
Olympic thoughts so far

Posted by BoiseBYU - 2008/08/18 09:01

1. I'm a Laker homer, most of you know that, but if I had to build a team around one player, it would be LeBron James hands down....Kobe has done ok, normally guarding and shutting down the other team's scorer, but James is THE complete player....
2. What ever happened to the Celtic stars? Where is Garnett, Allen or Pierce? Not that we need them, but Garnett would have been a nice big man in the middle and Allen is a better shooter than Redd....and Pierce, he is an upgrade over Carmelo....
3. One more thing about BB, what would you rather have...an Olympic gold or an NBA championship? No fair saying both...For me, I'd say Olympic gold...something about representing your country before the world in a talented way....
4. Can we proclaim Michael Phelps the greatest Olympic athlete of all time? How about the greatest athlete period? What a remarkable, remarkable Olympics...and have you seen how classy Mark Spitz has been? Kudos to him too....
5. What is it with Jamaica? Sweep the women 100 meter finals, shatter the men's 100 meter record, and if they were a State in the US would be lower in population than states like Oregon and Washington and Arizona...and Cool Runnings is still one of my favorite sports movies!
6. Back to BB...Is Carmelo overrated? He strikes me as a dime a dozen athleticly talented small forward....I don't get the ink about the dude
7. The event that scares me the most is the balance beam--doing a back flip on that? I'd have a cardiac first...
8. Did you see the reaction of the Togo kayaker winning the bronze? That was cool and perhaps what the Olympic is all about....
9. Opening ceremonies with all those kung fu guys acting in unison was really cool, assuming they were not computer animated pixels like the fake fireworks put up on the screen and the lip synching nine year old who replaced the real singer because, bluntly speaking, she was too ugly...sigh....I guess you cannot have everything perfect....
10. Back to Michael Phelps--that one 4 x 100 relay, was it the second gold? where the US anchor Lezak ran down the French record holder...that has to be one of the greatest races of all time....utter classic....

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Re:Olympic thoughts so far

Posted by snoscythe - 2008/08/18 09:53

BoiseBYU wrote:

4. Can we proclaim Michael Phelps the greatest Olympic athlete of all time? How about the greatest athlete period?

I hate to be the guy who makes a stand against Michael Phelps, but I think we are all a bit caught up in the hype with all the hyperbole. No one called Mark Spitz the greatest Olympian ever, and certainly no one called him the greatest athlete period. Yet, when Michael Phelps breaks his record by one medal, we are going to lavish those titles on him? Why?

First off, let me begin by addressing the lunatic idea that Phelps is the greatest athlete ever. Highly, highly dubious. Think of names like Michael Jordan, Hank Aaron, Michael Johnson, Wayne Gretzky, Paavo Nurmi, Bo Jackson, Muhammad Ali, Jim Thorpe, Tiger Woods, Lance Armstrong, Babe Ruth, and you want to leapfrog Phelps to the top of the list?

Let's break down what Phelps did. He won 8 gold medals in a single Olympics in the only discipline in which it would be possible. Think about it--how does a track and field star win 8 golds? They would have to run the 100, 4x100, 200, 4x200, 400, 4x400, both hurdles, and he would still need to add an even longer distance or non-running event to make 8. A wrestler would need to wrestle in four different weight classes in his first discipline, and three in the other. A male gymnast would have to win the all-around, the team title and all the individual events, while a female gymnast would not have enough events to even try. And it goes on.

And Phelps? He won in the 400 IM, 4 x 100 Free, 200 Free, 200 Fly, 4 x 200 Free, 200 IM, 100 Fly, and the 4 x 100 Medley. A great accomplishment? Absolutely, but we have to keep it in the context of the sport. It's the equivalent in track of running the 100, 4x100, 200, 4x200, the 400 track medley (100 run, 100 hurdles, 100 three-legged, and 100 backwards), the 200 track medley, the 4x 100 track medley team, and the 200 hurdles (doesn't exist). Do you see how

the cross-discipline comparisons break down?

Never to be beaten? It depends on whether swimming adds more events or schedules a more favorable 4x400. Spitz didn't have to add the 400 events to break the previous record of five golds. He swam seven events as an insurance policy. Necessity dictates what needs to be done, and history teaches us that someone will do it eventually--no one thought anyone would break the Shark's seven gold, but here it happened. Someone will come and beat Phelps eventually--it's just the way things go in athletics--everyone wants to be the best, and to be the best you have to beat the best.

