

August 6, 2016



*Let's Get This
Party Started!*

(Photo: USA TODAY/Rob Schumacher)



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The Sports Examiner: An Introduction

Welcome to the inaugural issue of The Sports Examiner. Our purpose is to cover international sports – with a special emphasis on those sports and events that are part of the Olympic and Olympic Winter Games programs.

These athletes deserve the comprehensive coverage given to a fairly small number of sports which are so popular in individual countries, such as baseball, basketball, football (several kinds), ice hockey and others. Why not offer a journal, available online, which can provide fans with a 360-degree view of the top level of world sport in all its diversity?

That's our goal. We're starting with a new look at the Olympic Games from the *team* perspective, as well as previewing upcoming finals to make you better informed whether watching in person in Rio, or on television or online (or both!).

After the Games are completed, we'll begin the continuous coverage of international sport because even though the program in Rio will be completed, sport does not stop. Tell your friends to join us for free by entering their e-mail address in the subscription form at www.Perelman-Pioneer.com!



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Rio 2016: A New Look at the Games

The Olympic Charter, the constitution and rule book of the worldwide Olympic Movement, states with clarity in Rule 57:

“The IOC and OCOG (organizing committee of the Olympic Games) shall not draw up any global ranking per country.”

No problem, we'll take care of it. The IOC and Rio 2016 organizers will award not only medals to the top three finishers, but also diplomas to the top eight place winners. That recognition is the basis on which points can be awarded to each place-winner and totaled up by nation.

We'll use the U.S. collegiate scoring system of 10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 for eight places, giving extra weight to the gold and silver medalists, but also recognizing that third and fourth are very close (and shared in some combat sports).

A daily report of the top scoring nations will be reported, along with who scored well each day. At the end of the Games and with all 306 events scored, we can report a deeper list of the overall scoring totals.

Why do this? Because each Olympic *team* deserves to be saluted not only for its medal winners, but for the diplomas it earns. Nations spend from thousands to many millions to train their athletes to compete and this is an appropriate way to salute those who achieve finalist status resulting in a special award that records their achievement.

And if you're scoring with us, don't hesitate to let us know if we've made a mistake!

Rio 2016: Capsule Previews of August 6 Finals

The first full day of competition at the Games of the XXXI Olympiad will feature finals – events that award medals – in 12 events, spread across seven sports. Following are capsule overviews of these events, which we will continue over the 16 days of competition following the Opening Ceremony.

Will we mention every medal winner? Not a chance. That's the fun of sport; theater is great, but you already know how *Romeo and Juliet* is going to end. Not so with sport, so on to the Games!

- ***Archery/Men's Team***

Archery was the only sport to compete on Friday, with the Men's Ranking Round. A total of 64 archers shot 72 arrows from 70 meters to seed themselves for the eliminations rounds and rank the teams for today's team event.

Korea's **Woo-jin Kim**, the defending world individual champion from 2015, led all scorers with a new world and Olympic record of 700 points, but he wasn't far ahead of American Brady Ellison, the 2013 World Champion, with 690.

For the team event, Korea, Italy, Chinese Taipei and the U.S. were the top four at the 2015 World Champs and with Australia and China, look to be the top contenders at the Sambadrome. In the Ranking Round, the top team performances came from:

1. Korea	2,057	3 in the top 12	(1-6-12)
2. USA	2,024	3 in the top 31	(2-15-31)
3. Italy	2,007	3 in the top 47	(3-16-47)
4. Australia	2,005	3 in the top 23	(14-20-23)
5. France	2,003	3 in the top 36	(8-21-36)
6. China	1,997	3 in the top 32	(17-19-32)
7. Chinese Taipei	1,995	3 in the top 39	(9-30-39)

The top four qualified directly to the quarterfinals in today's team vs. team elimination rounds; teams 5-12 will face off in the 1/8-finals. The U.S. is the only Western Hemisphere team in contention, and teams tend to do better the closer they are to home. We'll see early if Brazil has the home-field magic: they're ranked 11th out of 12 teams coming into the team final.

