

## Table Tennis Achieves New Heights Just In Time

Table tennis is continually putting new spins on the sport to make it more attractive to spectators and television viewers.

The latest? Men's and women's doubles events have been replaced with team competition. It's only fitting the format change was introduced in a country where table tennis is a national obsession.

China won both team titles, adding two more golds to the 16 in 20 events it has won since table tennis became an Olympic sport in 1988. Men's and women's singles conclude Saturday.

Jordi Serra, executive director of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF), told ATR that interest is stronger when fans can root for a country as a whole instead of individuals.

Even Chinese President Hu Jintao attended the women's team final, along with IOC President Jacques Rogge. Hu told reporters prior to the Games that if he could compete in any Olympic event, it would be table tennis.

"Bill Gates [of Microsoft] came here two or three times," Serra said. "He found the system very interesting. It's not that the doubles disappeared. The doubles is now a key point in the team events."

He added that in all of the men's matches except one, the team that won the doubles competition won the match.

Unlike the Davis Cup in tennis, a player is limited to a maximum of two matches. "The weakness of Davis



Abouelfetoh Abdelrazek of Egypt is defended by his Iceland opponents in a men's team handball match. / Getty Images

Cup is one strong player can decide the match," Serra commented.

### Table Tennis Palace

The Peking University Gymnasium is the first Olympic venue dedicated to table tennis. However, it becomes a multi-sport facility after the Games conclude.

Its roof resembles a table tennis ball between two hyperbolic surfaces.

The venue has room for eight competition tables and can seat 7,557. When only four tables are in play at one time, temporary seating fills the space. For key matches, only one table is used.

Serra said air flow and lighting are always challenges for table tennis venues. The Peking University air conditioning system releases air no faster than 0.2m/second, which is crucial when balls weigh only 2.74 grams and are sensitive to the slightest breeze. "You cannot see any air flow," he remarked. "It's the

(continued, page 3)

## Games Spectators Go Green As Restrictions Disappear

Thoroughfares in the Olympic Green were almost empty during the Games' first seven days. Sponsor pavilions had no line-ups and representatives for companies fretted over their multi-million-dollar investments. Spectators of events on the Olympic Common Domain came and went from the venues and did not explore the rest of the 2,803-acre site.

That changed with the opening of athletics at the 91,000-seat Bird's Nest Aug.15 and the distribution of thousands of site passes to local neighborhood councils. BOCOG said 238,150 people visited Aug.

### SPONSOR UPDATE

19, including 17,341 with coupons – the free tickets given to local people.

More than 7,300 people toured the GE Imagination Centre on Tuesday. The pavilion showcases GE's sustainability strategy through the five elements of Chinese culture: metal, wood, fire, water and earth.

"We're really pleased about the numbers of people visiting the Olympic Green and the tremendous

interest in the GE Imagination Center," said Matthias Hanssen, director of GE global Olympic marketing. "We're moving more than 7,000 people through the center per day, which means we're basically at full capacity."

GE is one of 14 global and domestic sponsors that have invested a combined \$100 million to \$150 million on the clusters of exhibition pavilions that are of the same quality as one would see at a world's fair.

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## 全世界同处一方 分享同一梦想

全世界各民族参加一个和平竞赛，庆祝我们拥有一个美好并充满青春活力的世界。这次，巴西有史以来最大的奥运代表团热切希望能亲身感受奥林匹克的价值，并且荣幸地期待上百万的巴西体育爱好者的支持。

里约2016年奥运申办委员会、巴西奥委会衷心祝贺中国人民和北京奥运组委会出色地准备了2008北京奥运会，让205个国家奥委会的一万多个运动员梦想成真。

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The Rio 2016 Bid Committee and the Brazilian Olympic Committee would like to congratulate the Chinese people and the Beijing Organizing Committee for the excellent preparation of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games, which will make the dreams of over 10,000 athletes from 205 National Olympic Committees come true.





# Future Innovations and Growth Planned for Table Tennis

(continued from cover)

same system as badminton. You can see a lot of exits. This creates perfect conditions."

