



Passion Backstory

Mia Hamm was born on March 17, 1972 in Selma Alabama. She was born with a club foot and had to wear corrective shoes as a small child. But that didn't stop her. She spent most of her life playing sports and was the youngest player ever to join the U.S. Women's National Soccer Team at age fifteen. In 1991, when the women's national team won the FIFA Women's World Cup for the first time, Hamm became the youngest American woman to win a World Cup championship at the age of nineteen.

She attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and helped win four NCAA championships. She was also awarded Female Athlete of the Year in 1993 and 1994. When Mia was at UNC Chapel Hill, her team only lost one game out of the 95 she played. This type of success illustrates the kind of passion and drive Mia Hamm embodies. She said, "I am a member of a team, and I rely on the team, I defer to it and sacrifice for it, because the team, not the individual, is the ultimate champion."

On May 22, 1999, Hamm broke the all-time international goal record with her 108th goal in a game against, which took a lot of hard work and sacrifice. She explains her training in these words, "I am building a fire, and everyday I train, I add more fuel. At just the right moment, I light the match." She also goes on to say that "It is not sacrifice if you love what you're doing."

Hamm played many years as a forward for the U.S women's national soccer team and was a founding member of the Washington Freedom. Hamm has scored more international goals in her career than any other player, male or female, in the history of soccer. Clearly there were setbacks throughout her career, but Mia often remarks, "Failure happens all the time. It happens every day in practice. What makes you better is how you react to it."

Hamm was named the women's FIFA World Player of the Year in 2001 and 2002, and is listed as one of FIFA's 125 best living players (as chosen by Pelé).

She helped lead Team USA to a gold medal at the 2004 Summer Olympics and was also chosen by her fellow U.S. Olympians to carry the American flag at the Athens Closing Ceremonies. Hamm retired in 2004 with 158 international goals at age thirty-two.

Hamm is married to Nomar Garciaparra and on March 27, 2007, Hamm gave birth to twin girls, Grace Isabella and Ava Caroline. She is the author of *Go For the Goal: A Champion's Guide to Winning in Soccer and Life*.

Her wise words to live by are simple... "If you don't love what you do, you won't do it with much conviction or passion." Mia Hamm is an inspiration to us all. Pass it on.

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