

The inspiring story of Wilma Rudolph

■ Early life and childhood struggles

Wilma Rudolph was born on June 23, 1940, in Saint Bethlehem, Tennessee, in the United States. She was the twentieth of twenty-two children in her family. She was born prematurely and faced serious health problems during her childhood. When she was four years old, she contracted **polio** and **scarlet fever**, diseases that left her with a weakened left leg and foot. Doctors told her family that she might never walk normally again. Despite this discouraging prediction,



Rudolph's mother strongly believed in her daughter's potential. With constant support and regular physical therapy, Wilma slowly regained strength in her leg. By the time she was twelve years old, she was finally able to walk without the leg **brace** she had worn for years.

■ Discovering a passion for running

After overcoming her early health challenges, Wilma Rudolph developed a passion for sports. She first played basketball at high school, where her speed quickly attracted attention. Her basketball coach noticed her extraordinary athletic ability and encouraged her to try track and field. Soon, she began training seriously and joined a team coached by Ed Temple at Tennessee State University. Under his guidance, Rudolph improved rapidly and became one of the most promising young

sprinters in the United States. At just sixteen years old, she qualified for the 1956 Summer Olympics in Melbourne, Australia, where she won a bronze medal as part of the 4x100-metre relay team.

■ Triumph at the Rome Olympics

Wilma Rudolph's greatest success came four years later at the 1960 Summer Olympics. There, she achieved an extraordinary performance that made her internationally famous. Rudolph won three gold medals: in the 100 metres, the 200 metres, and the 4x100-metre relay. Her graceful and powerful running style impressed spectators and journalists around the world. Because of her speed and elegance, the press nicknamed her "The Black Gazelle". With these victories, she became the first American woman to win three gold medals in track and field at a single Olympic Games session.

■ Legacy and impact

After her Olympic triumph, Wilma Rudolph became a global symbol of determination and perseverance. She used her fame to promote civil rights and equality in the United States. Rudolph also worked as a teacher and coach, inspiring young athletes to pursue their dreams. Her life story demonstrated that determination and hard work can overcome even the most difficult obstacles. Today, she is remembered as one of the greatest athletes in Olympic history and as a powerful example of courage, resilience, and hope.


brace: *tutore*

polio: *poliomelite*

scarlet fever: *scarlattina*

1  **Complete the sentences.**

1. Wilma Rudolph was born on June 23, 1940, in, Tennessee.
2. She grew up in a very large family and was the children.
3. As a child, she suffered from serious illnesses, including
4. These diseases left her with a and foot.
5. Doctors believed that she might never again.
6. With her mother's encouragement and regular therapy, Wilma slowly in her leg.
7. When she was twelve, she finally managed to walk without the she had worn.
8. At high school, she first played basketball, where her quickly attracted attention.
9. Her coach encouraged her to try after noticing her athletic talent.
10. At sixteen, she competed in the in Melbourne.
11. In 1960, she won three gold medals at the in Rome.
12. After her victories, she became a global symbol of

2  **Read the text and answer the questions.**

The Story of Usain Bolt and his Coach

Usain Bolt, widely regarded as the fastest man in the world, achieved extraordinary success thanks to the strong support of his coach, Glen Mills. Born in 1986 in Sherwood Content, Jamaica, Bolt loved running from a young age, but he faced challenges in developing his technique and maintaining focus during competitions. His natural talent was clear, but without proper guidance, he might not have reached his full potential. Glen Mills became Bolt's coach when he was a teenager, and their partnership was transformative. Mills recognised Bolt's exceptional speed and worked to refine his running technique, improve his stamina, and build mental strength. He provided constant encouragement and created a training programme tailored specifically to Bolt's abilities. This personalised

support allowed Bolt to gain confidence and maximise his performance on the track. Under Mills' guidance, Bolt rapidly improved and began winning national competitions. By the time he was nineteen, he was competing internationally, and his career skyrocketed. At the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, Bolt won three gold medals, setting world records in the 100 metres, 200 metres, and 4x100-metre relay. He continued to dominate in the 2012 and 2016 Olympics, becoming a global sports icon. Usain Bolt's story shows how a strong coach-athlete relationship can transform raw talent into greatness. The trust, guidance, and dedication from Glen Mills were crucial to Bolt's success, proving that behind every champion is often a mentor who believes in them completely.

Adapted from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Usain_Bolt

1. Where and when was Usain Bolt born?
2. Who was Usain Bolt's coach and why was he important?
3. What achievements did Bolt accomplish at the 2008 Beijing Olympics?
4. What does Bolt's story demonstrate about the coach-athlete relationship?