Lighting is also optimal. "It's important that the lighting is not annoying the players," explained Serra.

Claude Bergeret, ITTF executive vice president, said the sport's stature in China and convenient location at Peking University will help its exposure.

"Every VIP person will come to the table tennis venue, because they know this is where the important sport is," she explained to ATR.

"In other Olympics, that was not the case. Some



Claude Bergeret, ITTF executive vice president, and Jordi Serra, ITTF executive director, are keeping table tennis on the cutting edge. (ATR)

people didn't visit us, especially when the venue was far away from the athletic stadium. In Athens, it was difficult to come. Greece was not a country for table tennis."

But China is. The venue has been packed, especially when China is playing. In a departure from some other Olympic sports, the spectators are well aware of the rules.

Since the Sydney Olympics, the size of the ball has been increased from 38 to 40 mm to make it easier to see on television.

This is also the second Olympics in which games go to 11 points instead of 21. Competitors play best-of-seven rather than the old best-of-five.

"It was too long, and we wanted to have some more moments with some tension to have more interest," Bergeret divulged.

Players also are not allowed to hide the ball as they strike it. This allows the opponent - as well as the audience - to see the spin placed on the ball. Players don't look as much like contortionists on serves.

"You cannot hide with your arm, with your body, the moment the racket touches the ball," explained Bergeret. "It must be visible for the receiver."

"The first ones who asked for it were the players themselves," Serra added. "They said, 'How can we play, if we cannot see the ball, how it's coming, with the spin?'"

Serra said the change also makes rallies longer. The newest rule will go into effect on Sept. 1. A glue known as "speed glue" will be outlawed for health reasons. Players sometimes change the glue on their racket 10 times a day, and officials fear the fumes could be toxic.

## Rainbow Tables Debut

The game was not the only thing to be updated prior to the Beijing Games. The competition tables were specially made with lights below them.

They're called "Rainbow tables." "It's very clean, very nice looking," Serra stated. "We don't have these tables with the typical legs like you have in the garage."

Bergeret would like to go a step further, though. On a visit to fencing, she saw the spotlight that illuminated the athletes on the strip while everything around them was dark. "We could do that when we have only one table," she remarked. "This would be an improvement."

Bergeret would like to limit the number of tables to four, even though it would lengthen the competition. "Eight tables together are too many," she said. "You cannot watch everywhere and it is a little bit messy."

She also believes table tennis needs more entertainment besides the FUWA mascots between matches. Fencing, for example, has sword dancing. "It creates a different atmosphere."

## Pro Tour Offers Prize Money

Although China remains the world power, other countries are getting their rackets on the ball at the Games. Portugal, Congo, Paraguay, Vanuatu, Cameroon, Colombia, Kazakstan and Turkey are new to the Olympic table tennis tournament.

There are 205 member associations in the ITTF. Development has especially improved in Africa, South America and Oceania.



China won the women's team gold, in a match attended by Chinese president Hu Jintao and IOC president Jacques Rogge. / Getty Images

Under ITTF President Adham Sharara, a pro tour now has \$2 million in prize money, which is equally split between men and women. Serra also cited a development program, a youth program that includes a world junior championships, and emphasis on bringing more women into umpiring, coaching and official positions on the executive committee and board of directors.

