Name: _____ Date: _____

Caitlin Clark's Road to the Pros

Reading level 8 (4th grade) · 715 words

Who is Caitlin Clark? She is a basketball guard from Iowa. On March 3, 2024, she was two points from a scoring record that had stood for 54 years. She was still in college then, playing for the Iowa Hawkeyes. This book follows her road to the pros.

Iowa was home, playing Ohio State in front of a sold-out crowd. Late in the second quarter, Clark took a long three from near half-court. That shot did not set the record. Then a foul on Ohio State sent her to the free-throw line for two shots, and she made both.

With those points, she passed Pete Maravich, who played for LSU from 1967 to 1970. He scored 3,667 points. Nobody in Division I, the top level of college sports, had scored more. Clark finished that game with 35 points. Now she led them all, men and women.

The two players did not play alike. Maravich played before the three-point line. He played just three seasons, because first-year students could not play for the varsity team then. He scored his points in 83 games. Clark had played 130 games when she passed him.

Clark was born on January 22, 2002, in Des Moines, Iowa. She went to high school in West Des Moines. She plays guard. A guard handles the ball, passes and shoots from far away. In four years at Iowa, Clark made 548 threes. That is the most ever by a woman in Division I.

A college season ends with tournaments. On March 10, 2024, Clark led Iowa to the Big Ten tournament title. It was the third year in a row. The winner of each conference tournament gets a spot in the NCAA tournament. A committee picks the other teams.

The NCAA tournament is the big one. In 2024, 68 teams played in it. A team that wins moves on, and a team that loses goes home. It ends with the Final Four and then the national championship game. Clark's Iowa team had reached that game in 2023, too, and lost to LSU.

More records came in the tournament. On March 25, 2024, Iowa played West Virginia, and Clark reached 1,113 points for the season. That was the most ever for a woman in Division I. She made five threes that day, and Iowa moved on to the next round.

The final came on April 7, 2024, and South Carolina beat Iowa, 87 to 75. Clark scored 30 points in what was her last college game. Nielsen counts TV viewers. It figured that 18.9 million people watched on ABC and ESPN. Through 2026, no women's college game has drawn more.

Clark could have played one more year of college, but she chose to turn pro. On February 29, 2024, she said she would enter that spring's WNBA draft. WNBA is short for Women's National Basketball Association. It is the women's pro league in the United States.

In a draft, pro teams take turns choosing new players. Teams with the worst records get the best chances at the first picks. A lottery decides the top spots. On April 15, 2024, the Indiana Fever had the first pick. They chose Clark. ESPN said 2.45 million people watched. Through 2026, no WNBA draft has drawn more.

Her first WNBA season came in 2024. The Fever played 40 games, and Clark had 337 assists. An assist is a pass that leads right to a teammate's basket. At the time, no one in the WNBA had made more in one season. Another player has passed that number since. Clark was voted Rookie of the Year.

The next two seasons were not alike. In 2025, Clark played 13 of the Fever's 44 games. In 2026 she played 40 of the 44. She finished third in the league in points a game and second in assists a game. The Fever won 28 games and lost 16.

In 2026, the Fever made the playoffs. They lost their first series to Las Vegas, two games to one, on October 1. On October 24, the league named Clark to its All-WNBA First Team. One mark from her first season still stands. On July 17, 2024, she made 19 assists in one game, and through November 2026 no one in the WNBA has made more.

Questions

1. How did Clark pass Pete Maravich's record?

A. With two free throws after a foul on Ohio State
B. With a three-pointer from half-court
C. With a dunk at the buzzer

2. Why are Maravich's points and Clark's points hard to compare?

A. They played different sports
B. Maravich played with no three-point line and for only three seasons
C. Maravich never played in college

3. In the sentence 'a lottery decides the top spots,' what is a lottery?

A. A kind of tournament
B. A scoring record
C. A drawing left to chance

4. What happened in the national championship game on April 7, 2024?

A. Iowa beat South Carolina, 87 to 75
B. South Carolina beat Iowa, 87 to 75
C. Iowa beat UConn

5. Iowa won its game against West Virginia on March 25, 2024. What does that tell you?

A. Iowa went home
B. Iowa won the national title

C. Iowa moved on to the next round

Words to know

guard: ball handler
tournament: knockout contest
draft: choosing new players
lottery: chance drawing
assist: scoring pass
rookie: first-year player

Answer key: Caitlin Clark's Road to the Pros

1. A. With two free throws after a foul on Ohio State
2. B. Maravich played with no three-point line and for only three seasons
3. C. A drawing left to chance
4. B. South Carolina beat Iowa, 87 to 75
5. C. Iowa moved on to the next round