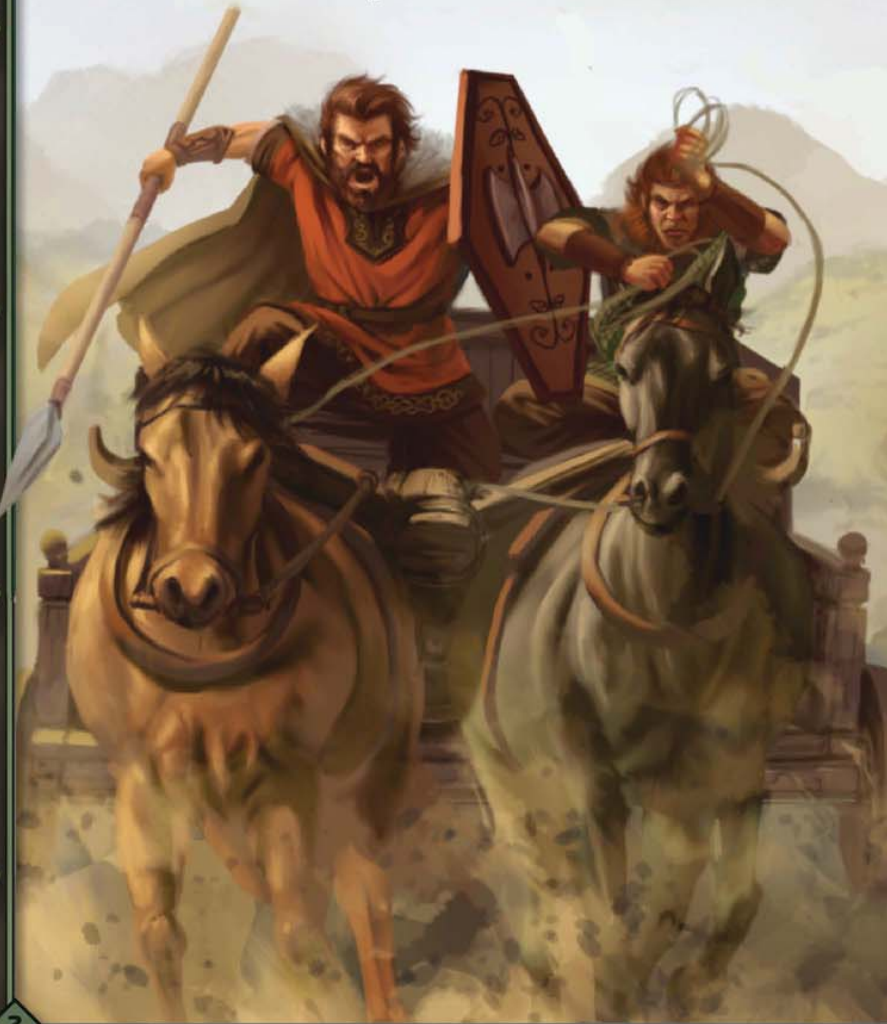


Long ago, the people of Ireland had a great hero called Cú Chulainn. Cú Chulainn was the son of a god and a human woman.

He was the strongest warrior in the world. When he was just 17, Cú Chulainn defeated whole armies all by himself. He rode in a great chariot, and when he fought he became like a wild animal.

This is the story of how young Cú Chulainn's life as a warrior hero began.



When Cú Chulainn was little, he had another name. His name was Sétanta. Sétanta was not a great warrior yet, but he was a very talented athlete. He practised a sport called hurling, which at the time was the greatest in Ireland.

Hurling is played between two teams on a large field. The only equipment is a wooden stick called a hurley. The players try to hit a hard ball into the other team's goal.

Hurling is an extremely difficult game. And Sétanta was an incredibly skilful hurler, even as a little boy.

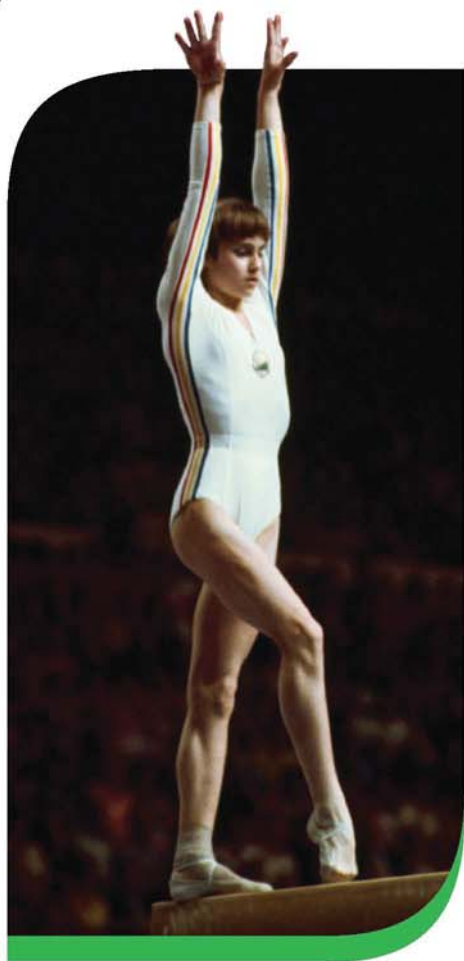


Facts About Incredible Athletes

There have been some incredible athletes in the last 50 years. Many of these athletes became known when they competed in Olympic games. During the Olympics, the best amateur athletes from around the world compete in dozens of different sports. These games may be the greatest test of an athlete's skill. Here are three Olympic athletes who did things no one thought possible.

Nadia Comaneci, Romanian Gymnast

Nadia Comaneci was only 14 years old when she competed in her first Olympics in 1976 in Montreal, Canada. There, Comaneci became the first person to get the highest score possible in gymnastics at the time – a perfect ten. Comaneci, who began training when she was six, won three gold medals at the Montreal Olympics.



Carl Lewis, American Runner

When he was a child, Lewis was a small and skinny boy who was not good at sports. But years of practice and a belief in himself led Lewis to become one of the greatest athletes in the world. He set world records in both running and the long jump, jumping an incredible length of almost 9 metres (29 feet)! Between 1984 and 1996, Lewis won nine Olympic gold medals in jumping and running.



Chen Yanqing, Chinese Weightlifter

Yanqing, who started training when she was 11, was the first woman to win gold medals in women's weightlifting in two Olympic games in a row – both in Athens in 2004 and in Beijing in 2008. This incredibly strong woman has lifted 138 kilograms (304 pounds) – more than twice the weight of her own body!