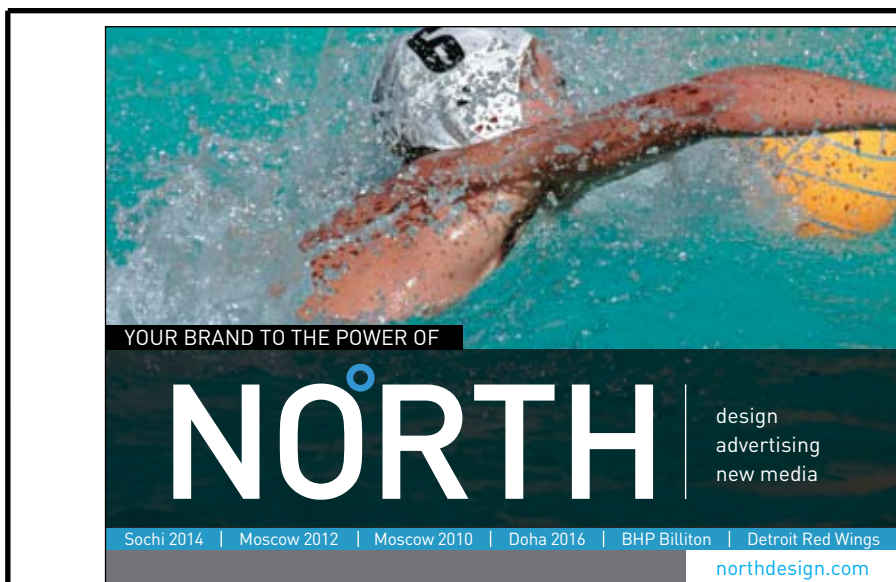
The latter, Bergeret remarked, is the most difficult because the official must be proposed by her national association. The men in charge, she commented, don't like to give their places up to a woman.

She's also pushing for more TV coverage. At the Athens Olympics, table tennis ranked fifth among sports for number of TV hours multiplied by viewers. However, the sport virtually disappears between Olympics in regions of the world other than Asia.

Bergeret said that when table tennis' representatives talk to television networks in Europe, "They don't listen to them, or they would like to be paid to show table tennis - and normally it's the contrary. Maybe we should start to pay and then we'll be seen and be sure we'll have a high level of TV viewers."

"And maybe then they will pay us. But we have to start something."

- ATR Staff



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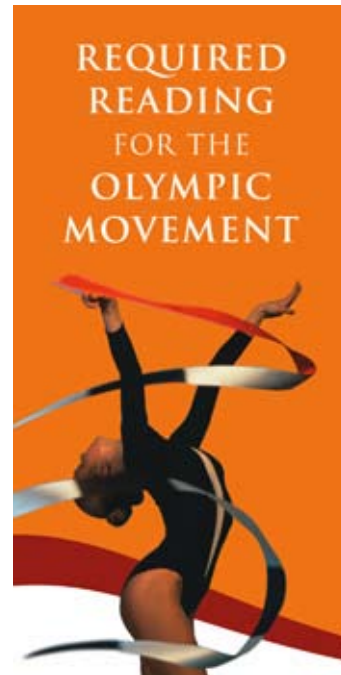
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## Today's Highlights

- **11 a.m.** - Leaders of South Africa's 2010 World Cup take questions about their readiness. Panel includes FIFA secretary general Jérôme Valcke, Local Organizing Committee CEO Danny Jordaan as well as government and police representatives. Westin Hotel in Chaoyang. RSVP is requested: Tiyani Rikhotso, Tiyani@gcis.gov.za.
- **12 p.m.** - Soccer legend Pele and Rio 2016 president Carlos Nuzman hold a briefing on city's bid. Brazil House, Jianguo Garden Hotel, 17 Jianguomennei Road.

## Quote of the Day

*"We're going 40 miles an hour over jumps. It can't get more rad than this."*

U.S. BMX rider **Donny Robinson** explains, in BMX-lingo, the thrills of the debut sport at Games



## Main Press Centre

- **Note:** No daily IOC/BOCOG press briefing

## Beijing International Media Center

[www.2008bimc.cn](http://www.2008bimc.cn)

- **10 a.m.** - Press conference. Hubei Province's vice governor speaks on construction and growth strategies in central China and capital city, Wuhan. Hall 1.
- **12 p.m.** - Press conference. City officials discuss reception services at Beijing tourist attractions. Hall 1.
- **4 p.m.** - Former Chinese Olympic Committee secretary general and FIVB president Wei Jizhong takes questions about China and the Olympics. Hall 2.

## Coming Up!

- **Aug. 23, 8 a.m.** - ATR Newsmaker Breakfast. First-ever joint appearance by the four 2016 bid cities. Leaders from Chicago, Madrid, Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo discuss strengths their cities offer, what makes them suitable. Venue: McDonald's, Olympic Green, north end.



