

# Bolt gets ninth gold

By EDDIE PELLIS  
Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Usain Bolt knelt down and gave the track one final kiss, then flattened his hand, reached down and slapped the white number “3” painted at the starting line.

Three Olympics, three races at each, three gold medals every time.

He could have just as easily slapped the number “1.” That would need no explanation.

The man who transcended track and became a world-class celebrity bid a blazing-fast farewell to the Rio de Janeiro Games — and likely the Olympics altogether — Friday night with yet another anchor leg for the ages. He turned a close 4x100 relay race against Japan and the United States into a typical, Bolt-like runaway, helping Jamaica cross the line in 37.27.

“There you go,” he said. “I am the greatest.”

Japan won the silver medal, finishing .33 seconds behind.

The U.S. finished the race third but endured yet another relay debacle — disqualified because leadoff runner Mike Rodgers was ruled to have passed the baton to Justin Gatlin outside the exchange zone. That promoted Canada to the bronze medal. The American were protesting the ruling, and as midnight approached in Brazil, there was no word on the outcome.

“It was the twilight zone. It was a nightmare,” said Gatlin, who, along with his teammates, found out about the DQ while parading the U.S. flag around the track. “You work so hard with your teammates, guys you compete against almost all year long. All that hard work just crumbles.”



Jamaica's Usain Bolt, center, competes in the men's 4x100-meter relay final during the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on Friday.

If the ruling stands, it will mark the ninth time since 1995 the U.S. men have been disqualified or failed to get the baton around at Olympics or world championships. (They blew a 10th medal, the silver at the London Games, after Tyson Gay's doping positive.)

The disqualification will cause more hand-wringing in the States.

In Jamaica, they'll party. Bolt's record in Olympic finals improved to nine victories over nine events.

Nobody's done that before, and nobody's on the horizon to do it again soon.

Along for his final trip down the track were Nickel Ashmeade, training partner Yohan Blake and the Jamaican elder statesman, former world-record holder Asafa Powell.

When Bolt received the yellow baton from Ashmeade for his final run down the straightaway, he was even, or maybe a step behind Aska Cambridge of Japan and Trayvon Bromell of the United States.

That lasted about four steps. With 70 meters to go, it was over.

“I am just relieved. It's happened. I am just happy, proud of myself. It's come

true,” Bolt said. “The pressure is real. I look at it as an accomplishment.”

Counting all the preliminaries, finals and his approximately nine-second blast down the stretch in Friday's final race, Bolt has spent 325 seconds — a tad less than 5 1/2 minutes — running on the track at the Olympics since he made his debut in Beijing eight years ago.

Every tick of the clock has been a treasure. And while he may not close things out with 23 golds, the number Michael Phelps left Rio with earlier this week, it's hard to argue there is anybody more successful or electric — or important to his sport, and the Olympics themselves.

The anchor sport of the Olympics has been mired for decades, but especially over the past year, in a cesspool of doping, cheating and bad characters.

When Bolt's on the track, everyone forgets.

All week, when asked a hundred different ways if this really is his last Olympics, he kept saying yes.

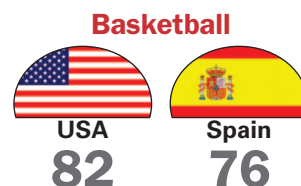
Tokyo is four years away, and now the world must ponder: Without Bolt on the track, how will things ever be the same?



United States' Carmelo Anthony (15) celebrates with teammate Kevin Durant (5) during a men's semifinal round basketball game against Spain at the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Friday, Aug. 19, 2016.

# US men join women, will play for gold

By BRIAN MAHONEY  
Associated Press



RIO DE JANEIRO — The U.S. Olympic men's basketball team is still a little better than Spain.

One more win and the Americans are again the best in the world.

The U.S. advanced to its third straight gold-medal game, beating Spain 82-76 on Friday in another tight matchup between the teams that met in the last two championship games.

Klay Thompson scored 22 points for the Americans, who will play Australia or Serbia on Sunday for their third consecutive Olympic title.

“This is where we wanted to be,” Kevin Durant said. “We talked

about it all summer and to be here for the final game, to win the gold, for all the marbles, we like our chances.”

The U.S. was just good enough again against Spain, winning a much different game than the all-offense matchups that decided the last two gold-medal games. This one featured several technical fouls and neither team got into an offensive flow.

It was the lowest-scoring game for the Americans in the Olympics

since the 2004 semifinals, when they managed 81 in a loss to Argentina.

It certainly wasn't pretty, but Olympic gold never loses its luster.

