

Lightning Bolt strikes in Beijing

■ MAX HAYS

Staff Reporter

Many people think that at the Beijing Olympics swimmer Michael Phelps was the main attraction, but this is far from the truth.

While Phelps was swimming laps in the pool, Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt was breaking three of the most sought

after records in the entire Olympics. The 100 meter dash, the 200 meter dash and the 4x100 meter relay, making him the fastest man in history.

Bolt didn't just set world records in these events, but he did so in effortless fashion. In the 100 meter dash, Bolt was so far ahead he began his celebration 20 meters before the finish line, still managing to run the race in 9.69 seconds, breaking his previous record and becoming the first man to run the event in under 9.70 seconds. Imagine if he had run his hardest the

entire way—scientists and his coach predict that he would have run under 9.60 seconds, a feat once thought to be impossible.

In the 200 meters, Bolt's self-proclaimed best event, he ran a 19.30 second race into a headwind, besting the world record of 12 years by .02

seconds.

This makes him the only the man in the world to break both of these coveted records in the same Olympics.

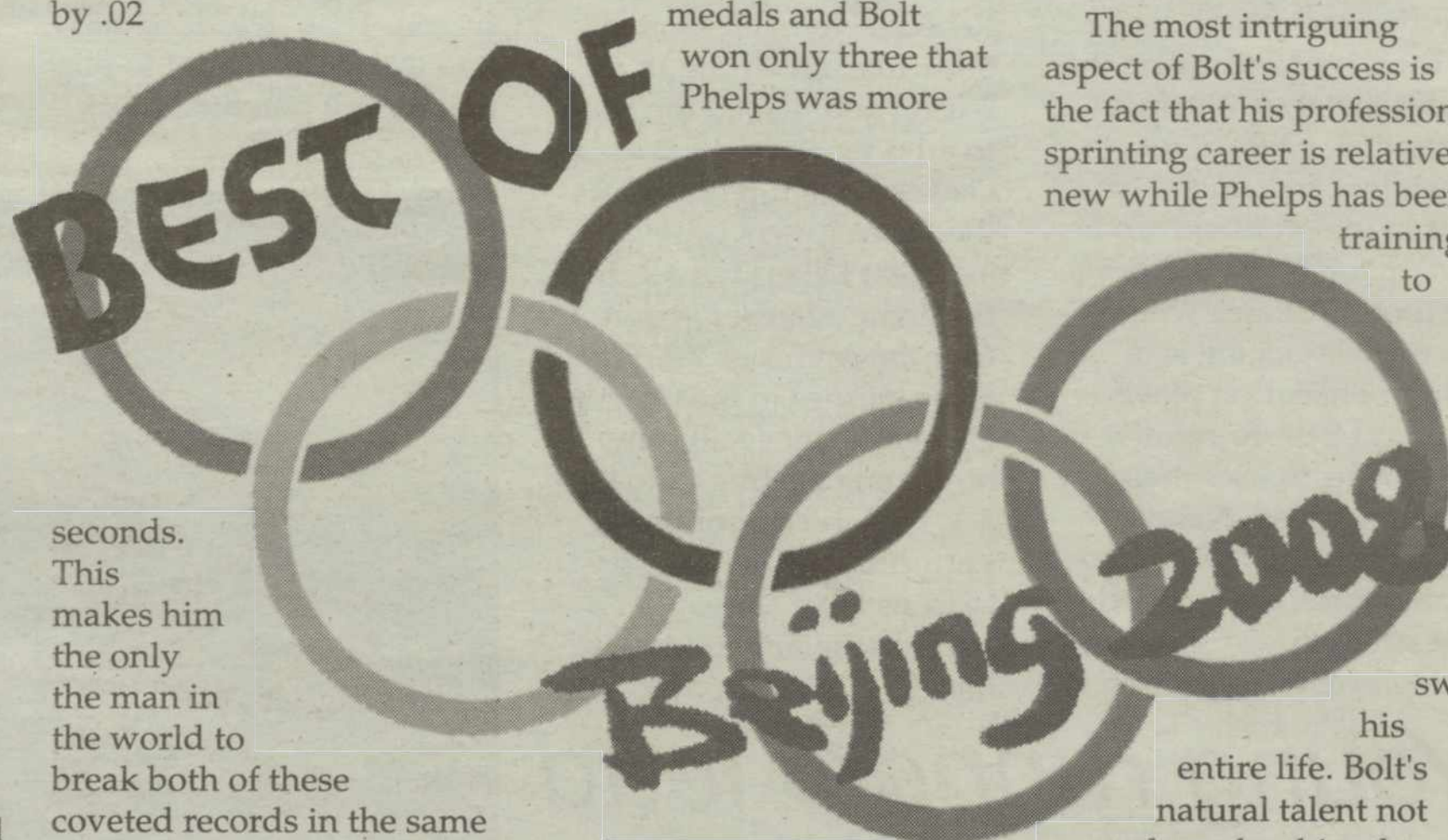
To finish the act, Bolt and his Jamaican teammates Asafa Powell, Nesta Carter

and Michael Frater broke one last record, the 4 X 100 meter relay. The team shattered the previous record that stood for 15 years by .3 seconds completing the race in 37.10 seconds.