# 2008 Medal Projections

	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total		Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
<b>China</b>	50	17	33	100	<b>France</b>	7	16	16	39
<b>U.S.</b>	47	28	34	109	<b>Ukraine</b>	5	8	10	23
<b>Russia</b>	27	27	28	82	<b>Netherlands</b>	5	4	6	15
<b>Great Britain</b>	19	13	16	48	<b>Poland</b>	4	9	4	17
<b>Germany</b>	19	11	19	49	<b>Kenya</b>	4	6	3	13
<b>Australia</b>	10	14	14	37	<b>Czech Republic</b>	4	4	2	10
<b>Korea</b>	10	11	10	31	<b>Romania</b>	4	3	3	10
<b>Italy</b>	9	12	12	33	<b>Cuba</b>	3	10	5	18
<b>Japan</b>	8	9	16	33	<b>Canada</b>	3	9	5	16
<b>Spain</b>	8	5	7	20	<b>Hungary</b>	3	6	6	15

*Based on results in recent World Championships. Projections are by Luciano Barra, former director of sport for the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI), and deputy CEO of TOROC 2006. Barra has been projecting medal counts for 10 years by analyzing past performances.*



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# Weightlifting Takes Control To Eliminate Drug Cheats In Games

International Weightlifting Federation officials tell Around the Rings they are pleased that none of the competitors at the Beijing Olympics tested positive for banned substances.

Sam Coffa, IWF first vice president, declared the competition successful with "no significant problems" while expressing delight on the anti-doping front.

"This time around, up until the last day, all tests that have been conducted have been negative," Coffa told ATR on the final day of weightlifting competition (Tuesday).

"(Doping) controls will be made tonight and we will know in a couple of days. But judging by what I've seen, we will be clean and it will be great," he said.

Of course, one of the main reasons for the unusually clean performance for these Games has been the focus on weeding out the drug cheats during out-of-competition testing.

Many of the suspect lifters have not

been able to attend the Beijing Games, including the entire Bulgarian squad and about a dozen Greek national team members.

"In a couple of the last Olympic Games we have been plagued with that [doping]. This time around, thank god, maybe the message is getting across," he remarked.

"I think doping remains the number one challenge for us. We are doing everything we can, we are spending enormous sums of money, we are catching the crooks and you can't do anything more than that."

In a thrilling and emotional finale, 25-year-old Matthias Steiner of Germany won gold in the Men's 105kg-plus division and proudly displayed a picture of his late wife, who died just before the Games, along with his medal.

The compact Beijing University of Aeronautics & Astronautics Gymnasium venue is based on a very similar template to both Sydney and Athens, Coffa explained.



Sam Coffa, first vice president of the IWF and Tamás Aján, IWF President. (ATR)

"The venue was terrific, we've been working for three years to bring this about and the venue was very receptive to the shorter competition we want to conduct now," Coffa said.

"Contemporary sport demands this sort of situation and it was very well done."

But Coffa said language difficulties in the lead-up to Beijing sometimes hampered preparations.

- Anthony Stavrinos

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# On the Scene in Beijing: Women Facing Labor Detention?

A BOCOG spokesman says he will investigate reports that two elderly Chinese women have been ordered to serve one-year terms of "re-education through labor" because they applied to demonstrate at official Olympic protest zones.

"I don't believe it's true because I think there must be some other reasons behind it, if they are detained and to be re-educated for a year," Wang Wei, executive vice president of BOCOG, told reporters Wednesday. "I will ask about it."



BOCOG VP Wang Wei expressed disbelief about reports of potential demonstrators being sent for re-education through labor. (ATR)

Human Rights in China reported that Wu Dianyuan, 79, and Wang Xiuying, 77, who were forcibly evicted from their Beijing homes in 2001, applied five times for permits to protest at one of the three specially designated protest zones in Beijing.

Meanwhile, access to the Human Rights in China web site was blocked to reporters working in the Main Press Center Wednesday.

