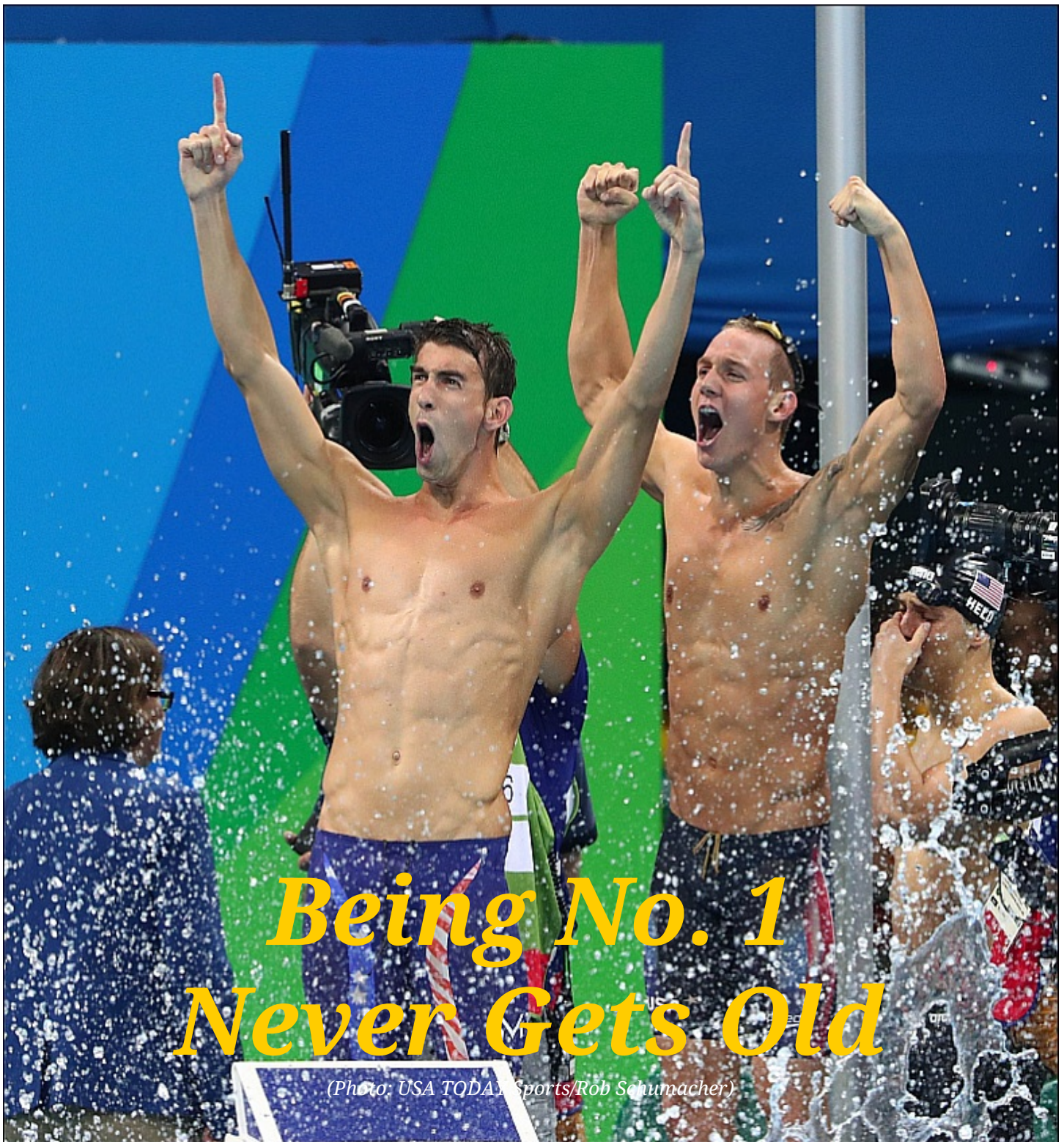


August 8, 2016



Being No. 1 Never Gets Old

(Photo: USA TODAY Sports/Rob Schumacher)

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You can also sign up to receive *The Sports Examiner* by e-mail (for free) on the home page of the Perelman, Pioneer & Co. [Web site](#). Look for the subscription sign-up box on the right side of the home page.

Errata

Some of our subscribers received an edition with an erroneous cover that mis-identified U.S. gold-medal winner Ginny Thrasher. *That was dumb*. Our apologies for the error; the corrected edition is available [here](#).



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Lane One: Be Real about Rio

What did you expect?

If you have been watching the Games of the XXXI Olympiad on television, tablet or phone, and reading the torrent of articles about the organization of the Rio Games, you could draw the conclusion that it's not going too well.

The crowds are thin in some of the venues, there are reports of various issues of admission lines, lack of food service, intermittent results delays and so on.

All to be expected.

Having served with organizing committees of 20 multi-day, multi-venue mega-events – including five Olympic Games – these kinds of issues are not a surprise. In fact, when you read about Rio, consider that the same reports of start-up pains accompany the grand openings of new attractions at outstanding venues like Disneyland, Universal Studios, Wal-Marts and so on. It will get better, and under the pressure of an Olympic Games, quite soon.

Even with an ample budget, there isn't enough time or money to rehearse something which cannot be simulated in practice. The Rio organizers have, apparently, just enough money to get by. But by the middle of the week, things will smooth out; they always do in these kinds of events.

