67 Arnold Palmer
You just can’t not put Palmer on a list like this, even though his 62 PGA Tour wins and seven Majors lags behind Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods. Where Palmer scored big in our estimation is on the character stakes. In his prime in the 1960s, he was an athlete who made crowds feel like they were part of his own private cheer squad.

66 Sachin Tendulkar
With a combined tally of 85 centuries and almost 30,000 runs in Tests and ODIs, Tendulkar’s sheer weight of runs is untouched. The “Little Master” has also spent something like 2500 days playing professional cricket. Baseball fans, think the endurance of Cal Ripken Jr with the power of Alex Rodriguez. Cricket fans, be thankful you’ve seen a legend.

65 Rafael Nadal
For better or worse, Nadal is the incarnation of the modern tennis player. Taking full advantage of modern, lightweight equipment and building a Superman physique, the Spaniard can defend and attack in the same shot. Huge skill and determination have already brought him six grand slams at 23. Will his body grant him more?

64 Arnold Schwarzenegger
Any man who has ever admired themselves in a gym mirror has a strand of Arnie’s DNA in them. The film star and Governor of California never forgot the bodybuilding that made him, turning it from a mildly embarrassing niche activity to an integral part of nearly every sports training on the planet. For that, even Jingle All The Way is forgiven.

63 Mickey Mantle
If ever one man was the spirit of his team, it was “The Mick” and the New York Yankees. A powerful switch hitter and quick outfielder, Mantle’s 536 home runs at .298 helped bring the Yankees seven World Series during his 18 years there. His massive homers included one that exited Tiger Stadium in Detroit and came to a stop a reputed 200m from the slugger.

62 Jahangir Khan
The winning streak of squash great Khan is one of the standards in sport. Between 1981 and ’86, the Pakistanis won 555 matches in a row, and harvested the British Open 10 times and the World Open six times in a formidable career. It reflected a ridiculous talent, together with the kind of training regimen few bodies can withstand.

61 Wally Lewis
Rugby league is played seriously in Australia, England and a smattering of minor Pacific nations like NZ. Despite the sport’s limited global impact, one man demands inclusion on this list because he towers above his contemporaries like no other. His brilliance can be summarised in three words: State-of-Origin.

60 Daley Thompson
Hyperactive kid and outsider, Thompson channelled his energies and breathtaking talents to become one of the most brilliant all-round athletes. The decathlete’s world records and multiple European, World and Olympic medals tell only half the story of this charismatic performer. His duels with arch rival Jurgen Hingsen lit up many major meets of the 1980s and the event has rarely received such prominence before or after.

59 Wayne Carey
One of the jokes we never tire of at Alpha HQ is how the AFL champ’s name sounds if you leave off the “y” at the end. Despite his numerous dodgy off-field antics, Carey is easily the greatest AFL player most of us have seen. His combination of sublime skills and sheer physical presence have been seen in precious few team sports in the world in any era.

58 Edwin Moses
With his own, jerry-built style, long legs and near-lethal training schedule, Moses owned the 400m hurdles for a long, long time. Between 1977 and ’87, he was a constant, winning 122 consecutive races, two Olympics and two World golds, setting four world records and raising high the profile of this lung-busting, technical event on his own.

57 Wilt Chamberlain
Of the best of the big men. Seven-foot “Wilt the Stilt” once shot a 100-point game, and went through the NBA like he claimed to go through women (20,000, allegedly). In scoring and rebounding, he was utterly dominant, breaking several records. He won two NBA titles, and should have won more. To many followers, he, not Jordan, is the greatest.

56 Joe Montana
With an American state for a surname and an even larger imprint on American football, Montana is the quarterback you’d throw the ball to if you had to destroy the Death Star with one shot. He won four Super Bowls with the San Francisco 49ers, but it was his ability to make clutch plays on demand that elevated “Joe Cool” above the mortals.

55 Miguel Indurain
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