## Legends All Firsts In Sport In Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka, a tropical island nestled in the Indian Ocean, is home to a rich sporting history and has produced many legendary athletes over the years. From cricket to athletics, this article will delve into some of the firsts in various sports that athletes from Sri Lanka have achieved. These pioneers have not only put Sri Lanka on the sporting map but have also inspired future generations.

#### Cricket

Cricket is arguably the most popular sport in Sri Lanka, and it has a storied history dating back to the early 19th century. One of the firsts in Sri Lankan cricket was the country's inaugural Test match against England in 1982. This match marked Sri Lanka's entry into international cricket and laid the foundation for future successes.



#### LEGENDS ALL: 'Firsts' in sport in Sri Lanka

by Mobo Reader (Kindle Edition)

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Another significant first in Sri Lankan cricket was the legendary Muttiah Muralitharan becoming the highest wicket-taker in Test cricket. Muralitharan, known for his unorthodox bowling action, claimed his 800th Test wicket in 2010, surpassing the previous record. His mastery of spin bowling made him an icon and an inspiration for cricketing talent in Sri Lanka.

#### Athletics

Sri Lanka has a notable history in athletics, with several athletes achieving remarkable firsts. Susanthika Jayasinghe, a renowned sprinter, became the first Sri Lankan woman to win an Olympic medal when she claimed bronze in the 200m event at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Her feat captured the nation's attention and elevated the profile of athletics in Sri Lanka.

In the world of marathon running, Sri Lanka's Lucian Rosa went down in history as the first Sri Lankan to win the Boston Marathon. Rosa's victory in 1959 paved the way for future generations of Sri Lankan marathon runners to strive for greatness.

#### Football

While cricket and athletics have enjoyed more prominence, Sri Lanka has also witnessed some firsts in football. In 1952, Sri Lanka's national football team played their first official international match against India. This historic fixture paved the way for Sri Lanka's participation in international football competitions.

In recent years, the Sri Lankan women's national football team achieved a significant first by qualifying for the AFC Women's Asian Cup. This accomplishment underscores the growing prominence of women's football in Sri Lanka.

#### Volleyball

Volleyball is another sport that has seen its fair share of firsts in Sri Lanka. In 2004, Sri Lanka's national volleyball team secured their first-ever medal in an international tournament when they won bronze at the South Asian Games. This achievement marked a turning point for volleyball in Sri Lanka and helped cultivate a passion for the sport among the youth.

Furthermore, Sri Lanka made history once again in 2019 when the country hosted the first-ever Men's Asian U23 Volleyball Championship. The tournament showcased Sri Lanka's capability to organize and host international sporting events.

Sri Lanka's sporting landscape is adorned with legends who have achieved remarkable firsts in their respective disciplines. From cricket to athletics, football to volleyball, athletes from this island nation have left an indelible mark on the international stage. Their achievements have not only brought glory to Sri Lanka but have also inspired future generations to pursue sporting excellence. As we celebrate these legends, it is important to acknowledge their contributions in shaping Sri Lanka's sporting identity.



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Asoka is an officer and a gentleman having turned to full-time journalism in 1982 as

the founder Sports Editor of a well recognized "national newspaper "Divaina", following his career as an Airman. Since then, he revolutionized sports journalism in Sri Lanka with his brilliant language and

presentation skills coupled with his uncanny ability at investigative journalism that has

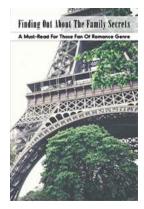
earned him numerous awards including the coveted Olympic Award for Sport Journalism in 2004.

'Legends All' is a collection of lives and times of 23 sporting luminaries of Sri Lanka – then and now - some of whom the present generation , regrettably, have not even heard of.



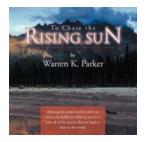
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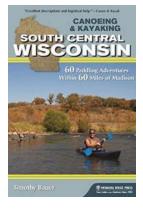
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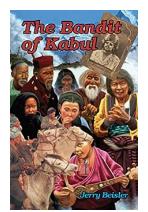
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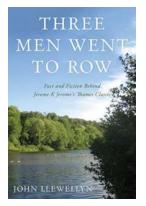
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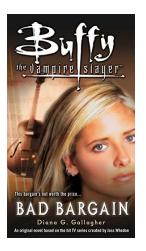
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