• **Cycling/Men's Road Race**

One of the traditional opening events of most Games, the road course will host 144 riders at Fort Copacabana over a 241.5 km course (150.0 miles) hard against the Atlantic Ocean. The opening two-thirds of the race features four circuits over the Grumari Circuit, with climbs of up to 166 m (545 feet). But the final quarter of the race includes three miserable climbs of 530 m (1,739 feet) each on the Vista Chinesa Circuit before heading to the finish. For maps and course elevations, [click here](#).

So the climbers are expected to be best. That favors **Vincenzo Nibaldi** of Italy, **Alejandro Valverde** of Spain, **Rui Costa** of Portugal, **Chris Froome** of Great Britain (this year's Tour de France winner), **Jarlinson Pantano** of Colombia, **Greg Van Avermaet** of Belgium and **Julian Alaphilippe** of France.

The Americans? Two will compete: **Taylor Phinney** – fourth in this race in the 2008 and 2012 Games – and **Brent Brookwaller**, 19th in the 2015 World Championships Road Race held in Richmond, Virginia. USA Cycling's director of athletics, Jim Miller, told [Velonews](#) in June, “If Phinney has a great day, he can ride a top five on this course. Perfect day, he can get a medal.”

• **Fencing/Women's Epee**

Some 37 fencers will line up on the pistes to contest the women's epee. All of the dramatis personae will be present:

- Yana Shemyakina (Ukraine): 2012 Olympic Champion
- Britta Heidemann (Germany): 2012 Olympic Silver Medalist
- Yujie Sun (China): 2012 Olympic Bronze Medalist
- Rosella Fiamingo (Italy): 2014 and 2015 World Champion
- Emma Samuelsson (Sweden): 2015 World Championships Silver Medalist
- Sarra Besbes (Tunisia): 2015 World Championships Bronze Medalist
- Anqi Xu (China): 2015 World Championships Bronze Medalist

So who's the favorite? The formchart says Fiamingo off her last two World Championships, or no. 1-ranked Xu, or perhaps Romania's **Ana Maria Popescu**, who has performed well on the World Cup circuit in the 2015-16 season. But look out for Russia's **Tatiana Lugonova**, who won the Epee Grand Prix in Rio in April, defeating Xu in the final and ranks third in the world overall. *You think the Russians in Rio might be highly motivated?*

- **Judo/Men's -60 kg**

The men's extra-lightweight (under 60 kg or 132 pounds) features 2015 World Champion **Yeldos Smetov** of Kazakhstan (world rank: 4), top-ranked **Won-Jin Kim** of Korea (a 2015 World Championships bronze medal winner) and the winner of the 2016 World Masters Tournament in Mexico, **Orkhan Safarov** of Azerbaijan.

But in judo, pedigrees count:

- Because the International Judo Federation's honorary president is Russian president Vladimir Putin, please consider 2014 World Champs silver medalist **Beslan Mudranov**.
- Because Japan dominates this sport, please consider 2014 World Champs bronze medalist **Naohisa Takato**. He's currently ranked sixth in the world, but has been quiet in 2016 ... so far.
- Because host-country miracles happen, watch for Brazil's 16th-ranked **Felipe Kitadai** ... just because.

- **Judo/Women -48 kg**

The lightest women's division (under 106 pounds) will be a fan favorite in Rio, thanks to the defending Olympic champion in the event, **Sarah Menezes**. But she's not the only attraction in the division:

- Ami Kondo (Japan): 2014 World Champion and world-ranked no. 2
- Urantsetseg Munkhbat (Mongolia): Ranked no. 1 in the world
- Paula Pareto (Argentina): 2015 World Champs silver and world-ranked no. 3
- Maryna Cherniak (Ukraine): Third in the 2015 World Masters and ranked 15th
- Eva Csernoviczki Hungary): 2012 Olympic bronze medalist and ranked 7th

But the loudest cheers in the Carioca Arena will be reserved for Mezezes, who won in London and showed well earlier this year with a second-place finish to Kondo in the World Masters meet in Guadalajara in May.

• ***Shooting/Men's 10 m Air Pistol***

The 46 men will qualify by shooting 60 shots each from 10 m, with the top eight moving on to the finals. There, a gradual elimination round will drop competitors over 20 more shots until only the final two shoot for the gold medal.

