



Student Name:

Class Period:

Date:

Meet the Originals

Texas Originals is a radio series about people who made an impact on Texas. You can hear it online and on radio stations around the state. Read or listen to the episode on Mildred "Babe" Didrikson Zaharias. Then, answer questions about it.

Mildred "Babe" Didrikson Zaharias 1911–1956

Mildred Didrikson Zaharias, nicknamed "Babe" for her childhood prowess on the baseball diamond, dominated women's sports from the 1930s through the '50s.

She was born in 1911 in Port Arthur, Texas, and quickly became known as not just a gifted athlete, but a fierce competitor in every arena she entered. Though best remembered for her accomplishments in golf and track and field, she also excelled in basketball, diving, roller-skating, bowling, and billiards. She even won a prize for her sewing at the 1931 Texas State Fair. Babe could type eighty-six words per minute, and was so good at gin rummy that few wanted to play against her.

The 1932 Los Angeles Olympics made Babe Didrikson a celebrity. Already a world record-holder in multiple events, she won gold medals in the javelin and hurdles and silver in the high jump. She took up golf at the age of twenty-four and quickly became the top women's player. Babe's success was no fluke. She played hard, and she practiced even harder. "I'd hit balls until my hands were bloody and sore," she recalled. "I'd have tape all over my hands, and blood all over the tape."

Babe and her husband, wrestler George Zaharias, helped found the Ladies' Professional Golf Association in 1950. But Babe's career and life were cut short by colon cancer at age forty-five. Babe Zaharias is buried in Beaumont, where a museum and annual golf tournament honor her accomplishments.

Check for Understanding: Answer the questions below based on evidence from the episode on Mildred "Babe" Didrikson Zaharias. Refer to the text included above if needed.

1. Babe Didrikson was an extremely talented athlete. In which sports did she excel?
2. What did Didrickson contribute to the game of women's golf?

Going Further: Write or discuss your answer to the question below, supporting your answer with evidence from the episode or additional information you have learned in class.

3. **Creating Connections.** Why would the nickname "Babe" be given to Mildred Didrikson for her "prowess on the baseball diamond"?