The Rio Games will be a memory in less than two weeks and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and its partners, the National Olympic Committees and International Federations of each sport will try to determine the lessons to be learned.

Here's one: Don't just choose cities with existing buildings. *Buildings don't put on sporting events; people do.*

So the IOC and its partners might want to grade how many of a bid city's venues *are already open and operating?* Those sites are the most likely to be ready to handle an Olympic Games competition and get it right, as they do for their everyday patrons.

Just a thought.



Rich Perelman
Editor

What is The Sports Examiner?

The Sports Examiner is a new publication. Our purpose is to cover international sports – with a special emphasis on those sports and events that are part of the Olympic/Winter Games programs. You can get it sent directly to your e-mail inbox (free) by signing up at www.Perelman-Pioneer.com.

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 variety?

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!



August 8, 2016

Rio 2016: U.S. leads expands; Italy third!

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.”*

So we’ll pick up the slack ... unofficially, of course. The IOC and Rio 2016 organizers will award not only medals to the top three finishers, but also elegant 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 National Olympic Committee (NOC). All together, over 306 events, there are 11,934 points to be awarded!

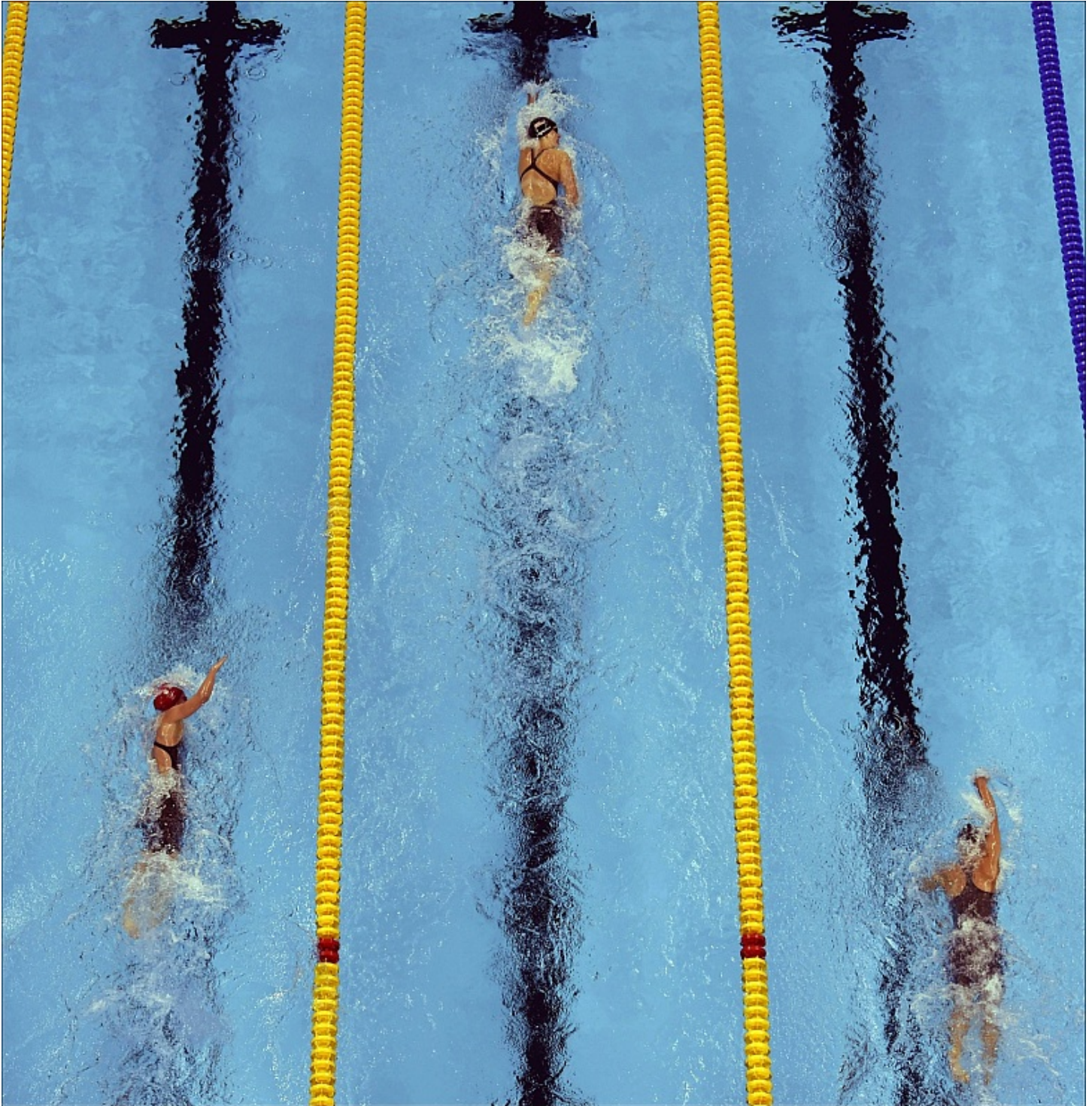
We’re using the U.S. collegiate track & field scoring system of 10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 for eight places, giving extra weight to the gold and silver medalists, but also recognizing that third and fourth are very close (and shared in some combat sports). After day 2, with 26 of 306 events scored, the leaders:

1.	128	USA	10.	32.5	Canada	19.	15	Indonesia
2.	85.5	China	11.	26.5	Hungary	20.	14	Vietnam
3.	79	Italy	12.	26	France	21.	13	Belgium
4.	66	Australia	13.	24.5	Kazakhstan	22.	11	Uzbekistan
5.	57	Japan	14.	22	Sweden	23.	10	Argentina
6.	49.5	Korea	15.	19	Spain		10	Kosovo
	49.5	Russia	16.	18	Chinese Taipei		10	South Africa
8.	45	Great Britain	17.	17	Netherlands			
9.	33.5	Brazil	18.	16	Thailand			

Day 2-only scoring leaders:

1.	66	USA		9	Mexico		4	Malaysia
2.	55	Italy	17.	8	New Zealand	32.	3.5	Slovenia
3.	46.5	China		8	Philippines	33.	3	Belgium
4.	33.5	Russia		8	DPR Korea		3	Colombia
5.	33	Australia		8	Spain		3	India
6.	30	Great Britain		8	South Africa		3	Poland
7.	24	Korea	22.	6	Kazakhstan	37.	2.5	Dom. Rep.
8.	22.5	Canada		6	Greece	38.	2	Serbia
9.	21.5	Brazil		6	Thailand		2	Germany
10.	21	Japan	25.	5.5	Uzbekistan	40.	1.5	Mongolia
11.	18	Sweden	26.	5	Latvia		1.5	Mauritius
12.	16	Chinese Taipei		5	Hungary		1.5	Romania
13.	10	Kosovo	28.	4	Indonesia	43.	1	Denmark
	10	Netherlands		4	Egypt		1	Switzerland
15.	9	France		4	Vietnam			

A total of 44 National Olympic Committees scored on the Day 2. We'll update the scores daily for the leading countries, and have a full tally at the end of the Games.



Domination: Katie Ledecky (USA) on her way to a gold medal and world record in the 400 m Freestyle.
(Photo: USA TODAY Sports)

Rio 2016: Capsule Previews of August 8 Finals

Two days in: 26 events decided, 280 to go!

The second 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 preview every medal winner? Not a chance. *Our perfect record went out the window with the first event of the Games*, when American Ginny Thrasher moved from 23rd in the World Rankings – and never a top-3 finisher in a major international event – to receiving the gold medal in the Women’s 10 m Air Rifle. But we thought the Chinese would do well and they won silver and bronze.

That’s the fun of sport; theater is great, but you know that Hamlet isn’t going to be chatting with his old friend Yorick after the curtain comes down! On with the Games!

• **Archery/Summary**

Date	Event	Gold	Silver	Bronze(s)
Aug 6	M Team	Korea	USA	Australia
Aug 7	W Team	Korea	Russia	Chinese Taipei

As expected: the Koreans won both team titles, winning 6-0, 6-0, 6-0 in their three men’s matches and then 5-1, 5-1 and 5-1 over Russia to claim the women’s crown.

• **Cycling/Summary**

Date	Event	Gold	Silver	Bronze(s)
Aug 6	M Road Race	Van Avernaet (BEL)	Fuglsang (DEN)	Majka (POL)
Aug 7	W Road Race	Van der Breggen (NED)	Johansson (SWE)	Longo Borghini (ITA)

Two late crashes on the final descent decided both road races: late-race leaders – Vincent Nibali of Italy and Sergio Henao Montoya of Colombia in the men’s event, and Annemiek Van Vleuten (NED) on the women’s side – all crashed and opened the way for Greg Van Avermaet of Belgium with Dane Jakob Fuglsang close behind and Anna van der Breggen (NED), Emma Johansson of Sweden and Elisa Longo Borghini of Italy.

• **Diving/Summary**

Date	Event	Gold	Silver	Bronze(s)
Aug 7	W 3 m Synchronized	Shi-Wu (CHN)	Cagnotto-Dallape (ITA)	Kenney-Smith (AUS)

The two-time defending World Champions – Tingmao Shi and Minxia Wu – had no trouble, winning by almost 32 points. Silver medalists Tania Cagnotto and Francesca Dallape were more than 14 points better than anyone else to secure the silver medal.

• **Diving/Men's 10 m Synchronized Platform**

The formchart:	Gold	Silver	Bronze
OG '12 London	Cao-Zhang (CHN)	Garcia-Sanchez (MEX)	Boudia-McCrory (USA)
WCh '13 Barcelona	Klein-Hausding (GER)	Minibaev-Chesakov (RUS)	Cao-Zhang (CHN)
WCh '15 Kazan	Chen-Lin (CHN)	Garcia-Sanchez (MEX)	Ismailov-Minibaev (RUS)

Eight pairs will contest the platform synchro program, with the top squads already having gone through a dry run at the Diving World Cup in Rio last February. There, the Chinese pair of **Aisen Chen** and **Yue Lin** won with 456.00 points, well ahead of the field. They come to Rio as favorites.

Germany's **Patrick Hausding** and Sascha Klein were second in Rio (448.44) with Great Britain's **Thomas Daley** and **Daniel Goodfellow** close (446.40). Consider them leaders for the other medals.