And **Felipe Almeida Wu** of Brazil enters the Olympics ranked no. 1 in the world, especially off his victories at the 2016 World Cup tournaments in Baku and Bangkok. Just 24, he's a first-time Olympian, but won the Pan American Games gold in this event last year.

But he's no shoo-in. **Oleh Omelchuk** of the Ukraine is in his third Olympics and finished sixth in the event in 2012. He's ranked second in the world to Wu. Defending Olympic champ **Jong-Oh Jin** of Korea is in the field and won two World Cup events in 2015. **Pablo Carrera** of Spain, ranked fifth, was fourth in London '12 in this event and won 2016 World Cup events in Munich ... and the pre-Olympic competition in Rio.

Third-ranked **Jitu Rai** of India, sixth-ranked **Xuan Vinh Hoang** of Vietnam and 24-year-old **Will Brown** (second in a World Cup event this year) will look to get to the knock-out round and do some damage from there.

But all eyes will be on Wu.

• ***Shooting/Women 10 m Air Rifle***

The defending gold and silver medalists from London 2012 are back to defend their titles, but neither is ranked as the top shooter in this discipline. A total of 51 athletes will shoot 40 shots from 10 m in the qualification round, with the top eight to go on a stepped elimination round, shooting up to 20 more shots to determine the medal winners.

Siling Yi of China won the 2012 gold medal, but ranks just third in the world for 2016. Poland's **Sylwia Bogacka** won silver in London and ranked second globally. But Serbia's **Andrea Arsovic** ranks at the top, winning the important Munich World Cup stop this year. Fifteenth in London, she has Olympic experience, but has yet to win a medal at the Worlds or the Olympics.

The 10 m Air Pistol is dominated by the Chinese, who hold four of the top six places in the World Rankings, but only two can compete in Rio. So in addition to Yi, the highly-decorated **Li Du** – 2004 Olympic gold medalist and 2006 World Champion in this event – will take aim in Rio. She already proved her ability to win there: she took the pre-Olympic World Cup event there earlier this year, her first World Cup win since 2008.

Goretti Alejandra Zumaya Flores of Mexico is just 19 years old, but ranks fourth in the world,

was second in the Munich World Cup and fourth in the Rio pre-Olympic World Cup. She won the Pan American Games in 2015. Remember, athletes competing in their home hemisphere tend to do wonderful things in Olympic Games.

• **Swimming/Men's 400 m Individual Medley**

No Michael Phelps, no Ryan Lochte. So the favorite is the 2012 bronze medalist, Japan's **Kosuke Hagino**, who has the fastest time in the world so far in 2016. But the U.S. champ, **Chase Kalisz** did the chasing at the World Champs last year in Russia, and is a half-second behind on the year list.

Hagino is going to get an argument from his teammates and 2015 World Champion **Daiya Seto**, who won by daylight, up 1.4 seconds over Hungary's **David Verraszto** last year (with Kalisz third). If you're looking for a surprise, consider youngsters **Jay Litherland** of the U.S. (age 20) and Aussie **Thomas Fraser-Holmes** (24). The 2016 year list:

4:08.85	Kosuke Hagino JPN	4:11.95	Feredico Turrini ITA
4:09.54	Chase Kalisz USA	4:12.05	Max Litchfield GBR
4:10.53	Daiya Seto JPN	4:12.21	David Verraszto HUN
4:11.02	Jay Litherland USA	4:13.25	Jacob Heidtmann GER
4:11.09	Thomas Fraser-Holmes AUS	4:13.62	Shun Wang CHN

• **Swimming/Men's 400 m Freestyle**

Yang Sun of China won the 2012 Olympic title and cruised to the World Championship in this event last year. He's crossed some swords with the Chinese authorities, but in the water, what's not to like?