People argue that since Phelps won eight medals and Bolt won only three that Phelps was more

races considered sprints and 16 races in the swimming category, meaning that Bolt won 60 percent of the races in his field while Phelps won 50 percent of his. Also, Bolt was in only one relay while Phelps was in three. Almost half of Phelps' medals were assisted.

The most intriguing aspect of Bolt's success is the fact that his professional sprinting career is relatively new while Phelps has been training to



swim

his

entire life. Bolt's natural talent not

only makes him the

greatest sprinter of all time, but also the greatest Olympian.

successful.

Yes, Phelps did win five more gold medals than Bolt, but there are only five

With humility, Phelps trumps Bolt in Olympic history

■ CHRISTOPHER ERBIN

Staff Reporter

One runs with the wind, one swims like a fish; Michael Phelps and Usain Bolt, possibly the greatest Olympians in history, are still worlds apart in terms of accomplishment. The number of Olympic records, the gold medal count, even things as subtle as his overt humility (I don't think the same could be said for Bolt)—the imprint Phelps' has left on the Olympic games is enormous, and Bolt's recent domination doesn't even begin to compare.

One of the biggest factors in determining whether Phelps or Bolt was more impressive in the 2008 Summer Olympics is whether you think swimming or running is a more difficult sport in which to excel. Bolt, the Jamaican running phenom, broke three world records in three attempts while Michael Phelps broke eight world records. Granted, Bolt did not compete in as many races as Phelps and Bolt is the first person to set world records in both the 100m and 200m events, which is hard to do for a runner.

Both Phelps and Bolt are great athletes, there's no doubt. But who is more impressive? Eight gold medals, seven world records, two touch-outs, and a few complete blowouts later, Phelps

has not only become the winningest Olympian of all time, but he did it in a manner that involved no moral controversy or disrespect towards his fellow competitors, while popularizing the sport of swimming and giving the world a new obsession.

The same simply cannot be said for Bolt. I've heard the arguments before—that Bolt faced tougher competition, since running is a more "natural" sport in which more people can excel, whereas Phelps is just facing people that can swim. That's a horrendous argument. For every country that trains their runners to win Olympic Gold and break World Records, there's a school or training center that is training young swimmers beginning with toddlers, to prime them for the Olympics by the time they are 16.

Some people are saying Bolt only trained for the 100m for a couple of months. While this may be true, it is basically saying that he ran half of the 200m, which he trains for 24/7/365. Phelps swims different strokes in the pool. That's more difficult. It'd be like Bolt shattering the world records in the 100m and 200m, running frontward, backward and skipping.

Phelps, on the other hand, had a much tougher path to the finals. He had

a total of nine preliminary races to get to the eight finals. The three relays did not have any preliminaries in which Phelps swam. His teammates took care of that.

Four of his five individual races had two rounds each of preliminaries. Only the 400m medley had one preliminary round. Although Bolt's races each had three preliminaries, none of his races were on the same day. Phelps' 17 races spanned eight days, with two days having one race, three days having two races, and three days having three races!

With all eyes on Phelps, he completely focused on the task at hand, shutting out all the distractions of the media, fans, other athletes, past races, future races and anything and everything else. The expectations and the pressures on him were tremendous.

Bolt had very little pressure. Although there was some anticipation of a Tyson Gay-Asafa Powell-Usain Bolt 100m dream final, the pressure definitely was on Gay and Powell to perform. Powell was trying to overcome his label as choker at big meets and reclaim the world record. Gay was trying to overcome his hamstring injury and to reclaim the U.S.'s waning dominance in the 100m.

Bolt had the world record and it was evident in the way he ran and showboated

in the 100 that he felt no such pressure. Additionally, there just wasn't that much media coverage of him until he easily broke the 100m record. The pressure he felt in the 200m is still nothing compared to what Phelps had to go through.

While Bolt dominated all three of his race, Phelps crushed seven world records, and won eight gold

medals. Phelps won four times as many gold medals. Are you joking me? How is that NOT more impressive?

The main reason I'm going for Phelps is that he has demonstrated over a long period of time that he can't be touched in his sport. Bolt first came onto the athletics radar when he was 15 years old. I can remember reading news reports excitedly describing his future potential, but

2008 has really been his breakthrough year. He's been untouchable only in recent months. Meanwhile, Phelps has demonstrated his superiority since before the 2004 Olympics. If Bolt is still the man to beat in 2012, then perhaps he may deserve to be in the same category as Phelps.