The group said the women were questioned for 10 hours and then sentenced to one year of "Re-education Through Labour."

IOC communications director Giselle Davies told reporters she was not aware of the report but would inquire. She repeated the IOC's stance, that "the Games themselves ... cannot be a panacea for all the ills (in China)."



Fans cheer Yin Jian as she wins China's first sailing gold. (ATR)

State media reported Monday that city authorities have not approved any of the 77 applications received, involving 149 people in all.

Meanwhile, five American blogger-activists and a foreign artist were reportedly detained in Beijing Tuesday, according to Students for a Free Tibet.

## China Wins First Sailing Gold

A windsurfer born in the mountains of Sichuan province wins the first gold medal in sailing for China. Yin Jian, who turns 30 this year, took the women's wind surfing title in Qingdao. Yin, the silver medalist in the event at the Athens Olympics, says she has overcome injuries from head to toe. Acupuncture and massage are part of her post-race therapy.

"I have never been complacent, never been arrogant. I kept holding on until the very last moment of competition," Yin said of her will to win, speaking through an interpreter at a press conference.

## Ukrainian Under Investigation for Doping

The IOC has begun disciplinary procedures following a positive drug test against Ukrainian silver medalist Lyudmila Blonska, who finished second in the heptathlon behind fellow Ukrainian Nataliia Dobrynska.

IOC medical director Patrick Schamasch called IAAF President Lamine Diack with the news Wednesday.

Diack stated the procedure is underway to test the athlete's B sample, followed by a hearing. Blonska, 30, served a doping suspension between 2003 and 2005. If guilty of a second offense, she could face a lifetime ban.

Blonska, 30, is also in the long jump, and was third in qualifying. The final is Friday, but she could be expelled from the Games on Thursday after the IOC convenes its disciplinary commission and executive board.

Hyleas Fountain of the U.S. would move up to silver if Blonska is stripped of the medal and Russia's Tatiana Chernova would get the bronze.

## Mayor of London Heads to Beijing

London Mayor Boris Johnson jettied to Beijing, where he plays a key role in the handover ceremony Sunday. He will accept the Olympic flag from Beijing Mayor Guo Jinlong.

While in Beijing, Johnson will attend a series



The men take to the air in BMX quarterfinals. / Getty Images

of meetings to promote London, attract investment and strengthen trade links, as well as to learn important lessons about hosting the Games in 2012. He'll sit down with IOC President Jacques Rogge.

The Olympic handover is due to begin at the Bird's Nest stadium at 8:30 p.m. Sunday.

## First for Bahrain

Rashid Ramzi won Bahrain's first Olympic medal after out-sprinting the pack to clinch the men's 1,500-meter title Tuesday. "I think that in Bahrain, my country, people are very happy. The first contact came from (the King of Bahrain, Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa)," Ramzi said.



Liudmyla Blonska runs the heptathlon 800m. / Getty Images

## Record Gold Haul for Britain

Britain's 16 gold medals so far make the Beijing Games its best overseas Olympic performance, surpassing the previous record haul -- 14 golds at Paris (1900) and Antwerp (1920). At the 1908 London Olympics, Britain collected 55 gold medals.

## Where's Jacques?

IOC President Jacques Rogge is back in Beijing after brief stops in Hong Kong and Qingdao. On Wednesday, he visited the Fengtai Sports Center Softball Field and also spent time at the Olympic village.

- Mark Bisson

# Olympic Green Stars Include Warriors, Today Show

*(continued from cover)*

Sustainability is a common theme. The exterior of China National Petroleum's building is covered with grass. Johnson & Johnson has five of the famous 2,000-year-old terra cotta warriors on loan from the city of Xian. Omega has lured visitors with special guests, such as U.S. supermodel Cindy Crawford. Its larger-than-life action mural of eight-time gold medal swimmer Michael Phelps has proven a popular spot for photos.

Near Coca-Cola's building, Olympic pin collectors busily make trades and some locals fearlessly take photos of the imposing bomb disposal unit towed by a police truck near the Olympic Green subway station. It's the third of four stations on the new Line 8 that services the Green.

