

Olympic Competition Begins in 16 Sports

U.S. swimmer Michael Phelps launches his quest for an unprecedented eight gold medals in the pool when the swimming competition opens at the Water Cube Saturday.

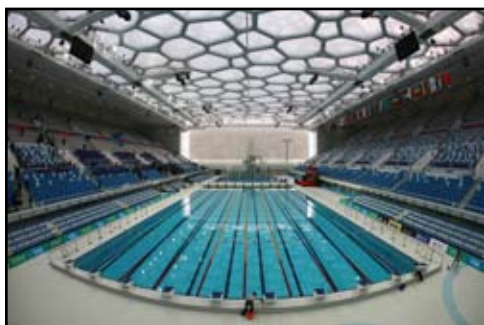
Teammate Ryan Lochte is considered one of his biggest rivals for the gold medal in the 400m individual medley, which begins with heats at 6:33 p.m. (6:33 a.m. EST).

Phelps, nicknamed the "Baltimore Bullet," is aiming to break U.S. swimming legend Mark Spitz's Olympic record of seven gold medals – the most won by an athlete at a single Summer Games.

Swimming is one of 16 sports competitions kicking off the first full day's action of the Olympics; football got underway Wednesday.

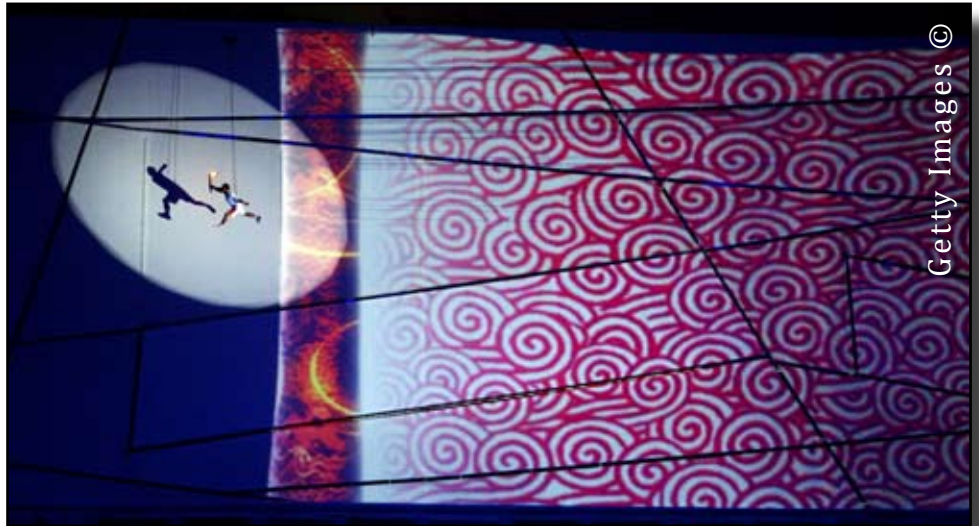
The other sports opening are: rowing, badminton, basketball, boxing, road cycling, equestrian eventing, fencing, artistic gymnastics, weightlifting, handball, judo, shooting, archery, sailing and volleyball.

Seven gold medals will be awarded on Day One of the Games in road cycling, fencing, weightlifting, judo and shooting.



The Water Cube interior (Getty Images)

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Getty Images ©

The first medal ceremony at the Beijing Olympics is for the women's 10m air rifle and takes place at 11:05 a.m. (11:05 p.m. EST) at the Beijing Shooting Range Hall.

In badminton, 22 matches are scheduled for the opening day of competition at the Beijing University of Technology Gymnasium.

China has dominated badminton at the past two Olympics and is hoping for a strong performance this time around. At Athens 2004, it won five medals including three gold.

Meanwhile, two Chinese women weightlifters are strong medal prospects in the 58kg and 69kg categories. Their competition begins at the Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics Gymnasium Saturday.

Japan is expected to continue its Olympic dominance in judo when 386 competitors from 92 nations

compete for the 14 gold medals on offer at the Beijing Games. At Athens 2004, Japan won eight of a possible 56 judo medals.

Venus Cherishes Gold

On Sunday, four more sports open their competition programs – hockey, diving, waterpolo and tennis.

Athletes contest a total of 14 gold medals on Day Two.

In tennis, U.S. star Serena Williams launches her bid to become Olympic champion, stressing the importance of the competition alongside the grand slam titles she has won.

"This is the Olympics, it doesn't get any bigger and for all my trophies, my gold medal is my favorite," she said in a press conference Friday.

"For me this is as big as the U.S. Open."

- Mark Bisson

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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.



Morning Mist Not Pollution Says BOCOG Leader

Chinese officials maintained Friday that the recent heavy morning mist has been caused by humidity, not air pollution, and athletes should not fear for their health.