Best of the rest are two Western Hemisphere squads: **David Boudia** and **Steele Johnson** from the U.S. (fourth in the Rio World Cup: 439.95) and the defending Olympic silver medalists from 2012, **Ivan Garcia** and **German Sanchez** (who did not compete in February). Wild card: Russia's **Viktor Minibaev**, now with a new partner in **Nikita Shleikher**; Minibaev and Roman Izmailov were fifth in the Rio World at 428.46, a level down from the top four.

• **Fencing/Summary**

Date	Event	Gold	Silver	Bronze(s)
Aug 7	M Foil	Garrozzo (ITA)	Massialas (USA)	Safin (RUS)
Aug 6	W Epee	Szasz (HUN)	Fiamingo (ITA)	Sun (CHN)

Hungary's 33-year-old Emese Szasz never had an international championship win until her come-from-behind, 15-13 battle against favorite Rossella Fiamingo of Italy, outscoring her 4-1 in the third period. Italy's youthful Daniele Garrozzo also had no major senior titles, but he ran out to a 14-8 lead in the first period over favored Alex Massialas of the U.S. and won, 15-11 in the second period.

• **Fencing/Women's Sabre**

<i>The formchart:</i>		<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Bronze</i>
OG '12	London	Ji-Yeon Kim (KOR)	Sofiya Velikaya (RUS)	Olha Karlan (UKR)
WCh '13	Budapest	Olha Kharlan (UKR)	Yek. Dyachenko (RUS)	Ji-Yeon Kim (KOR)-Irene Vecchi (ITA)
WCh '14	Kazan	Olha Kharlan (UKR)	Mariel Zagunis (USA)	Yek. Dyachenko (RUS)-Yana Egorian (RUS)
WCh '15	Moscow	Sofiya Velikaya (RUS)	Cecilia Berder (FRA)	Chen Shen (CHN)-Anna Marton (HUN)

The top competitors over the last quadrennial have traded placements with regularity and a close competition is expected in Rio. The women's Sabre was introduced in 2004 and the only gold-medal winners return: **Mariel Zagunis** of the U.S. (2004-2008) and **Ji-Yeon Kim** of Korea from London.

Who's the hottest coming into Rio:

- Russia's **Sofya Velikaya** is world-ranked no. 1 at present and won the European Championships over **Anna Marton** of Hungary in June.
- American **Ibtihaj Muhammad**, ranked eighth, won the Pan-American Championships (over Zagunis) also in June.
- China's **Chen Shen**, ranked sixth, won the Asian title (Kim was third), held in China, in April.

There's no clear-cut favorite here, but Muhammad and Zagunis have the home time-zone advantage, and third-ranked Zagunis won twice on the World Cup circuit during the 2015-16 season. The only other two-time winner on the circuit is second-ranked **Olha Kharlan**, the 2013-14 World Champion. It's anyone's tournament from the quarterfinals on.

• **Gymnastics~Artistic/Men's Team**

<i>The formchart:</i>		<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Bronze</i>
OG '12	London	China	Japan	Great Britain
WCh '14	Nanning	China	Japan	United States
WCh '15	Glasgow	Japan	Great Britain	China

China qualified first out of Friday evening's competition at 270.461 points, comfortably ahead of the U.S. (270.405), Russia (269.612) and Japan (269.294). Analyzing the top four by apparatus:

- *Floor Exercise:* Japan and the U.S. were strong here, China and Russia were well back.
- *Parallel Bars:* China's best event, the Russians and U.S. were strong. This was Japan's worst event of the night, 1.5 points behind the other three.
- *Pommel Horse:* Russia was slightly better than China and Japan. The U.S. had a lot of trouble, with two falls.
- *Horizontal Bar:* The U.S. was dominant, with Japan more than two points behind and the others close by.

- **Rings:** China and Russia were both strong, and the Americans and Japanese were more than a point behind both.
- **Vault:** Japan was a half-point better than the others, but all four were good.

The rotations pair China and the U.S. and Russia and Japan, with crowd favorites Brazil and Great Britain in the third group and Ukraine and Germany as the fourth pair.

- **CHN & USA:** Floor Exercise, Pommel Horse, Rings, Vault, Parallel Bars, Horizontal Bar
- **JPN & RUS:** Pommel Horse, Rings, Vault, Parallel Bars, Horizontal Bar, Floor Exercise

This means the Americans (horizontal bar) and Japanese (floor) will close with strong events, while the Chinese (horizontal bar) and Russians (floor) will finish with weaker ones. Give the Chinese the edge heading into the final events, but they will have to hold off an American and Japanese rush.

• **Judo/Summary**

Date	Event	Gold	Silver	Bronze(s)
Aug 6	M 60 kg	Mudranov (RUS)	Smetov (KAZ)	Takato (JPN) Urozboev (UZB)
Aug 7	M 66 kg	Basile (ITA)	An (KOR)	Sobirov (UZB) Ebinuma (JPN)
Aug 6	W 48 kg	Pareto (ARG)	Jeong (KOR)	Kondo (JPN) Galbadrakh (KAZ)
Aug 7	W 53 kg	Kelmendi (KOS)	Giuffrida (ITA)	Nakamura (JPN) Kuziutina (RUS)

Youth was served in a stunning upset as Italy's 21-year-old Fabio Basile – ranked 26th in the world – took down favored Baul An of Korea to win the men's -66 class, while Beslan Mudranov's win at -60 was the second in a row in this class for Russia after Arsen Galstyan's triumph in London. Joy for Argentina and Kosovo: Paula Pareto, the Argentina's only Judo medalist, now with a gold at -48 to go along with her bronze from 2008, and favored Majlinda Kelmendi earned Kosovo's first Olympic medal ever!

