



In March 2011, a devastating earthquake and tsunami in Japan killed thousands of people and it destroyed much of Hideki Matsuyama's home.

A month later, Matsuyama almost turned down his first chance to play the Masters for golf; however, he decided to play only because he thought it would **lift spirits**. A decade later, he lifted his country again, becoming Japan's first-ever professional golfer to win a men's major golf championship – the 2021 Masters Tournament. Matsuyama's **one-shot victory** over Will Zalatoris at Augusta National, US, made him the Masters champion, and it was the biggest moment for the sport in his golf-crazed homeland.

29-year-old Matsuyama was introduced to golf by his father at the age of four. After winning several championships as an **amateur**, he turned professional in 2013.

**Difficult words:** **lift spirits** (to make somebody feel happier or more cheerful), **one-shot victory** (the situation when the winner is better only by one shot than the runner-up), **amateur** (a person who takes part in an activity for pleasure, not as a job).

**Discussion Questions****Topic Talk**

1. Define the following words: *lift spirits*, *one-shot victory* and *amateur*
2. Why did Hideki Matsuyama almost turn down to play in the Masters Tournament in 2011?
3. And what made him decide to play instead?
4. Did he win the first time he played in the Masters Tournament?
5. At what age did Matsuyama turn into a professional golfer?
6. At what age did Matsuyama become Japan's first-ever professional golfer to win a men's major world champion?

**Express Your Thoughts**

1. Are you familiar with the Masters Tournament?  
How popular is Hideki Matsuyama in your country? Are you a fan of him?
2. Do you play golf? Do many people in your country play golf as a hobby?
3. How popular is Hideki Matsuyama in your country?