

## **Profile of a sports star**

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There is a footballer whom I admire the most. He is an athlete who always steals the show. His extraordinary skills touch my heart. His name is Lionel Messi.

Lionel Messi is a skilful football player. He was born on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1987 in Rosario, Santa Fe Province, Argentina. He is often called by his nickname Messidona. He is 1.69m tall and weighs 67kg. He plays for FC Barcelona and Argentine national team. He plays football for both teams enthusiastically. He has two siblings, one elder brother and one younger sister.

When Messi was eleven, he suffered from growth hormone deficiency, an illness that made Messi's life miserable. However, with the help of the Spanish Government, he was able to receive proper treatment. After a couple of years, Messi started playing football for local teams such as Newell's Old Boys. Then he joined Barcelona and was later selected by the Argentine national team. His achievements are remarkable. By the age of 21, Messi had been awarded the Ballon d'or and named Fifa World Player of the Year. He is often regarded as the best footballer in the world. He is the first to win three European Golden Boot Awards consecutively. What's more, he has kept the highest goal scoring record -73 goals in a season.

Messi was not born a talent; he always equips himself with harsh and intensive training, both physically and mentally. Since he was 15, he has started training seven hours a day. For the first two hours, he works on his dribbling, then for the next three hours, he works on shooting and passing (corners, penalties and free kicks). Lastly, he plays a training match with his teammates for two hours. He is a hard-working person. Instead of showing off, he demonstrates great sportsmanship that should be admired. Messi is also famous for being a superb mentor. He often teaches Neymar JR, his teammate in FC Barcelona, how to shoot from different angles and how to control the ball.

Without doubt, he is an outstanding player. Also, he is a kind and caring person. He has established his own charity called Leo Charity, which aims at helping poor and sick children around the world. In 2010, he donated US\$130,000 to a Syrian child. He also strongly supports the UNICEF. He thinks that people living in developed cities and countries should care more about people in poor countries as he believes that all human beings are equal.

Messi's motto is 'impossible is nothing'. He is right. He was born in a poor family. His father was a mechanic and his mother was a cleaner. Even though he suffered from a severe illness when he was an adolescent, he wasn't defeated by it and he managed to recover. With his determination and perseverance, he overcame all obstacles and became a well-known footballer.

I think young people should learn from him. Nowadays, youngsters give up easily and are vulnerable to adversity. They should stay optimistic even when facing adversity and should try to overcome challenges. With determination, everything is possible. We should keep in mind that 'whenever there is hope, there is a way.'