

Beijing 2008 - "Michael Phelps Quest For Gold"

While watching the 2008 Olympic games I digressed to the Super Bowl game a few months back. The words I used to describe the Giants victory over New England was Destiny, Fate, Unbelievable, Miraculous. The Giants performance in that game, as unbelievable as it may have been at the time, pales in comparison to the incredible, unprecedented feat that was accomplished by Michael Phelps in the 2008 Olympic games. I watched in awe every evening as he won gold after gold in every competitive race that he entered and whether solo or as a team effort he was successful in his quest for unparalleled achievement in Olympic and sports history. The incredible Mr. Phelps, whose name is the same as another Phelps, the only other one I know, the Peter Phelps of Mission Impossible fame. The one fictional character, Peter, is the man who is given mission after mission of an impossible nature but he and his team always seemed to orchestrate a successful outcome no matter what the odds against them. Peter Phelps was a fictional character but Michael is as real as real can be and after watching his performance in these games I believe he is the real Mission Impossible Phelps achieving success in each mission with his team at Beijing one race at a time.

Some of his solo efforts were anti-climactic because he made it look so easy as he thrashed the field by such a wide margin that you knew the inevitability of the outcome before the race was half over. I would estimate that six of his eight gold medal victories were won in this fashion. The other two, however, were a different story. Talk about manifest destiny, no one can do it better than Michael Phelps. The French were trash talking about how they would crush the American team in the 4 x 100 meter free style relay. They found out the hard way that their trash talk only spurred Michael and the American team to victory. Michael's swimming ability is unparalleled in the 2008 games, but we have to give credit where it is due, and that is to his team mates without whom his quest for eight gold may not have materialized. Michael gave his team an edge to help assure victory but it was his team mates fortitude and determination for victory as well that made the achievement possible. The anchor in the 4 x 100 meter relay, Jason Lezak, really impressed me as he swam a fantastic race. He caught up with the best swimmer on the French team, Alain Bernard, and snatched the victory right out from under him after being a full length behind with only fifty meters to go. Truly amazing to say the least. However, the defining moment of Michael's quest for eight gold medals came in the race for the 100 meter Butterfly and his 1/100th of a second victory over Cavic. Cavic earlier gave Michael the fuel for his victory by suggesting that the games would be better off if Michael lost a race or two. That's all Michael needed to hear. How unsportsmanlike by Cavic to suggest that a competitor should lose to make things better, for who, maybe him, but not for the games and not for the world. It looked for a time as if Michael's dream for eight gold had finally come to an end but he miraculously stretched his arms out and snatched it away from Cavic to ensure victory and the fulfillment of his destiny. Michael and the American team had accomplished the impossible but as we have learned by watching these games, "Nothing is Impossible". If you have a dream and want it bad enough then nothing should stop you from making that dream come true. Walt Disney had a dream but he has nothing on Michael Phelps in providing a magical experience for the world to see. I'd like to see Walt grab eight gold out of the hat like Mr. Phelps did.

During the course of the first eight days of the Olympics I got to know a little more about Michael and his quest for Olympic history by watching the interviews with him, his family, coach and friends. It became clear that he and his team mates worked very hard for their accomplishments and I feel strongly that they were competing more for the glory of Country, the USA, than for their personal gratification. I think Lezak said it best when he was asked if he won for Michael when he dug down deep and overcame incredible odds to beat out the French in the relay. His reply basically said that he swam his best for his country and self and if he could help Michael achieve his dream at the same time then so much the better. I applaud his reply and attitude toward the games and the competition.

The athletes who have come before Michael, such as Carl Lewis and Mark Spitz had also achieved greatness for their time and left a milestone in their wake that others could measure themselves by in the Olympic Games to come. Without such past accomplishments there would be no real way to measure what Michael achieved at the 2008 Olympic games. Mark Spitz set an amazing record for his era and that was another Olympics that was very exciting to watch. He also claimed victory after victory and gave the world a historic Olympics at that time. Who knows what other records he could have set if he decided to compete again. Although that may not have been the case with Mr. Spitz, I don't think we've heard the last splash from "The Incredible Mr. Phelps". I'm already looking forward to London 2012 and to see what Michael has in store for us. I have no doubt that he will try to better his last performance as incredible a feat as that may be. I have a strong feeling that his record will stand for a long time or at least until Michael competes again in 2012. Remember "Nothing is Impossible". Eight may be a lucky number by Chinese standards but I think it rubbed off on Michael as he won eight gold in the Olympics that started in 8-08-08. Twelve may be another lucky number for him and his next goal in 2012. After watching his performance this past week I would not put it past him and only time will tell.

I would like to thank Michael and the rest of the Olympic athletes who have given their country, family and friends a performance to be proud of. They gave us much enjoyment watching them overcome incredible odds to compete and achieve medal victory. Gold is the ultimate medal, but it is not everything, and all of the athletes who have competed and made it to the games have much to be proud of. They beat the best of the best just to be there representing their respective countries and so much the better if they won a medal. Congratulations to Michael Phelps, and his team mates, Lochte, Lezak, and the rest of the American swim team, Soni, Coughlin, Dara Torres, now there's another story, Misty May and Kerri Walsh, our phenomenal Women's Beach Volley Ball Team, Shawn Johnson, Nastia Liukin, and Alicia Sacramone of the women's gymnastic team and also the

men's gymnastic team. They overcame tremendous odds in winning Bronze without our top gymnasts competing due to injuries and congrats to all of the rest of the American athletes who have made their country and their family and friends so very very proud. The 2008 Olympics is not yet over and I look forward to watching the rest of the events to come. GO MICHAEL, GO AMERICA ! Watch out London - 2012 !

About the Author

MY name is Mike D'Auria and I grew up in the Canarsie section of Brooklyn. I played softball for many years until I sustained a severe hamstring injury while running to first base. I have been playing golf ever since. For more info and golf tips go to <http://guideforbeginninggolfers.com>

Source: www.isnare.com

Source: <http://articles.exospy.com>