Mia Hamm

Pre-reading

Questions:

- Who is Mia Hamm?
- What do you know about her?

Definitions:

- Ceremony – an act or series of acts carried out in a specific manner
- Bone marrow – a soft substance that fills the hollow center part of bones

Reading

Mia Hamm is the most well known women’s soccer player in the world. Over her seventeen year career, she scored a record 158 international goals. Hamm won the U.S. Soccer Female Athlete of the Year Award five consecutive years. She helped the U.S. soccer team win two World Cups.

Hamm also helped the U.S. soccer team become Olympic champions! The team won gold in 1996 and 2004. At the 2004 Games, Hamm was chosen to carry the U.S. flag during the closing ceremonies. She was the first soccer player ever given this honor.

Mia Hamm was born on March 17, 1972, in Selma, Alabama. She was the fourth of six children. Her father was a pilot in the air force. His job took their family all over the world; in fact, Hamm moved more than seven times in her life.

Hamm was introduced to soccer by her brother, Garrett. He joined their family through adoption when Mia was eight years old. He was one of Hamm’s heroes. In 1997 he died of a rare bone marrow disease. In 1999 Hamm started the Mia Hamm Foundation. It is a non-profit organization that raises funds and awareness for bone-marrow disease and young women’s athletics.

While growing up, Hamm played on boys’ soccer teams. She learned to be an aggressive player. Her love of the game grew and grew. She became the youngest woman to ever play for the U.S. national team. In 1987 she joined the team at the age of 15.

Throughout her career, Hamm was very aware of the impact she had on youth. She was (and still is) a role model for young athletes all over the world. She has strived to be a better player and a better person both on and off the field. Hamm retired from soccer in December, 2004.

Today she continues to encourage youth through her public speaking. She tells kids to, “Try to make the right decisions… learn from your mistakes and celebrate your small successes…” That’s good advice for all of us!
Understanding

1. What does the word **honor** mean in this story? __________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

2. How old was Hamm when she retired? ________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

3. Why did Hamm create the Mia Hamm Foundation? ______________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

4. What does the word **consecutive** mean? _____________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

5. What made the 2004 Olympic Games extra special for Hamm? __________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

6. What is a **role model**? ____________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________

7. Why is Hamm such a famous athlete? _________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________________
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Writing

**Option A:** Summarize this story in your own words.

**Option B:** Write about an athlete you admire.

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