Now, as for the greatest Olympian ever, I think his name will be in the running, but again we have to weigh his results by his discipline. I agree he is possibly the greatest American Olympian ever, with the greatest threats coming from Mary Lou, Carl Lewis, and Michael Johnson. Internationally, I don't think he beats out Paaavo Nurmi or Larissa Latynina's accomplishments.

Nurmi set the record of five gold medals that Spitz would later eclipse, but he did so in distance running. In 1924, he won in five events, 1500 m, 5000 m (with only 26 minutes rest between, setting world records in both), 3000 m team , and both cross country events. He won all five in four days, and would have run to defend his world record and gold in the 10,000 m, but the Finnish government withdrew him from the race in fear of the heat.

Latynina dominated her sport at all disciplines. She remains the only gymnast to medal in every individual apparatus, and holds 18 medals in a discipline that offers only 6 events per Olympics.

What I think we are seeing is a phenomenal performance, but I think Phelps is simply destined to become the next Mark Spitz. Someone whose name is only mentioned every four years. I absolutely disagree that he is the greatest athlete of all time, and I do not think he is the greatest Olympian of all-time when we consider the international athletes who our media never tells us about.

We are caught up in the Olympic spirit and hype in a year where the US doesn't have many glamor athletes, and it is human nature to overreact immediately after witnessing something. Great athlete? Yes. Greatest? Not by a long shot.

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Re:Olympic thoughts so far

Posted by Hengst - 2008/08/18 10:15

I agree with sno. i think we could probably call phelps the greatest swimmer of all time, but I think we need to leave it at that. Personally, I think Michael Jordan is probably the greatest olympian of all time. Imagine how many gold medals he would have if they had a 3 point shooting contest, dunk contest, awarded a defensive tournament mvp gold etc . . .

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Re:Olympic thoughts so far

Posted by BoiseBYU - 2008/08/18 10:50

As usual, Snocythe has very good points to be made and are thought provoking. In the end who is the "greatest athlete," especially when talking about different athletes in different sports and eras, is fraught with subjectivity. The people you mention Sno were and are great to be sure, and perhaps the greatest. I'd probably throw Jim Thorpe in there too. But Phelps has won more gold than any other athlete ever, setting world records left and right, and done it over two Olympics, and who knows maybe he will be back in 2012? I know it is all in swimming, but my understanding is that the different swimstrokes are much more different in skill and talent than we often think, so it is not like Hengst suggests akin to Michael Jordan dunking and then defending etc...Thanks for weighing in and sharing....

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Re:Olympic thoughts so far

Posted by BoiseBYU - 2008/08/19 11:19

Congratulations to Dong Dong of the People's Republic of China for winning the bronze in the trampoline event....

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Re:Olympic thoughts so far

Posted by SenorCougar - 2008/08/19 21:14

BoiseBYU wrote:

Congratulations to Dong Dong of the People's Republic of China for winning the bronze in the trampoline event....

What about the winner of the women's gold in the trampoline event.... HE WENNA and the silver medalist of the same event was Karen COCKBURN....:blink:

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Re:Olympic thoughts so far

Posted by bball - 2008/08/19 21:46

1. Way too much gymnastics in the olympics.
2. Get rid of all the judged events--it's become a farce, a complete joke in some cases. So gymnastics, diving, syncro diving--all have to go.
3. Carmelo is one of my least favorite players, he's a big mouth with ordinary talent, I was disappointed to see him make the team.
4. Usain Bolt is a beast, my goodness, he jogs faster than everybody else having to bust their veins to stay close. What if this guy really ran, really pushed it, ran to the end of the race?
5. 4 years ago I was happy to see the arrogant and loud mouth U.S. bball team get dumped, but this year I'm pulling for them, despite Carmelo being on the team. If they can win with some class and realize they no longer automatically own the basketball world anymore and that they have to go out a compete and play great basketball and forget all the hotdogging stuff.
6. I'm bugged that the U.S. trains and educates all these great athletes, then they run home to Mama and compete for their home country. Not much can be done about that, it just bugs me. Many of the world's top swimmers, sprinters, runner, and many others all attended U.S. universities and competed in the U.S.; then they compete for somebody else.