Some Olympic Green visitors have even gotten a glimpse or two of their favorite athletes. Those gawking at the base of the Ling Long Pagoda broadcast tower on Monday afternoon got a glimpse of Phelps himself as he readied for an interview on NBC's "Today" show set next to the track and field training center.

The world's largest McDonald's is doing a booming business near the north end of the domain, just like the neighboring Beijing 2008 Olympic Super Store. The lawn outside a China Post outlet has become an impromptu picnic area for McDonald's customers. To the east of the pedestrian mall -- which lies along

Beijing's historic central axis -- is China Story, a series of tents that showcase different regions of China's history, art, culture and tourism.

The Green isn't all green; in fact, it's rather grey with two bus depots, parking lots, a satellite farm and a couple dozen power generators the size of freight shipping containers.

The dragon-shaped waterway that winds itself along the eastern side of the site extends all the way up to the Fifth Ring Road for the climax: a 1,679-acre Olympic Forest Park. The green, northern jewel is bigger than the famous urban green spaces of Vancouver 2010 (Stanley Park) and London 2012 (Hyde Park), combined.

Inside the gate is a lake with a musical fountain. Paved trails and labeled plants and trees abound. It's a pleasant getaway from the hustle and bustle elsewhere on the Green and seems wildly popular among locals.

Unfortunately, it may not be inviting to aspiring Olympians. Signs prohibit swimming in summer and skating in winter.

Development of the massive Olympic campus was not without controversy. Authorities admitted evicting 10,000 people to make way for venues earlier in the decade, but claimed the residents were



Visitors stroll down the Olympic Green pavement. (ATR/B.Mackin)

amply compensated to find housing elsewhere. The biggest remnant of the community is the 500-year-old Ming Dynasty-era Niang Niang temple, directly south of the Water Cube.

Those seeking tickets for venues on the Green try their luck and look over their shoulders at the far south end, outside the Beituchung subway station. Despite signs in Chinese and English warning ticket scalping is forbidden, money does change hands. Elsewhere, outside the Bird's Nest security gates, aggressive hawkers try to unload their counterfeit Beijing 2008 goods.

- Bob Mackin



## SPORT EVENT DENMARK

### Hosting Winners

#### SOME EXAMPLES OF MAJOR SPORTS EVENTS HOSTED IN DENMARK:

World Artistic Gymnastics Championship 2006 (FIG)  
World Orienteering Championship 2006 (IOF)  
World Match Racing Championship for women 2006 (ISAF)  
World Standard Championship 2006 (IDSF)  
World Floorball Championship for women 2007 (IFF)  
World Sailing Farr 40 Championship 2007 (ISAF)

#### SOME EXAMPLES OF UPCOMING MAJOR EVENTS TO BE HOSTED IN DENMARK:

World Taekwondo Championships 2009 (WTF)  
UEFA Congress 2009 (UEFA)  
World Wrestling Championship 2009 (FILA)  
121st Session & XIII Olympic Congress 2009 (IOC)  
World Track Cycling Championship 2010 (UCI)  
World Road Cycling Championship 2011 (UCI)