Wang Wei, BOCOG executive vice president and secretary general, said the fog and haze "was not a very nice picture if you see it from around the environment." But he added that because of measures the Chinese government has taken to reduce harmful emissions -- such as limiting the number of vehicles and factory exhaust -- officials "have every reason and we are fully confident to say we will provide a good air quality during the Olympic Games."

BOCOG has set up 27 monitoring stations to measure pollution, including one near the Bird's Nest. Wang said that the air pollution index Friday was about 80, which is the second level. The top level, classed as "excellent," is below 50, while 51-100 is "fairly good," according to the Beijing Municipal Environmental Protection Bureau.

"When it's a rainy day or foggy day the visibility is not good enough, but it doesn't mean the air quality is not good," says Guo Hu, director of the Beijing Meteorological Observatory.

Water Vapor is Key

He said water vapor content, or relative humidity, was 80-90 percent at 7 a.m., dropping to 70 percent by noon. Though the heavy shroud of mist burned off a bit, the sky remained gray.

Wang said air quality depends not only on actions taken within

Beijing, but also within the whole area.

"For the mist of the air, at the moment, I don't think we can do anything," Wang said. "In China, we call it 'the grandfather of the heaven.' They decide everything, but after all these years of hard work, we are very happy to see the good result."

"Of course, we always hope for the best, but no matter how good it is, we still hope for better."

Coates Fears Damage

John Coates, president of the Australian Olympic Committee, said Friday he feared the pollution could cause "permanent damage" to the environment.

"Significant pollution is a problem," he said. "But we're just getting on with it. Let's hope one legacy of the Games will be the realization of the damage done [to the environment]."

Du Shaozhong, deputy director and spokesman for the bureau, said he was "confident the air quality standards, particularly inhalable particles, are in line with international standards."

He said Beijing has tried to honor the commitments it made to the IOC regarding four major pollutants.

"In terms of the air quality improvement during the whole year in Beijing, we have done quite a lot," he said. "We have tried very hard to make sure the air quality could be improved, and we will have very good air quality during Games time."

Guo said heavy rain can help



remove pollutants from the air.

"We estimate that on the 9th or 10th of August, we're going to have a big rain," he said. "So along with this rain, we expect the weather condition in Beijing can be further improved."

- By ATR Staff

U.S. Press Corps Delayed

Journalists following U.S. President George Bush to Beijing were detained for three hours Friday on a chartered Northwest Airlines 747, according to an Associated Press report.

The plane landed at 2:10 a.m., but passengers weren't allowed to disembark until after 5 a.m. The reporters, photographers and camera operators filed through Chinese customs and immigration. Normally, the U.S. press corps is waved through while government officials process their details.

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Today's Highlights

- **8 a.m.** – ATR Newsmaker Breakfast – Iraqi discus thrower Haidar Nasser, gold medallist Willie Banks and Chairperson of the IOC Athletes' Commission Election Committee, Anita DeFrantz, give the athletes' view of the Olympic Games and talk about the role athletes should play in organizing the Games. Venue: McDonald's, Olympic Green, north end.
- **10 a.m.** – Coca-Cola Chairman Neville Isdell officially opens the Shuang Experience Center on the Olympic Green.
- **6 p.m.** – Coca-Cola Live Positively Award, Daily Presentation at Shuang Experience Center.

Quote of the Day

"You have chosen as the theme of these Games One World, One Dream. That is what we are tonight. As one world, we grieved with you over the tragic earthquake in Sichuan Province. We were moved by the great courage and solidarity of the Chinese people. As one dream, may these Olympic Games bring you joy, hope and pride."

- IOC President **Jacques Rogge** during opening ceremony

Beijing International Media Center

- **2:30 p.m.** – Representatives of the State Administration of Work Safety hold a group interview. Hall 2.
- **4:30 p.m.** – Screening of the movie "Fearless" starring Jet Li. Shuang Experience Center on the Olympic Green.
- **5 p.m.** – Registration due for Aug. 10 visits to Jingshan Park, Beijing 798 Art Zone and the Temple of Confucius at Guozijian Museum.

Main Press Centre

- **11 a.m.** – Joint IOC/BOCOG Daily Press Briefing – MPC
- **10 a.m.** – UNEP - Environmental Aspects of the Games

Coming Up!

- **Aug. 11, 8 a.m.** – ATR Newsmaker Breakfast – London Olympics Minister Tessa Jowell is an observer at the final Summer Games ahead of London. She will comment on what they are hoping to learn, see and do while in Beijing. Venue: McDonald's, Olympic Green, north end.

EYES ON THE FUTURE



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On the Scene in Beijing: *Bold Words from Lula*

Brazilian President Pledges Terror-Proof 2016 Games in Rio

Brazilian President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva boldly promoted Rio de Janeiro's 2016 Olympic host bid on Friday by raising the hot-button issue of terrorism.

In comments that might be construed as testing an IOC rule forbidding direct comparisons to rivals, Lula downplayed an IOC report that red flags security in Rio de Janeiro.