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Re:Olympic thoughts so far

Posted by Conosticator - 2008/08/19 22:35

BoiseBYU wrote:

Congratulations to Dong Dong of the People's Republic of China for winning the bronze in the trampoline event....

And Ding Dong won Gold, closely followed by Twinkie with the silver... :silly:

Originally Twinkie was favored but for some unknown reason had recently put on a lot of weight... :S

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Re:Olympic thoughts so far

Posted by BoiseBYU - 2008/08/19 22:54

Conosticator wrote:

BoiseBYU wrote:

Congratulations to Dong Dong of the People's Republic of China for winning the bronze in the trampoline event....

And Ding Dong won Gold, closely followed by Twinkie with the silver... :silly:

Originally Twinkie was favored but for some unknown reason had recently put on a lot of weight... :S

I hear Dong Dong is the new King Kong of trampoline

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Re:Olympic thoughts so far

Posted by Squeegee - 2008/08/20 08:57

bball wrote:

2. Get rid of all the judged events--it's become a farce, a complete joke in some cases. So gymnastics, diving, syncro diving--all have to go.

I agree. Any event where your score is determined by how the judges think you did is too subjective to be objectively run at the Olympics (or any level?).

Thankfully, that also cuts out figure skating, the "artistic" freestyle ski and snowboard jumping, and half-pipe competitions from the Winter Olympics.

Measurable values should be the only ways to judge scores. Scored goals, timed races, distances, heights, etc.

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Re:Olympic thoughts so far

Posted by Mingjai - 2008/08/20 09:29

bball wrote:

6. I'm bugged that the U.S. trains and educates all these great athletes, then they run home to Mama and compete for their home country. Not much can be done about that, it just bugs me. Many of the world's top swimmers, sprinters, runner, and many others all attended U.S. universities and competed in the U.S.; then they compete for somebody else.

Same with all of the world's top scientists and businessmen. They learn here in the States and go one to make money in other places. I have no problem with that--it's all part of the free market system that makes America great. The reason why American universities are the best at athletics and academics is that they don't discriminate like other countries. They take the best--neither the government nor the USOC nor the NCAA can tell universities who they can enroll (outside of minimum visa and test score requirements). If you put a rule in place that athletes attending American universities forfeit their ability to compete for their home country, then we might see a drop-off of foreign talent competing in NCAA athletics. Plus, I'm not sure if competing for the US team would allow them to have the proper credentials to stay in the US. Green cards are generally only available through employer sponsorship or familial sponsorship. If the US isn't going to give you a green card or citizenship, then why compete for them.

I'm a little more bothered by players like Giuseppe Rossi, who was born in New Jersey, but plays for the Italian soccer team (and scored 4 goals in the Olympics). It would be nice for the development of US soccer for a quality striker like Rossi to play for the Stars and Stripes. In the end, though, I don't blame him for wanting to play for one of the top national teams in the most popular sport in the world. It would be like a French-born child of American immigrants to the France getting an offer to play for the USA basketball team--he'd be crazy to choose the French team over US team, especially if he'd get significant time for the US.

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Re:Olympic thoughts so far II

Posted by BoiseBYU - 2008/08/22 15:45

More to discuss!

Hurrah: The US Men's Volleyball team...Their victory over Russia before a hostile crowd was electrifying! On the heels of the tragic loss of life for the family of the coach, and the close games they have continued to win, these guys are THE team to rally around....Now they face a very tough Brazil squad....

Overrated: US Track. While Phelps gets Kellogg endorsements, I hear Butterfinger is hoping to sign the US relay teams....

Hurrah: Jamaica sprinters man.....Bolt is three for three in world records with the 4 x 100 breaking the 16-year old record set by the US in Barcelona...The only time the sprinters lost was when the Jamaican women dropped the baton in the 4 x

100 finals. So I guess only Jamaica can beat Jamaica....

Hurrah: Let's give a large hurrah to ALL of volleyball. Men and women win beach and in-door women are playing for gold too...When has that ever happened?