• **Judo/Men's -73 kg**

<i>The formchart:</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Bronze</i>
OG '12 London	Mansur Isayev (RUS)	Riki Nakaya (JPN)	Nyan Saynjargal (MGL)-Ugo Legrand (FRA)
WCh '13 Rio de Janeiro	Shohei Ono (JPN)	Ugo Legrand (FRA)	Dirk van Tikhelt (BEL)-Dex Elmont (NED)
WCh '14 Chelyabinsk	Riki Nakaya (JPN)	Kuk-hyon Hong (PRK)	Victor Scvortov (UAE)-M. Mogushkov (RUS)
WCh '15 Astana	Shohei Ono (JPN)	Riki Nakaya (JPN)	Nyam Saynjargal (MGL)-Chang-R.An (KOR)

The men's lightweight division is led by **Shohei Ono**, winner of two of the last three World Championships, including the 2013 title in Rio. He's only ranked third in the world at present, thanks to a quiet schedule in 2016, but he did win the German Grand Prix earlier in the year.

Battling Ono will be a group of world-class medal winners, including **Ugo Legrand** of France, **Dirk van Tikhelt** of Belgium and **Dex Elmont** of the Netherlands. But the world's top-ranked judoka in this class is Korea's **Chang-rim An**, winner of the French Grand Prix this year and fifth in the World Masters meet.

Two central Asian competitors might be the hottest coming in: Mongolia's **Odbayar Ganbaatar**, ranked 10th, was second in the 2016 Masters tournament and Azerbaijan's **Rustam Orujov** won the European title earlier in the year. From the quarters on in, it will be a tight finish to try and unseat Ono.

- **Judo/Women's -57 kg**

<i>The formchart:</i>		<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Bronze</i>
OG '12	London	Kaori Matsumoto (JPN)	Corina Caprioriu (ROU)	Marti Malloy (USA)-Automne Pavia (FRA)
WCh '13	Rio	Rafaela Silva (BRA)	Marti Malloy (USA)	Miryam Roper (GER)-Vlora Bedeti (SLO)
WCh '14	Chelyabinsk	Nae Udaka (JPN)	Telma Monteiro (POR)	Automne Pavia (FRA)-S. Verhagen (NED)
WCh '15	Astana	Kaori Matsumoto (JPN)	Corina Caprioriu (ROM)	Automne Pavia (FRA)-Dom. Sumiyaa (MGL)

The cast of characters in the women's lightweight division hasn't changed much over the past quadrennial. **Kaori Matsumoto** will be back to defend her London gold and 2015 World title and won her only major international tournament this year, the German Grand Prix in Dusseldorf.

She will be meeting her old foes: **Rafaela Silva** of Brazil, the hometown favorite (and 2013 World Champion), American **Marti Malloy**, winner of the 2016 Pan American title; France's **Automne Pavia**, winner of the 2016 European Championship and **Corina Caprioru** of Romania, twice silver medalist from London '12 and last year's World Champs.

But, two Asian rivals to Matsumoto might be the toughest to handle: no. 1-ranked **Sumiya Dorjsuren** of Mongolia, who won the Asian Championships and Masters tournament this year, and Asian runner-up and second-ranked **Jandi Kim** of Korea. A very tight division, with lots of upset potential.

- **Rugby Sevens**

<i>The formchart:</i>		<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Bronze</i>
OG '12	London	not held		
WCup '13	Moscow	New Zealand	Canada	United States-Spain

The debut of Rugby Sevens into the Olympic Games has been exciting, but has demonstrated the high quality of three teams heading into the semifinals:

- *Semifinal 1:* Australia vs. Canada
 Pool A: def. Colombia, 53-0 Pool C: def. Japan, 45-0
 Pool A: def. Fiji, 36-0 Pool C: def. Brazil, 38-0
 Pool A: drew with U.S., 12-12 Pool C: lost to Great Britain, 0-22
 QF: def. Spain, 24-0 QF: def. France, 15-5

- *Semifinal 2:* New Zealand vs. Great Britain
 Pool B: def. Kenya, 52-0 Pool C: def. Brazil, 29-3
 Pool B: def. Spain, 31-5 Pool C: def. Japan, 40-0
 Pool B: def. France, 26-9 Pool C: def. Canada, 22-0
 QF: def. United States, 5-0 QF: def. Fiji, 26-7

The annual Rugby Sevens international competition is called the World Series. In the 2015-16 season, Australia has been best, winning three of five tournaments and defeating New Zealand twice on their way to series titles. Make them the favorites to add an Olympic gold medal to the national resume.

• ***Shooting/Summary***

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Bronze(s)</i>
Aug 6	M 10 m Air Pistol	Hoang (VIE)	Wu (BRA)	Pang (CHN)
Aug 7	W 10 m Air Pistol	Zhang (CHN)	Batsarashkina (RUS)	Korakaki (GRE)
Aug 6	W 10 m Air Rifle	Thrasher (USA)	Du (CHN)	Li (CHN)
Aug 7	W Trap	Skinner (AUS)	Rooney (NZL)	Cogdell (USA)

Shooting medals are being widely distributed: four different winners in the first four events and hardly a parade of favorites. In the women's Trap, Catherine Skinner of Australia actually missed her first shot against New Zealand's Natalie Rooney, but came back to win, 12-11 anyway. China is collecting medals very efficiently: four in four events so far.