“It's an amazing feeling now,” center DeAndre Jordan said. “We really want to accomplish this.”

Kevin Durant added 14 points on the day he moved past LeBron James into second place on the U.S. Olympic career scoring list. Kyrie Irving had 13 for the U.S.

Pau Gasol scored 23 points for Spain, which made it tough on the Americans for the third straight Olympics, but again had to settle for coming close against the world's No. 1 team.

# LOCHTE: Lasting memory of athlete could be incident, not the 12 medals

Continued from 1B

ality and regular ‘bro’ behavior, Lochte has always been about having fun. This is the guy who gleefully admitted eating McDonald's three times a day while winning four medals at the 2008 Beijing Games. For Rio, he dyed his dark hair white, not realizing the pool's chlorine would turn it light green.

His memorable props — diamond grills on his teeth on the medal podium, crazily colored high-tops, sunglasses bearing his favorite made-up expression of “Jeah!” — and easygoing, goofy nature has made him a popular and relatable star with the public and his teammates.

“I think that is why I do so many different things with the hair, the grills, the crazy shoes,” he said in Rio, “It's just my personality coming out there.”

Lochte's success led to his own 2013 reality TV show

called “What Would Ryan Lochte Do?” It had a short run and left some viewers with the impression that its star was nothing more than a good-looking dim bulb. Still, lines for his autograph sessions at meets routinely stretch longer than anyone else's.

As hard as he plays, Lochte works hard, too. His 12 Olympic medals are second only to Michael Phelps among U.S. male Olympians.

This time Lochte was only a small part of the show. He finished fifth in his only individual event and swam on the victorious 4x200-meter freestyle relay. Instead, the biggest memory of the 32-year-old swimmer in Rio will be the grainy security video of him and teammates Gunnar Bentz, Jack Conger and Jimmy Feigen exiting the gas station restroom and sitting on the ground, some with hands up.

Like other pro swimmers,

Lochte is reliant on sponsors to foot his bills so he can focus on year-round training and travel to meets without having to hold a regular job.

His sponsors, including Speedo, Ralph Lauren and airweave premium bedding, have been in no hurry to cut ties with him, though have said they are monitoring the situation.

The incident feeds a lot of American clichés of the bad-boy athlete, and while it was relatively minor, it is “unsavory,” says Thomas Ordahl, chief strategy officer at the brand consulting firm Landor.

Ordahl believes it's probably a good idea for companies to hold off on making decisions until the issue surrounding the dispute is sorted out. But he suspects that eventually, sponsors will probably drop Lochte.

“The truth is that there are enough celebrities to be attached to without bringing that kind of baggage with

you,” said Robert Passikoff, president and founder of the research firm Brand Keys.

USA Swimming is expected to convene its executive board to discuss likely punishment, as it did when Michael Phelps was arrested for a second DUI two years ago. Technically, the four could be fined, suspended or expelled. In the Phelps case, the board announced a week after the arrest that it was suspending the sport's biggest star for six months, banning him from competing in the 2015 world championships and taking away six months of his funding stipend.

For Phelps, it was his third strike.

This is Lochte's first major gaffe, and whatever sanctions the national governing body passes down could have little effect on the professional swimmer.

He's already said he plans to take the first extensive break of his career following the

Olympics and move from North Carolina to California. A suspension could keep him out of next year's world championships — often bereft of big stars following an Olympic year — and the Arena Pro Swim Series, a five-meet circuit in the U.S. But that would hardly impact Lochte should he decide to resume training for the 2020 games.

As for the other three, Feigen has indicated he would retire after Rio and the 26-year-old is looking forward to attending law school somewhere in Texas. He made a \$10,800 payment to a Rio charity that teaches martial arts to poor children after the incident, and his passport was returned. He left Brazil Friday night.

Bentz and Conger stumbled just as they were getting started on the international stage, so the repercussions could linger longest with the Olympic rookies. They, along with Feigen, swam

in preliminary heats, and earned gold medals when their teammates won relays in the finals.

They returned home to the U.S. Friday.

Bentz will be a 20-year-old junior majoring in business at Georgia this fall and Conger will be a 21-year-old senior majoring in corporate communication at Texas. They remain amateurs and presumably will continue their NCAA careers with their respective programs, which also could hand out punishment.

What may take longer for everyone to forget is how the four stole the spotlight.

“While we are thankful our athletes are safe, we do not condone the lapse in judgment and conduct that led us to this point,” USA Swimming executive director Chuck Wielgus said. “It is not representative of what is expected as Olympians, as Americans, as swimmers and as individuals.”

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