"Brazil is a country where the word terrorism does not exist," he told reporters inside the Embassy of Brazil before attending Beijing's 2008 Games opening ceremony. "We don't have terrorist attacks like in the U.S. and London. Personal safety is no less than the U.S."

Lula also introduced divine intervention as a reason why Rio de Janeiro could win.

"When God made the world, he prepared Rio for the Olympic Games," the Brazilian leader said.

Calling Rio de Janeiro "the most beautiful city in the world," Lula said if IOC members could "get their feet on the ground" and "get to know" the city their fears about public safety would diminish.

Rio de Janeiro is one of four cities in the race for 2016, along with Chicago, Madrid and Tokyo. All have events planned in Beijing to promote their bids.

Kissinger in Beijing

Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger toured the Beijing Planning Exhibition Hall on Thursday.

Kissinger, 85, met secretly in 1971 with Chinese Premier Chou Enlai, which opened the door to a historic 1972 summit between U.S. President Richard Nixon and Mao Zedong. The catalyst for the high-level meetings was actually so-called "ping pong diplomacy" in which Canadian and U.S. table tennis teams were invited to visit China.

Kissinger is the last surviving IOC Honour member, a status granted for his work on IOC reforms following the Salt Lake City scandal.

Samsung Pavilion Opens

Samsung joined the parade of sponsors opening pavilions on the Olympic Green this week. The Olympic Rendezvous @ Samsung -- the company's facility for athletes and spectators -- is billed as a "high-tech and eco-friendly" pavilion. In addition to showcasing Samsung



technology, the 1,200-square meter building features a private area for athletes and their families, a spectator center for the public and an outdoor area for daily entertainment.

Guests included Gerhard Heiberg, IOC marketing director; Liu Xuan, China's first artistic gymnastics gold medalist; Yuan Bin, Beijing 2008 marketing director, Peter Ueberroth, USOC chair and Yoon-Woo Lee, Samsung CEO.

McDonald's Big Mac Contest

In a race to build the best Big Mac, teams from around the world competed at the McDonald's on the Olympic Green Thursday to make the sponsor's signature product.



Beijing Photo Gallery



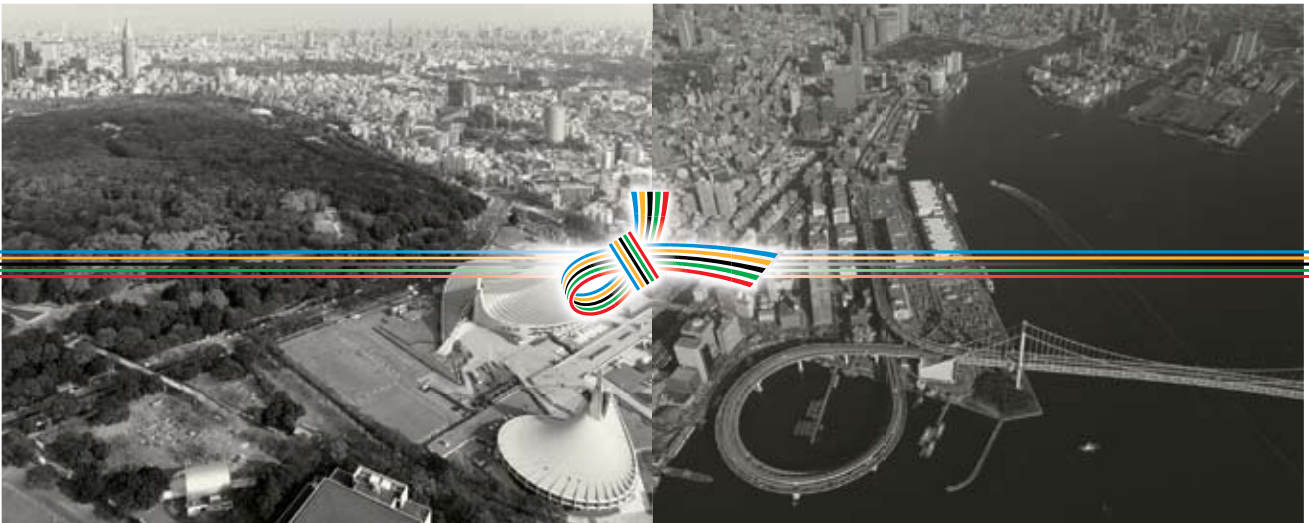
President George Bush in Beijing after a meeting with U.S. athletes. He's one of about 90 heads of state attending the opening ceremony. (Getty Images)



U.S. basketball stars LeBron James and Kobe Bryant join teammates to meet the press at a news conference Friday. Hundreds of reporters filled the press conference room at the Main Press Center, the biggest turnout yet for these Games. (ATR)

- ATR Staff

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Tokyo 2016 Bid Committee
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