• ***Shooting/Men's 10 m Air Rifle***

<i>The formchart:</i>		<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Bronze</i>
OG '12	London	Alin Moldoveanu (ROU)	Niccolo Campriani (ITA)	Gagan Narang (IND)
WCh '14	Granada	Haoran Yang (CHN)	Nazar Louginets (RUS)	Vitali Bubnovich (BLR)

A very large field of 50 shooters will begin the 10 m Air Rifle competition. In the qualification round, 60 shots will be fired, with the top eight moving on to the finals. There, up to 20 shots will be fired in the final: after eight shots, the shooter with the lowest score is eliminated. This continues every two shots until only two are left to shoot for gold and silver.

The Chinese are exceptionally strong here, owning three of the top four places in the current world rankings. In his second Olympic Games, **Yifei Cao** ranks first in the world and has runner-up places in the World Cup tournaments in Bangkok and Rio. Countryman and 2015 World Champion **Haoran Yang** – only 20 – was Youth Olympic Champion in 2014 and won the Bangkok World Cup this year. They will be highly disappointed with less than two medals in Rio.

The biggest challenge might come from Eastern Europe:

- 17-year-old **Filip Nepejchal** of the Czech Republic, on fire in 2016 with a World Cup win in Baku (but also an 81st-place finish in the World Cup in Munich). That Baku win got him up to no. 3 in the ISSF world rankings.
- The top Russian entry in this class is 21-year-old **Vladimir Maslennikov**, who won the Rio World Cup meet, shooting 207.0 in the finals. He's world-ranked fifth.
- **Serhiy Kulish** of Ukraine is a two-time Olympian at age 23, having finished 18th in London in this event in 2012. This year, he been consistent, finishing in the top nine in four World Cup meets, including third in Munich.

Italy's **Niccolo Campriani**, silver winner in London, is back as well, but has been more active in the Free Rifle-3 Positions, where he won the gold medal in 2012.

• **Shooting/Men's Trap**

<i>The formchart:</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Bronze</i>
OG '12 London	Gio. Cernogoraz (CRO)	Massimo Fabbrizi (ITA)	Fehaid Al-Deehani (KUW)
WCh '14 Granada	Erik Varga (SVK)	Edward Ling (GBR)	Giovanni Pellielo (ITA)

One of the two qualifications rounds was completed on Sunday, with 2012 silver medalist **Massimo Fabbrizi** completing a perfect day with 75 hits in 75 tries. He was trailed by 2014 World silver-medal winner **Edward Ling** of Great Britain (73) and Italy's **Giovanni Pellielo** (also 73). Two more rounds of 25 targets will be shot to determine the semifinalists.

With only four to move on to the 15-shot semifinals, the contenders are essentially four: **Josip Glasnovic** (CRO) and **David Kostecky** (CZE), both at 72, and Turkey's **Yavuz Ilnam** and Brazil's **Roberto Schmits**, both at 71.

Despite his silver in London, Fabbrizi was hardly the fashionable choice to lead the event: he ranks 30th in the world, with 16th and 21st-place finished in his two World Cup events this year. But his timing appears impeccable.

• **Swimming/Summary**

Date	Event	Gold	Silver	Bronze(s)
Aug 6	M 400 m Freestyle	Horton (AUS)	Sun (CHN)	Detti (ITA)
Aug 7	M 100 Breaststroke	Peaty (GBR)	van der Burgh (RSA)	Miller (USA)
Aug 6	M 400 m Ind. Medley	Hagino (JPN)	Kalisz (USA)	Seto (JPN)
Aug 7	M 4x100 m Free Relay	United States	France	Australia
Aug 7	W 400 m Freestyle	Ledecky (USA)	Carlin (GBR)	Smith (USA)
Aug 7	W 100 m Butterfly	Sjostrom (SWE)	Oleksiak (CAN)	Vollmer (USA)
Aug 6	W 400 m Ind. Medley	Hosszu (HUN)	DiRado (USA)	Belmonte (ESP)
Aug 6	W 4x100 m Free Relay	Australia	United States	Canada

It's the Olympics, right? So the world records – in five events so far – are falling: Katinka Hosszu (HUN) in the 400 m Individual Medley, then the Australian women in the 4x100 m Freestyle Relay, Britain's Adam Peaty in the 100 m Breaststroke heats and final, Sweden's Sarah Sjostrom in the 100 m Butterfly and, of course, American Katie Ledecky in the 400 m Freestyle. Almost lost: a 23rd Olympic medal (and 19th gold) for Michael Phelps on the U.S.'s winning 4x100 m Freestyle Relay.

