

**BOBBIE ROSENFELD:
THE OLYMPIAN WHO COULD DO EVERYTHING**

TEACHER'S GUIDE

CURRICULUM LINKS: (Grades 6 and up)

Language Arts (including Visual Literacy), Social Studies, Physical Education & Health,

Women's Studies, Music, Art, Dance, Drama.

OVERVIEW

Bobbie Rosenfeld was one of Canada's finest athletes. She excelled in many sports: track and field, ice hockey, basketball, softball, and tennis. When she went to the Summer Olympics in 1928, she won two medals. When she could no longer play sports, she coached. When she could no longer coach, she wrote a sports column for the *Toronto Globe and Mail*.

She was a woman known for her strength and good sportsmanship on the sports field, for her wit and honesty off the field. In 1950, she was voted Canada's "Female Athlete of the Half-Century".

She remains a role model for young women today.

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. What is a hero? Brainstorm for ideas about what makes a hero e.g. courage, selflessness, idealism. Discuss people you know or have heard of who are heroes e.g. Terry Fox, Helen Keller, and Martin Luther King Jr.
2. What is discrimination? Discuss the various forms of discrimination e.g. race, religion, gender, age. Give examples from your life or from a newspaper article.
3. Debate: "Men are better at sports than women."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

CHAPTER 1: Beginnings

1. Describe the situation in Russia that gave the Rosenfeld family the incentive to leave.
2. Why did immigrants come to Canada from all over the world?

CHAPTER 2: Growing Up in Barrie

1. What were women's traditional jobs before World War I? How did these change during the War?
2. How did sports change for women during the 1920s?
3. What is women's "suffrage"? Name one woman who worked towards this goal. Outline her life and achievements.

CHAPTER 3: High School Athlete

1. What were some of the difficulties Bobbie had when she tried to participate in sports? Do you believe these problems have changed since the 1920s or do they still exist? Back up your answer with facts.
2. Bobbie's family became Canadian citizens in 1920. What are the rights of citizens?

CHAPTER 4: A Move to the Big City

1. Why did the Rosenfelds move to Toronto?
2. Which sports were becoming more popular in the Toronto Jewish community in the 1920s? Why?

CHAPTER 5: Canada in the 1920s

1. The 1920s was a decade of growth and opportunity. Give one example of how a person could become wealthy. If you were living in the 1920s, what would you have done to achieve success?
2. How did opportunities for women open up in the 1920s in the workplace?
3. How did athletic clothing for women change in this decade? How did this change affect women's sports?

CHAPTER 6: The Complete Athlete

1. What was Bobbie's favorite sport? What was her achievement in that sport?
2. In 1924, Bobbie won the Toronto Ladies Grass Courts tennis singles championship. What was her reaction on winning? What does that tell you about the kind of person she was?

CHAPTER 7: Working Girl

1. Describe Bobbie's achievements at the Ontario Ladies Track and Field Championship in 1925.
2. How were the rules changed after that day? Why?

CHAPTER 8: Women and the Olympics

1. What was Baron Pierre de Coubertin's attitude towards women's sports? Do you agree or disagree. Why?
2. Why did the British women's track and field team refuse to send a team to the Olympics in 1928? Do you believe they made the right decision? Why?

CHAPTER 9: Halifax Olympic Tryouts

1. Ethel Catherwood's nickname was the "Saskatoon Lily". What is a nickname? If you know someone who has a nickname, what does it tell about that person?
2. What do the words "uphold the honor of Canada" mean in the Olympic oath?

CHAPTER 10: Traveling to Amsterdam

1. How did the women's team raise money to pay their way to the Olympics? Name something you really want to do. How do you plan to achieve your goal?
2. Describe the training routine on the ship. What do you do to get ready for an important event, game or presentation?
3. In the 1920s and 1930s, it was sometimes difficult for Jews to enter the world of sports. Besides Bobbie's outstanding athletic abilities, what did she do to be accepted by her teammates?

CHAPTER 11: Opening Ceremonies

1. The motto of the Olympic Games is "Faster, Higher, Stronger". Explain what you think this motto means. How can you apply this motto to your own life?
2. Explain the design of the Olympic flag. Would you change this design? If so, how?

CHAPTER 12: Winner of the 100-Meter Race

1. Why didn't Bobbie compete in the discus event? Do you think it was a wise decision to put her in the 100-meter race instead? Why or why not?
2. What was Bobbie's attitude about winning the silver instead of the gold? What does this tell you about Bobbie's character?

CHAPTER 13: The Good Sport

1. Why did the team managers decide to enter Bobbie in the 800-meter race, an event she'd never trained for? Do you think they made the right decision? Why?
2. Why was the decision taken to eliminate the 800-meter race for women? Do you agree or disagree? Why?

CHAPTER 14: The Matchless Six

1. Why was the 4x100 meter relay so important to Myrtle Cook?
2. Explain the significance of the Canadian women's accomplishments at the 1928 Olympics.

CHAPTER 15: A Triumphant Return

1. What did the city of Toronto give the women when they came home? Compare these gifts to what Olympic athletes receive nowadays.
2. Describe Bobbie's attitude towards driving a car. What does that tell you about her character?

CHAPTER 16: A Cruel Blow

1. What was the "cruel blow" that Bobbie suffered? Why did it happen?
2. Have you ever known anyone who has suffered a serious illness? Describe how he or she dealt with it.