# Sports Day

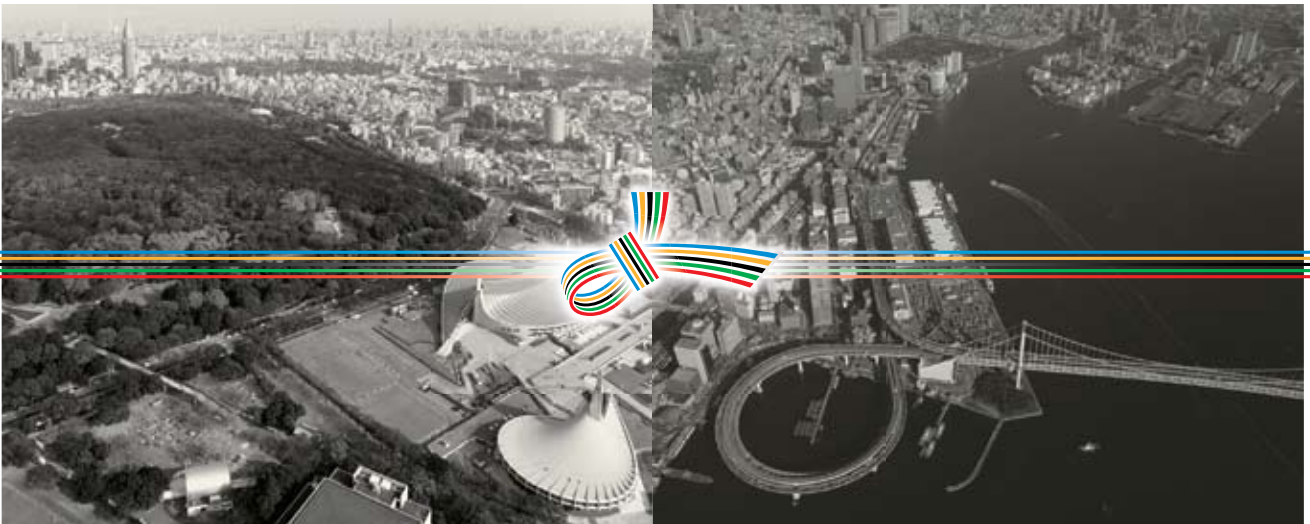
August 21, 2008

	Events	Time	Venue
<b>Athletics</b>	Heats and Qualifiers: M/W 4x100m; W: high jump; M: javelin and decathlon 100m, long jump, shot put, high jump, 400m. Semis: M: 800m, W: 1500m. Finals: M: 400m, 110m hurdles, triple jump; W: 20km walk, javelin, 200m.	9:00 – 13:30, 19:00 – 23:30	National Stadium
<b>Basketball</b>	W: semifinals	20:00 – 23:30	Olympic
<b>Beach Volleyball</b>	W: medal matches	9:00 – 12:00	
<b>Cycling BMX</b>	M/W: semifinals and finals	9:00 – 12:00	BMX Venue
<b>Canoe/ Kayak Flatwater</b>	Semifinals: M: K1, C1, K2, C2 500m; W: K1, K2 500m	15:30 – 18:00	SY Rowing-Canoeing Park
<b>Diving</b>	W: 10m platform competition and final	10:00 – 11:00	National Aquatics Center
<b>Equestrian</b>	Jumping: individual final rounds	19:00 – 20:30, 22:00 – 23:30	HK
<b>Football</b>	W: medal matches	18:00 – 22:00	Workers' Stadium
<b>Gymnastics = Rhythmic</b>	W: individual and group all-around qualifiers	18:00 – 22:00	BJUT

	Events	Time	Venue
<b>Handball</b>	W: placement and semifinals	12:00 – 15:30, 18:00 – 21:30	National Indoor Stadium
<b>Hockey</b>	M: classifications and semifinals	8:30 – 12:00, 18:00 – 21:30	Olympic Green Hockey Stadium
<b>Modern Pentathlon</b>	M: all five events and medal ceremony	8:30 – 11:00, 14:30 – 15:30, 17:00 – 18:00, 20:00 – 21:00	Fencing Hall
<b>Sailing</b>	Medal races: tornado and star	13:00 – 14:00	Qingdao Olympic Sailing Center
<b>Softball</b>	Gold medal match	18:30 – 19:30	Fengtai Softball Field
<b>Swimming</b>	M: 10km marathon and medal ceremony	9:00 – 10:00	SY Rowing-Canoeing Park
<b>Taekwondo</b>	M -68kg and W -57 kg competition and medal rounds	9:00 - 14:00, 15:00 – 21:31	USTB
<b>Table Tennis</b>	M/W: singles rounds	10:00 – 16:00, 18:00 – 22:00	PKU
<b>Volleyball</b>	W: semifinals	12:30 – 13:30, 20:00 – 21:00	Capital
<b>Water Polo</b>	W: medal matches	17:00 – 19:30	Yingdong

W = Women / M = Men

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