• **Swimming/Men's 200 m Freestyle**

The formchart:		Gold	Silver	Bronze
OG '12	London	Yannick Agnel (FRA)	Tae-Hwan Park (KOR) & Yang Sun (CHN)	
WCh '13	Barcelona	Yannick Agnel (FRA)	Conor Dwyer (USA)	Danila Izotov (RUS)
WCh '15	Kazan	James Guy (GBR)	Yang Sun (CHN)	Paul Biedermann (GER)

James Guy of Great Britain is the 2015 World Champion, but was the slowest qualifier for the final. China's **Yang Sun** looked strong in winning his semi with a season's best, with 400 m IM champ **Kosuke Hagino** close behind. America's **Conor Dwyer** (swimming next to Sun, in lane 3) and German **Paul Biedermann** led the second semi and can go faster: that's four swimmers for three medals ... unless Guy has a surprise in him from lane eight. Season's bests for the finalists:

1:44.63	Yang Sun (CHN)	1:45.45	Paul Biedermann (GER)
1:45.19	James Guy (GBR)	1:45.66	Francis Haas (USA)
1:45.41	Conor Dwyer (USA)	1:45.69	Aleksandr Krasnykh (RUS)
1:45.45	Kosuke Hagino (JPN)	1:45.89	Chad Le Clos (RSA)

• **Swimming/Men's 100 m Backstroke**



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<i>The formchart:</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Bronze</i>
OG '12 London	Matt Grevers (USA)	Nick Thoman (USA)	Ryosuke Irie (JPN)
WCh '13 Barcelona	Matt Grevers (USA)	David Plummer (USA)	Jeremy Stravius (FRA)
WCh '15 Kazan	Mitch Larkin (AUS)	Camille Lacourt (FRA)	Matt Grevers (USA)

London champ Matt Grevers couldn't make the U.S. team this time, finishing third at the American trials in Omaha. The two Americans in Rio – **Ryan Murphy** and **David Plummer** – won their heats in 52.49 and 52.50, respectively, 20/100ths clear of the rest of the field. A 1-2 for the U.S.? It happened in this event in 1984 and 1996, but has happened six times in the event (GDR 1976-80, HUN 1992 and NED 1936). Australia's World Champion **Mitch Larkin**, in lane 3 to Murphy's 4 and Plummer in 5, is the defending World Champion and is sure to give both a loud argument, as will **Camille Lacourt** of France in lane 6. Seasonal bests for the finalists:

52.12 David Plummer (USA)	52.84 Evgeny Rylov (RUS)
52.26 Ryan Murphy (USA)	52.96 Camille Lacourt (FRA)
52.54 Mitchell Larkin (AUS)	53.21 Ryosuke Irie (JPN)
52.73 Jaiyu Xu (CHN)	53.34 Robert Glinta (ROU)

• **Swimming/Women's 100 m Backstroke**

<i>The formchart:</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Bronze</i>
OG '12 London	Missy Franklin (USA)	Emily Seebohm (AUS)	Aya Terakawa (JPN)
WCh '13 Barcelona	Missy Franklin (USA)	Emily Seebohm (AUS)	Aya Terwkawa (JPN)
WCh '15 Kazan	Emily Seebohm (AUS)	Madison Wilson (AUS)	Mie Nielsen (DEN)

Emily Seebohm of Australia is the reigning World Champion and has the co-fastest time in the world this year. But she was only third in her semi and will be on the outside looking in at the final. **Kathleen Baker** of the U.S. led the qualifiers at 58.84, but there are five finalists within 0.12 on the season. **Katinka Hosszu** of Hungary has already won the 400 m Medley in world-record time and Aussie **Madison Wilson** and Dane **Mie Nielsen** won medals at last year's Worlds. Too close to call! Season's bests of the finalists:

58.73 Mie Nielsen (DEN)	58.95 Yuanhui Fu (CHN)
58.73 Emily Seebohm (AUS)	59.02 Olivia Smoliga (USA)
58.84 Kathleen Baker (USA)	59.03 Madison Wilson (AUS)
58.94 Katinka Hosszu (HUN)	59.06 Kylie Masse (CAN)

• **Swimming/Women's 100 m Breaststroke**

<i>The formchart:</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Bronze</i>
OG '12 London	Ruta Meilutyte (LTU)	Rebecca Soni (USA)	Satomi Suzuki (JPN)
WCh '13 Barcelona	Ruta Meilutyte (LTU)	Yuliya Efimova (RUS)	Jessica Hardy (USA)
WCh '15 Kazan	Yuliya Efimova (RUS)	Ruta Meilutyte (LTU)	Alia Atkinson (JAM)

Russian World Champion **Yuliya Efimova** was ruled out of the Games in the Russian doping scandal, and then placed back in by the Court of Arbitration for Sport. She won the first semifinal and wagged her finger at the television cameras, indicating she's still no. 1. But American **Lily King**, the world leader in 2016, won the second semi with the fastest time – 1:05.70 – to Efimova's 1:05.72, and has said that Efimova, who has served two doping suspensions, should not be in the meet.

