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What is a Goat?

Some consider it a barnyard animal. Some consider it a silly internet meme due to its incredible scream. Some consider part of their identity due to their zodiac sign being Capricorn. Some consider it worthy of its own game where you go around tearing up the town while controlling a goat. Some consider it a bad luck charm to the city of Chicago, keeping it from the World Series for a century until just this past year.

All of these phrases share one thing in common: the word goat. To some older people, the term GOAT refers to the person blamed for a failure. In the past, the term GOAT was used as an insult more than anything. Historically, the goat term has had an interesting path into its modern day understanding.

The first time we see it in a sports term was in 1909, referring to 'Boss' Charles Schmidt, a catcher for the Detroit Lions. "Catcher [Charles] Schmidt, who had been the 'goat' of the first game [of the World Series], redeemed himself at this time." Even then, the term had a confused meaning with the term 'scapegoat', or the 'one who gets blamed'. However, Gerald L. Cohen, a language researcher, shedded some light on this confusion. "A scapegoat is innocent, whereas the goat is not; he has blundered, usually at a crucial moment," Cohen writes. "And the standard etymology of 'goat' as a shortening of 'scapegoat' is therefore almost certainly in error." So there you have it, plain as day, the goat was used for someone who blundered.

If we use this understanding of the word, who would be our modern day GOATS?

Mark Sanchez, Jackie Smith, Bill Buckner. People we associate with making completely dumb plays, such as the drop in the endzone, the own goal, the missed ground ball, or the infamous Butt Fumble.

However, in the last couple of years, we have seen an evolution in the term GOAT. It has now morphed from a word to an acronym. It no longer refers to an animal prancing around rocky mountaintops. It now refers to something much grander: the Greatest Of All Time. Who was the first person to be considered the GOAT? Muhammad Ali, whose girlfriend wanted to make sure that Ali's likeness and property would be properly managed. Because of that, the "Greatest of All-Time Incorporated", or simply "G.O.A.T Inc."

However, the GOAT a broad umbrella term. What do people think of when they think of the greatest? I decided to find out exactly how people would react when I posed the question, "Who is the GOAT?" I left the question vague so that people could come to their own conclusions about what they considered greatness. The responses were numerous, with very few repetitions.

Between different people, the GOAT varies. It's almost like choosing a car. A soccer mom who needs to transport children is not interested in looking at a sports car. Now to me, the sports car is the better option. It has a more powerful engine, faster acceleration, nice leather seats, and a TV in the back so you can play Xbox with your buddies when you're on the road. But hey, depends on the person.

Michael Jordan, who many sports fans consider the GOAT, was a basketball player for the Chicago Bulls, winning 6 Finals and 6 MVP awards and 14-Time All Star selections. For a long time, Jordan dominated the NBA with his sweet handles and ability to create shots. Before MJ, most people who watched the NBA considered the GOAT to be Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, a 6 time Finals winner and 19-Time All Star selection. Now, the NBA has LeBron James, a 3 Finals

winner and 14-time All Star, who is challenging the GOAT. Many say that he is too good and he is 'chasing the ghosts' of MJ, Kareem, Russell, and Wilt. Some people say it's already happened.

After I conducted my survey, some examples of responses I got were Jordan, Tiger Woods, Mozart, Albert Einstein, Mary Lou Retton, Beyonce, Serena Williams, Stephen Hawking, Michael Phelps, Tom Brady, and Jay-Z.

That's when we boil it down to the simple question; what is greatness? All of these people were, or still are, considered the very best at their profession in the entire world. Each of them has created monumental changes to their industries, and as a result, change the way we listen to music, enjoy entertainment, and think about the world itself.

But the GOAT may not be a singular entity, but a group of people. A couple of answers I received reflected this mindset. Some say the 2017 Golden State Warriors are the greatest team ever. The GOAT, according to some people, are the next generation, the people it is up to the older generation to change and influence. The GOAT is the next generation of great people.

One person thought of a "shepherd on a hill, proudly leading his flock". These goats would be absolutely lost without this nameless shepherd. This person saw a selfless act of leadership, trying to sincerely help.

My definition of the GOAT is someone who brings immense change to an industry, someone who breaks conventions, a pioneer in the field. And honestly, to me, this fits the description of one thing perfectly.

Westminster's reputation and prestige make it special; The fact that it's the only choir college out there makes it unique, like Michael's handles or Tiger's backspin. It's choirs are fit to handle the toughest of situations, like Beyonce's impossible songs, or Brady leading the most unbelievable comeback of my life. And yes, I know, Westminster is not a person, and the term GOAT usually refers to an individual. But that shouldn't matter. WCC is the best at what it sets

out to do. Not to be eGOATistical, but I truly think that when it comes to measuring immense
it's talent, it's reputation, and it's ability to lead and create skilled and trained people,
Westminster Choir College is the GOAT.