CHAPTER 17: Searching for a New Life

1. Bobbie always signed her autograph "Just a natural . . . Bobbie". What is the significance of this phrase? Create your own personal autograph.

CHAPTER 18: Canada in the 1930s

1. Why do some historians call the 1930s the worst decade of the twentieth century? (Name at least three factors.)
2. What was the significance of the riot at Christie Pits?
3. The Summer Olympics were held in Berlin in 1936. How did many Jewish athletes react to this fact? What would you have done? Why?

CHAPTER 19: The End of an Era

1. Compare the attitude of amateurs and professionals towards sports. How has this attitude changed from the 1920s to the present day?
2. How and why did conditions for women's sports get worse during the 1930s?
3. How did attitudes towards women change in the 1930s regarding work outside the home? Do you agree or disagree with these attitudes?

CHAPTER 20: Career Woman

1. How was Bobbie different from other women of her time?
2. What was the difference between writing about women's sports and men's sports in Bobbie's time? Do you think the situation has changed now? Back up your answer with specific examples.

CHAPTER 21: "Sports Reel"

1. Explain the significance of Bobbie's column, "Sports Reel".

CHAPTER 22: Canada in the 1940s and 1950s

1. Compare the attitudes towards Jews and Blacks during these decades. Have these attitudes changed or stayed the same for each group? Explain.

2. Describe the role of women in the workplace and in sports in the 1950s.

CHAPTER 23: Bobbie at Mid-Century

1. Describe Bobbie's reaction to being named Canada's Female Athlete of the Half-Century.
2. Describe the attitude of male sportswriters to women athletes in the 1960s and 1970s.

CHAPTER 24: The Legacy of Bobbie Rosenfeld

1. In your opinion, what is Bobbie's greatest legacy?
2. Do you believe Bobbie should have been voted Canada's Female Athlete of the Century? Why or why not?
3. If Bobbie Rosenfeld were alive today, what do you think she'd say about the world of sports, in particular about the place of women in sports?

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Write a fan letter to Bobbie or to any member of the Matchless Six.
2. Watch the video, "Bobbie Rosenfeld: The Natural Athlete". What was your favorite part? Why? What would you change in the video? Why?
3. Write a poem about Bobbie Rosenfeld or the "Matchless Six".
4. Debate: "Sports should be played to win or sports should be played only for the fun of it."
5. Write a letter to the editor and complain about the newspaper article describing female athletes as "leathery-legged, flat-chested muscle molls."
6. Write an entry from Bobbie's journal about an important event in her life.
7. Write and illustrate a series of three postcards Bobbie might have sent home to her family.

DRAMA

1. Pretend you're Bobbie in the 800 meter race. With a partner, act out the scene between Bobbie and Jean Thompson as they're running.
2. Give a play-by-play account for radio of one of Bobbie's Olympic races.
3. Interview Bobbie after one of her races. Make a video of the interview with sound effects.

ART

1. Create a collage of female athletes from your country, with facts about why they're famous.
2. Design a poster to advertise the 1928 Olympics or to encourage young Canadian women to participate in sports.
3. The Olympic flag has five interlocking rings representing the five major continents and the colors of all the countries' flags. Design your own flag for the Olympic Games.
4. Choose a chapter from the book and create a comic strip about it.

5. Design three postage stamps that could have been used in the 1928 Olympics.
6. Create a "Bobbie Rosenfeld" cereal box. Your box should contain at least 10 biographical facts about Bobbie's life.

MUSIC & DANCE

1. Research popular songs from the 1920s and 1930s. Play examples to the class and present facts about styles, performers and dates.
2. Research the dances that people did in the 1920s. Demonstrate one dance to the class.

SOCIAL STUDIES

1. Research the new inventions of each decade of the 20th century. Make a display about at least one invention for each decade. This can be in the form of a timeline, collage, or "Inventions of the Century" TV commercial.
2. Research the location of the Summer Olympics. Mark those places on a world map with the dates the Games were held. Do you notice any patterns or significance in the places chosen for the Games?
3. Compare a newspaper article about women's sports from the 1970s to one from the present. Analyze these articles to determine if there is any difference in how the athletes are portrayed. Have attitudes towards women athletes changed significantly? Explain.
4. What problems did new immigrants to Canada face in the 1920s? Compare these with problems immigrants have now.
5. Trace the development of shoes for athletes during the 20th century.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION & HEALTH

1. Choose one event from the Olympic Games in which women compete. Compare coaching methods for this event in 1920 and the present.
2. The coach told the young women not to drink "soda pop" while they were in training for the 4x100 relay race. Create an optimum diet that track athletes should follow while in training.

3. Who was named Canada's "Male Athlete of the Half-Century"? Research his life and accomplishments.
4. Research rheumatoid arthritis: causes, symptoms, treatment.
5. Research a Sports Hall of Fame in your country or community. Describe its history and significance.
6. Body checking is banned in women's hockey. Debate: "Body-checking should be reinstated as a permissible part of International Women's Hockey."
7. Prepare a questionnaire and do a survey in your class or grade about the sports that girls and boys participate in: type of sport, level, amount of time, and so on. Graph the responses and analyze the results. What conclusions do you come to about participation in sports for boys and girls?

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