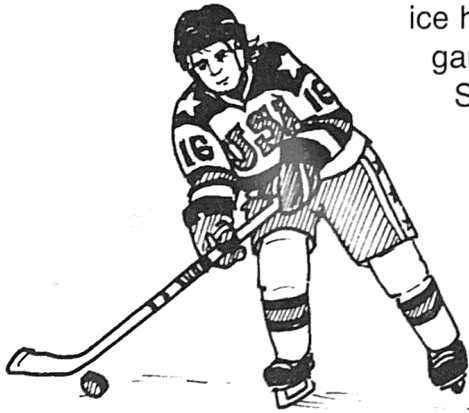


# The Miracle on Ice

In 1980 people in the United States had many political problems to worry about, including the U.S. hostages in Iran, the “cold war” with the Soviet Union, and a severe energy crisis that caused gasoline prices to soar. The United States, along with 61 other countries, boycotted the 1980 Summer Olympic Games in Moscow to oppose the Soviets’ invasion of Afghanistan. It was not a happy time, and Americans desperately needed something to celebrate. At the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York, they got it.



One of the most popular events in the Olympic winter games is ice hockey. People in the United States loved to watch the games, even though in the 70s and 80s it seemed as if the Soviets always won. The mighty 1980 Soviet team was the best in the world, completely made up of professional hockey players. The 1980 U.S. Olympic ice hockey team, coached by Herb Brooks, was made up of mostly college students. Coach Brooks had handpicked each of the players on the U.S. team from colleges all around the United States.

“I looked for players who knew the name on the front of the sweater is more important than the one on the back,” Brooks once said, meaning that he selected players who put the good of the team ahead of their individual glory.

The week before the Olympics, the Soviets clobbered the U.S. team 10 to 3 in a practice game. Going into the semifinals, everyone was sure the Americans didn’t have a chance. But Coach Brooks believed in his team, even though no one else did. He demanded excellence because he believed they could achieve it.

On February 22, 1980, Team USA took to the ice for a semifinal game against the Soviets after an inspirational speech from Coach Brooks. “You’re meant to be here. This moment is yours,” the coach said.

The U.S. team played their best. Goalkeeper Jim Craig blocked 39 shots at the goal and only let 3 go by. The score was 3 to 3 with 10 minutes to play when the U.S. team scored a fourth goal to take an amazing 4 to 3 lead against the Soviets. The defense held on and did not let the Soviets score again. As the final seconds ticked away, announcer Al Michaels exclaimed, “Do you believe in miracles? Yes!”

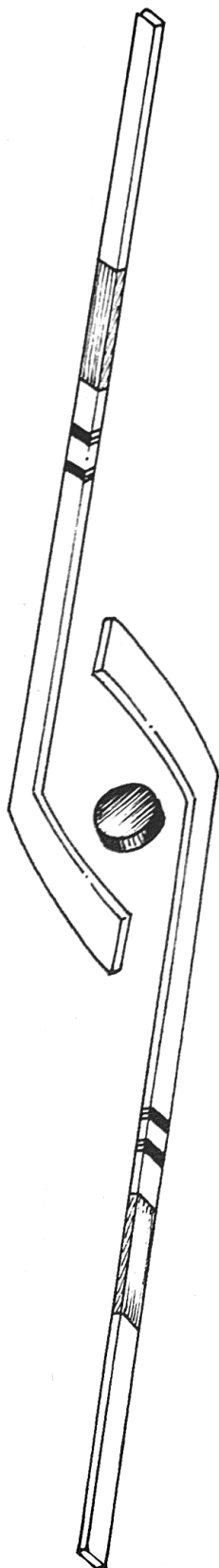
Across the United States people who were driving in their cars and listening to the game on the radio began flashing their headlights and honking their horns to celebrate. The team hugged and rejoiced on the ice. Coach Brooks quietly slipped into the locker room. Asked why, he said he wanted to leave the ice to his players. “It was their moment,” he said. That moment became known as the “Miracle on Ice,” one of the greatest victories in the history of sports.

The U.S. team went on to win the Olympic gold medal against Finland, but not even the gold medal game could compare to the Miracle on Ice. It wasn’t just a victory over the greatest hockey machine in the world, but a turning point in U.S. history. Americans watched the brave young hockey players and their coach pull together to achieve the impossible. As a result, Americans had a renewed sense of pride in their country and a new-found optimism for the future.

Coach Herb Brooks died in 2003 in a car accident at the age of 66, but the legacy of the Miracle on Ice lives on.

## The Miracle on Ice (cont.)

Write letters in the blanks to match each description with what it describes.



- |           |  |                     |
|-----------|--|---------------------|
| 1. _____  | the location of the 1980 Winter Olympics   | A. energy crisis    |
| 2. _____  | the country the U.S. hockey team beat to win the gold medal in the 1980 Olympics                 | B. Herb Brooks      |
| 3. _____  | the number of countries that boycotted the 1980 Summer Olympics in addition to the United States | C. 3                |
| 4. _____  | the number of goals the U.S. hockey team scored against the Soviets in the Olympics              | D. Finland          |
| 5. _____  | the U.S. hockey team's goalie  | E. Lake Placid      |
| 6. _____  | one of the problems Americans were worried about in the 1980s                                    | F. Jim Craig        |
| 7. _____  | the nickname given to the U.S. hockey team's victory over the Soviets in the 1980 Olympics       | G. 4                |
| 8. _____  | the age Al Brooks was when he died in a car accident   | H. Al Michaels      |
| 9. _____  | the location of the 1980 Summer Olympics   | I. "Miracle on Ice" |
| 10. _____ | coach of the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team   | J. 39               |
| 11. _____ | the number of Soviet goals the U.S. goalie blocked in the Olympics                               | K. 61               |
| 12. _____ | the number of goals the Soviets scored against the U.S. hockey team in a practice game           | L. 66               |
| 13. _____ | the number of goals the Soviet hockey team scored against the U.S. team in the Olympics          | M. Moscow           |
| 14. _____ | the sports announcer who screamed, "Do you believe in miracles? Yes!"                            | N. 10               |