Speaking of beach volleyball: I confess: watching the winning women's beach volleyballers roll in the sand is TV worth watching. I mean seeing athletes celebrate their hard earned accomplishment is enjoyable. So why my aversion to watching the men do the same thing? (My problem I know) Question: Do you think TV viewership will grow when the inevitable co-ed beach volleyball competition arrives and the winners presumably roll in the sand celebrating victory? ;) YIKES!

Boo: Those cheatin Chinese....new requests for investigation over China's underaged gymnasts....

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Re:Olympic thoughts so far II

Posted by Mars - 2008/08/23 06:56

BoiseBYU wrote: Speaking of beach volleyball: I confess: watching the winning women's beach volleyballers roll in the sand is TV worth watching. I mean seeing athletes celebrate their hard earned accomplishment is enjoyable. So why my aversion to watching the men do the same thing? (My problem I know) Tough call...

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Re:Olympic thoughts -- Final

Posted by BoiseBYU - 2008/08/25 09:45

I LOVE the Olympics...Here are my final thoughts--

Men's Volleyball ROCKS! Seeded I think fourth, they overcome the tragic stabbing of a very dear and close friend to win gold...the best story for me

Did you see the one-legged South African compete in the open water swim? She took off her artificial leg, sat on the dock, ready for the start of the event. She only wanted to be viewed as one more Olympian athlete. That moment was my favorite moment of the Olympics....

Well, we know why men's BB got Dwight Howard--to rebound, and Michael Redd, to shoot, now we know why we got Kobe-to play clutch when it was finally needed. I was the fool (paid for it the next day at church) to stay up and watch the game and when the US called time-out, up by two, I said well, now we see how they handle pressure and who steps up? Kobe. Sinks a tough shot in the lane, assists a three, makes a four point play, and just like that the gold is ours. He WANTED the ball and he performed. I would still build my team around LeBron, but he is clutch

Biggest disappointment? Not track. They only came in 2 medals less than Athens and that with a lot of botched batons and hurdles etc. No the biggest disappointment was boxing....one bronze medal. Assuming boxing remains an Olympic sport (I could never quite figure out the scoring) US men's boxing needs a top to bottom overhaul

More cool things: More countries than ever (204) came and more countries than ever won medals.

NBC actually did a very good job all in all with the production--more action and less "stories."

Grouchy thoughts: IOC are cowards--they let China get away with reneging on its promises of openness. Allowing China to keep Joey Cheek from entering the country was outrageous and the IOC let them get away with it. China had what 8 kazillion volunteers but never got around to approving one protest application?

China does not have a clue when it comes to diversity and openness, but they sure know how to build some really cool

venues....the bird's nest is iconic, as is the cube....

I do not know if I am in good company or not: SI also calls Phelps the greatest Olympian athlete....

We witnessed the greatest track performance in Bolt's three shattering world records....Jamaica is THE sprint center of the Universe

I can hardly wait for London 2012...Just think, by then BYU will have won a National Championship!

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Re:Olympic thoughts -- Final

Posted by nuk13 - 2008/08/25 14:31

I loved the Olympics. I agree that Phelps was outstanding but not the greatest Olympian or athlete. (Sno, you make good points about the number of swimming events versus other venues.) I don't know who is but I wouldn't pick Jordon either. He more or less flopped at baseball. I don't know if Thorpe is, but I would like to know what he could have done with modern equipment and methods.

I would like to have seen 1 white guy on the BB team. Then again there wasn't a black guy on the volleyball team. I did enjoy the volleyball's win against Brazil. What a match. I enjoyed the Cougar, Miller who did very well.

I agree that judged events ought to be reevaluated and some or all dropped, (and throw in (or out) figure skating in the winter O's). The vaults were great but 10 seconds to glory and you get a chance at the same medal Bolt, Phelps and the marathoners get. How about those cute girls in their cute bathing suits flinging around those cute ribbons? I hedge a little cause I like boxing. However, I watched the Irish kid against the Chinese kid in light heavy and the Irish kid could hardly get a point no matter how many times he tagged his opponent. There is too much politics in the Olympics especially the judged events.

One of my favorite moments was the Bulgarian lady who won the single rowing skull. She cried when her anthem was played and it just got to me.

One other comment: When will we get to see swimming, rowing, water polo, track and field, wrestling etc. again? I love football and basketball but how about something on some of these other sports. I guess we'll have to wait 4 years.

Thanks Boise for a great thread.

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