Tae-Hwan Park of Korea won silver in London and is back, while **James Guy** of Britain was second in last year's World Championships. But **Connor Jaeger** was impressive in his Olympic Trials win and there's more in the tank – so to speak – to move up in Rio. Australia's **Mack Horton**, just 20, has the world's top time, from April at the Australian Trials and will be competing in his first Olympic Games. The top entrants by 2016 best times:

3:41.65	Mack Horton AUS	3:44.26	Tae Hwan Park KOR
3:43.55	Yang Sun CHN	3:44.66	Conor Dwyer USA
3:43.79	Connor Jaeger USA	3:44.89	Florian Vogel GER
3:43.84	James Guy GBR	3:45.09	David McKeon AUS
3:43.97	Gabriele Detti ITA	3:46.37	Henrik Christiansen NOR

• **Swimming/Women's 400 m Individual Medley**

The all-strokes test will be taken by 33 swimmers, led by defending World Champion **Katinka Hosszu** of Hungary. She won both the 200 m and 400 m medleys in 2015 and will try to move up after her fourth in the 400 m IM in London. She has the fastest time in the world by a long way in 2016 and Shiwen Ye's world record of 4:28.43 from London is not out of reach.

Ye is in the field, but has been quiet since winning both individual medleys in the 2014 Asian Games. The conventional wisdom is that she is not in form to defend, but ...

Behind Hosszu, **Elizabeth Beisel** of the U.S. won silver in London at just 19 and will be in the fight again along with teammate **Maya DiRado**, the silver medalist in the 2015 World Champs. They will both get a fight from **Hannah Miley** of Great Britain (fifth in London), but with the second-fastest time in the world this year. The top entrants by 2016 marks:

4:29.89	Katinka Hosszu HUN	4:34.82	Aimee Willmott GBR
4:33.40	Hannah Miley GBR	4:35.04	Sakiko Shimizu JPN
4:33.42	Mireia Belmonte ESP	4:35.26	Blair Evans AUS
4:33.55	Elizabeth Beisel USA	4:35.55	Miho Takahashi JPN
4:33.73	Maya DiRado USA	4:36.61	Lara Grangeon FRA

- ***Swimming/Women's 4x100 m Freestyle Relay***

In the 2012 Olympic Games, it was Australia, Netherlands and the United States. In last year's 2015 World Championships: same.

So those are your likely medalists. China was fourth in 2012 and Sweden in the 2015 Worlds last year in Kazan, Russia.

The 2016 year list means nothing, since the Aussies and American haven't raced for real yet, but the Dutch lead the parade from its European Championships win in 3:33.80, far ahead of Italy (3:37.68).

- ***Weightlifting/Women's 48 kg***

A compact field of 15 lifters will compete in the opening class in weightlifting at 106 pounds. China has dominated this class, but **Zhihui Hou** was injured in practice a few days ago and the country will no representative in this class.

But the gold medal is likely to remain in Asia:

- **Hiromi Miyake** of Japan, the silver medalist from London is back; she was third in the 2015 World Championships in Houston and lifted 193 kg (425 pounds) last year.
- **Thi Huyen Vuong** of Vietnam, the 2015 World Champs silver medalist is the top-ranked lifter in the world beyond the Chinese;
- **Wei-Ling Chen** of Chinese Taipei was fifth in the 2015 World Championships.

Those are the only lifters ranked in the top ten of 2015 who will lift in Rio. Perhaps an outsider? How about **Chanu Saikhom Mirabai** of India (ranked 13th in 2015) or **Sri Wahyuni Agustiani** of Indonesia (14th in 2015)?



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For women weighing 106 pounds or less, consider that Miyake and Vuong both lifted 85 kg (187 lbs.) in the Snatch lift last year and Vuong lifted 109 kg (240 lbs.) in the Clean & Jerk. Can you lift 225% of your body weight?

Final Bell

The Opening Ceremony is a celebration, but also an endurance event for both participants and spectators.

By our watch, the parade of athletes clocked in at two hours and 37 minutes for more than 8,000 athletes. Too long? Actually, pretty efficient when you consider that it took longer to march in 6,163 athletes at the Special Olympics World Games in Los Angeles in 2015. That parade, at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, took 2:49.

That was a wonderful moment for the Special Olympics Athletes, as was Rio's opener in the Maracana Stadium. Both are memories that will last a lifetime for those who were there (for all 4:23) ... and who saw it around the world.

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