Sports and Success: Lessons from Unconventional Athletes

Reading & Vocabulary – "Breaking the Mold: The Story of Cool Runnings"

In 1988, Jamaica shocked the world by sending its first-ever bobsled team to the Winter Olympics. Coming from a country with no snow, the team faced skepticism and financial struggles. They were initially recruited from the Jamaican military and had no experience in winter sports. However, they trained relentlessly, pushing a makeshift sled on the streets and practicing in freezing temperatures abroad. Their participation was seen as a joke at first, but their dedication and perseverance earned them worldwide respect. If they had received more support, they might have performed even better. Although they didn't win, their story became legendary, proving that determination matters more than circumstances. Their journey was later turned into the Disney film Cool Runnings, inspiring future athletes to challenge traditional expectations.

Exercise 1: Match the words with their definitions.

1. **Skepticism**	a) Continued doing something with great effort, without stopping.
2. **Relentlessly**	b) Doubt or disbelief about something.
3. **Performed**	c) Famous and admired for a long time.
4. **Legendary**	d) Participated in a competition or an event.
5. **Makeshift**	e) A temporary or improvised substitute for something.
6. **Perseverance**	f) The ability to keep doing something despite difficulties.
7. **Challenge**	g) To test or question a belief or tradition.
8. **Dedication**	h) A strong commitment to achieving something.

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Grammar Focus – Mixed Conditionals in Context

📖 **Explanation:**

Mixed conditionals combine past and present situations. They help us discuss how past actions influence our current reality or how present situations would be different if something had happened differently in the past.

Structure:

- If + past perfect → would/could/might + base verb
- 🏅 *If the Jamaican team had trained in colder conditions, they would be better prepared today.*
- 🌍 *If I had studied sports management, I might be working with professional athletes now.*

📝 **Exercise 2: Complete the sentences with mixed conditionals.**

1. If the Jamaican team _____ (have) more experience, they _____ (win) a medal.
2. If they _____ (train) in colder conditions, they _____ (be) better prepared.
3. If they _____ (not participate) in 1988, their story _____ (not inspire) so many athletes.
4. If I _____ (not break) my leg last year, I _____ (still play) football today.
5. If Serena Williams _____ (not practice) so much, she _____ (not be) one of the greatest athletes ever.
6. If the team _____ (listen) to their critics, they _____ (never compete) in the Olympics.
7. If Michael Jordan _____ (not take) a break from basketball, he _____ (possibly win) another championship.
8. If I _____ (train) more as a teenager, I _____ (be) a professional athlete now.
9. If the government _____ (support) athletes more, more people _____ (be) encouraged to pursue sports.
10. If marathon runners _____ (not have) so much discipline, they _____ (not finish) races successfully.

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