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INCREDIBLE COMEBACKS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

The Comeback Kids 4

CHAPTER 2

Baseball 8

CHAPTER 3

Basketball 16

CHAPTER 4

Hockey 22

CHAPTER 5

Football 28

CHAPTER 6

Golf 34

CHAPTER 7

Tennis 38

CHAPTER 8

The Olympics 44

CHAPTER 9

Extreme Sports 48

CHAPTER 10

School Sports 52

GLOSSARY 56



CHAPTER 1

THE COMEBACK KIDS

Five seconds remain on the clock. The score is tied. A player grabs the ball and races down the court. As the ball sinks into the net, the buzzer sounds. The crowd roars. Her team wins the game.

This was the player's first game back. The season before, she was injured. Many games were missed.

Recovery was a long process. But the athlete worked through the pain. Then she won an important game for her team.





Athletes push themselves hard. They want to be the best. But sometimes players need a break. The time off might be due to sickness. It could be because of an injury. After some time, they return. Often, the players are better than before. This is called a comeback.

Strength is needed to make a comeback. Physical abilities are important. Mental power is also needed. Athletes need to be **resilient**. This means being able to keep going, even when bad things happen. Players are also dedicated. Great athletes can make incredible comebacks.





COMEBACK AWARDS

Some groups give awards for comebacks. The Associated Press honors National Football League (NFL) players with the Comeback Players of the Year award.

In 2018, quarterback of the Indianapolis Colts Andrew Luck won Comeback Player of the Year. Luck hurt his shoulder and missed the 2017 season. Then the athlete came back strong. His team won nine of the final ten games.

Major League Baseball (MLB) gives a comeback award too. Pitcher David Price was injured in 2017. That season he only started 11 games. The next season, the athlete started 30. The pitcher threw 177 strikeouts. Price was one of the athletes awarded Comeback Player of the Year in 2018.

Jonny Venters also won a Comeback Player of the Year award in 2018. He pitches for the Atlanta Braves. The athlete missed five seasons. Then Venters came back. In 50 games, the player only allowed 26 hits.

CHAPTER 2

BASEBALL

Baseball is an old sport. The game was first played in the U.S. in the 1800s. It is called America's favorite **pastime**. Through the years, baseball has had many comeback stories.

The Kansas City Chiefs needed Mike Moustakas. He was a key hitter. But in 2016, there was an accident. The third baseman ran after a pop-up ball. Another player ran into him. Moustakas's knee was badly hurt. Doctors said he needed surgery. Recovery took months.



Taking it slow, the slugger began to play again. Before long, Moustakas was hitting home runs. His team was happy to have him back. In 2017, he played 148 games. Thirty-eight home runs marked a career high. This comeback earned him an award. It was for MLB Comeback Player of the Year.



MIKE MOUSTAKAS

A photograph of Michael Brantley, a professional baseball player, in mid-swing. He is wearing a white Cleveland Indians uniform with "INDIANS" written in red across the chest. He is also wearing a dark blue helmet, red batting gloves, and a black wristband on his left wrist. The background is a blurred stadium crowd.

MICHAEL BRANTLEY

Michael Brantley is an outfielder. He joined the Cleveland Indians in 2009. In 2015, Brantley had 164 hits. The next year, the player had only nine. That is because he got hurt. It was his shoulder. The athlete had two surgeries. Brantley missed many games. His team went to the World Series without him. **Self-doubt** made recovery hard. But Brantley pushed through.

Every day the outfielder worked hard. Brantley came back strong. He had 101 hits in 2017. Then the sportsman was chosen for the All-Star Game. The next year was even better. Brantley had 176 hits and played in another All-Star Game.

GLOSSARY

ACCOLADE

an award or recognition for doing something good

AGILITY

the ability to move easily and quickly

AMATEUR

someone who participates in an activity on a non-professional basis

ANEURYSM

an enlarged, weakened artery; a potentially dangerous condition

CHAMPION

the winner of a game or contest

DECORATED

awarded

EPIC

extremely difficult or impressive

GRAND SLAM

the achievement of an athlete who wins all the major events of their sport; particularly in tennis and golf

LIFESTYLE

the way someone lives

MARATHON

a running race that is 26.2 miles long

INCREDIBLE COMEBACKS

Athletes are often seen as heroes. They represent the best of the best in the world of sports. But even players in their prime can be hurt or injured. What makes an athlete truly heroic is his or her ability to recover and come back better than ever. Which sports heroes of yours have made incredible comebacks?



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