristine Lilly, secured the gold medal at the 1996 Summer Olympics in Athens, Georgia. They would return to win gold again in 2004.

Other accolades include being elected Soccer USA's female athlete of the year five years in a row (1994-1998), MVP of the Women's Cup in 1995 and the winner of three ESPY awards, including Soccer Player of the Year and Female Athlete of the Year. In 2004, she and teammate Michelle Akers were put on FIFA's list of the 125 greatest living soccer players, the only two women and only two Americans to be named.

In 1999, she founded the Mia Hamm Foundation, which is dedicated to bone marrow research after her brother, Garrett, died of the disease shortly after the 1996 Olympics. Hamm was married to her college sweetheart, Christiaan Corry, from 1994 to 2001. She married professional baseball player Nomar Garciaparra in 2003. After helping her team win gold at the 2004 Summer Olympics, Hamm retired to start a family.