

SWIMMING

SWIMMING: A FINAL BOW FOR PHELPS?

We've heard this song before: The 2016 Games at Rio will be Michael Phelps' final Olympic appearance.

Indeed, the Olympics' most decorated athlete has said that at the grand old age of 31, he will be hanging up his trunks after the Rio games, happy with whatever he adds this month to his 22 medals over three Olympiads.

But there's still life left in this old boy. After a short-lived retirement that included a reality-show appearance, a visit to the White House and a drunken driving arrest, Phelps came back to the 2015 Nationals and set record times in the 100m and 200m butterfly and 200m individual medley, so consider him a major factor at Rio in these events.

As for other contenders for hardware, look to Americans Ryan Lochte, Nathan Adrian and Hungary's Laszlo Cseh.

On the women's side, American Missy Franklin will try to add to her five-medal haul in London, where she won gold in the 100m and 200m backstroke, the 4x100 medley and the 4x200 freestyle. Others in the medal mix include Americans Katie Ledecky and Katie Meili and Hungary's Katinka Hosszu.

On a side note, Natalie Coughlin needs one medal to become the most decorated female swimmer.

Swimming

8/6-13 M; 8/15-16 M

Synchronized Swimming

8/14-15 Q; 8/16 M; 8/18 Q; 8/19 M

Michael Phelps

TABLE TENNIS

CHINA SMASHES TABLE TENNIS COMPETITION

China has dominated since table tennis debuted as an Olympic sport in 1988, winning 24 gold medals and 47 medals in all. In Rio, the script should read much the same, given the Chinese count four of six of the world's top-ranked men's players and five of six on the women's side. China also enters having swept gold medals at the 2015 and 2016 World Championships. Current world No. 1 Ma Long is the man to beat in singles, followed by second-ranked Fan Zhendong. Also watch for German duo Dimitrij Ovtcharov and Timo Boll. The ladies hierarchy includes China's Li Xiaoxia, the defending singles gold medalist, compatriot Liu Shiwen, and Japan's Ai Fukuhara and Kasumi Ishikawa, London silver medalists in the team competition.

8/6-9 Q; 8/10-11 M; 8/12-15 Q; 8/16-17 M

interesting FACTS

• The first bicycle is thought to have been created in 1790 by Frenchman Comte Mede de Sivrac.

• After his right hand was injured by a grenade in 1938, world-class Hungarian shooter Karoly Takacs taught himself to shoot left-handed and won gold medals at the 1948 and 1952 Olympics.

• Judo rules require judoka to bow at the beginning and end of contests and when entering and leaving the mat.

• On average, it takes a taekwondo athlete three years of training to achieve black belt status.

• In mountain biking, riders can make their own repairs and can accept assistance only in dedicated assistance zones.

• Reconstructed from the ruins of the ancient Greek venue, Athens' Panathinaiko Stadium is the only stadium in the world to be made entirely of white marble.