Almost lost in the shuffle are quality swimmers like London winner **Ruta Meilutyte**, who had the fourth-fastest time in the semis (1:06.44), but who can go much faster. Same for **Katie Meili** of the U.S., second at the U.S. Trials and with the fourth-fastest time in the world in 2016. Seasonal bests for the finalists:

1:05.20	Lily King (USA)	1:06.29	Jinglin Shi (CHN)
1:05.70	Yuliya Efimova (RUS)	1:06.48	Alia Atkinson (JAM)
1:05.82	Ruta Meilutyte (LTU)	1:06.45	Hrafnhildur Luthersdottir (ISL)
1:06.00	Katie Meili (USA)	1:06.73	Rachel Nicol (CAN)

• **Weightlifting/Summary**

Date	Event	Gold	Silver	Bronze(s)
Aug 7	M 56 kg	Long (CHN)	Om (PRK)	Kruaithong (THA)
Aug 6	W 48 kg	Tanasan (THA)	Agustiana (INA)	Miyake (JPN)
Aug 7	W 53 kg	Hsu (TPE)	Diaz (PHI)	Yoon (KOR)

The medals are being spread out beyond the traditional powers, with eight countries claiming medals over the first two days. This might be the best result of the difficult burden that this sport bears from series of doping scandals from Eastern European teams, three of whom were banned from the Games for multiple positives during the last three years. The leading country by number of medals so far: Thailand!

• **Weightlifting/Men's 62 kg**

The formchart:		Gold	Silver	Bronze
OG '12	London	Un-Guk Kim (PRK)	Oscar Figueroa (COL)	Eko Irawan (INA)
WCh '13	Wroclaw	Lijun Chen (CHN)	Un-Guk Kim (KOR)	Oscar Figueroa (COL)
WCh '14	Almaty	Un-Guk Kim (PRK)	Eko Irawan (INA)	Jianjun Ding (CHN)
WCh '15	Houston	Lijun Chen (CHN)	Fran. Mosquera (COL)	Oscar Figueroa (COL)

Weightlifting separates its competitors into groups of like ability and performance, with the medal possibilities always in Group A. The Featherweight division appears to be a race between four men for three medals:

- **Lijun Chen** (CHN) is the clear favorite, having won the 2015 Worlds at Houston, lifting a world-record total of 333 kg (734 pounds).
- **Oscar Figueroa** (COL), a medalist in three of the last four major internationals (see above). He's lifted a combined 316 kg (697 lbs.) in 2013 and 315 kg (695 lbs.) last year.
- **Eko Irawan** of Indonesia, the 2014 Worlds silver medalist and London Olympic bronze medalist. He was fourth in Houston in this class last year. He lifted 317 kg (699 lbs.) back in 2012.
- **Farkhad Kharki** of Kazakhstan, *originally from China*, but who moved in order to compete for his new country. He competed at 69 kg last year (13th in Houston), but is back down to 62 kg, where he was second in the 2013 Asian Championships, lifting 303 kg (668 lbs.)

None of the other five competitors claim combined lifts of more than 305 kg (672 lbs.)

• **Weightlifting/Women's 58 kg**

<i>The formchart:</i>		<i>Gold</i>	<i>Silver</i>	<i>Bronze</i>
OG '12	London	Xueying Li (CHN)	Pimsiri Sirikaew (THA)	Yuliya Kalina (UKR)
WCh '13	Wroclaw	Hsing-Chun Kuo (TPE)	Alex. Escobar (ECU)	Elena Shadrina (RUS)
WCh '14	Almaty	Mengrong Deng (CHN)	Sukanya Srisurat (THA)	Rhattikan Gulnoi (THA)
WCh '15	Houston	Boyanka Kostova (AZE)	Mengrong Deng (CHN)	Hsing-chun Kuo (TPE)

The women's Lightweight division features seven athletes in Group B and nine in the medal-class Group A. Thanks to various doping suspensions, the three leading contenders for medals are pretty clear. The parade is led by 2013 World Champion **Hsing-Chun Kuo**, London '12 silver medalist **Pimsiri Sirikaew** of Thailand and 2014 World silver medalist **Sukanya Srisurat**, also from Thailand.

Kuo lifted a combined 237 kg (522 lbs.) last year to finish with the bronze medal in Houston (she is likely to be moved up after the doping re-tests are sorted out), while Srisurat was fourth (for now) at 227 kg (500 lbs.). Sirikaew hoisted 236 kg (520 lbs.) to win silver in 2012, but hasn't done better than 216 kg (470 lbs.) in the following seasons.

Should any of these favorites falter, look for **Lina Rivas** of Colombia or **Yuderquis Contreras** of the Dominican Republic to get shots at a medal.

Trials Tracker

One of the raging debates, especially in track & field, is about the dates selected for the U.S. Olympic Trials vs. the competition dates at the Olympic Games. Too soon, and it makes it hard for athletes to keep their edge, some say. Too late and there isn't enough recovery time.



August 8, 2016

So we're keeping track of the Trials vs. Games performance of U.S. athletes in swimming and track & field, comparing the Trials finals marks vs. the last round achieved in the Games. Let's see how the U.S. does:

<i>Trials vs. Games – Swimming: through August 6</i>				
<i>Event</i>	<i>Men's Performance</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Women's Performance</i>	<i>%</i>
400 m Freestyle	1/2 better at Games	50.0	1/2 better at Games	50.0
100 m Breaststroke	1/2	50.0		
100 m Butterfly			1/2	50.0
400 m Ind. Medley	1/2	50.0	2/2	100.0
<i>Totals:</i>	3/6	50.0	4/6	66.6

On the Cover

Michael Phelps (left, second leg) and Caleb Dressel (lead-off leg) celebrate the U.S. victory in the men's 4x100 m Freestyle Relay final in Rio.

(Photo: USA TODAY Sports/Rob Schumacher)

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