

Rio 2016

SWIMMING

2016 OLYMPIC GAMES

SWIMMING HIGHLIGHTS

1. LEGEND MICHAEL PHELPS GOES OUT WITH GOLD

It goes without saying that Olympic legend Michael Phelps has made a huge impact on the sport of swimming and will be missed as he says goodbye, confirming his retirement from competitive swimming.

In Rio, he took home 6 medals, 5 gold and 1 silver. It was his fourth consecutive win in the 200m individual medley, and finished his last career race with the gold in the 400m medley relay. He's now the most decorated Olympian of all time holding 28 medals, 23 of which are gold.

2. 18 YEAR OLD KYLE CHALMERS DESTINED FOR GREATNESS

18-year-old Adelaide (South Australia) man, Kyle Chalmers breaks Australia's 48 year gold medal drought in the men's 100m freestyle as he wins first place with a time of 47.58.

Many sports scientists and coaches are predicting 'King Kyle' to be destined for greatness. They say based on his annual improvements he is set to break the world record for 100m freestyle within a year. That since tracking his progress in 2011, he has shaved off between 0.8 and 1.7 seconds from his race time each year. (source: The Australian)

Kyle will definitely be one to watch!

3. SIMONE MANUEL MAKES HISTORY IN 100M FREESTYLE

Simone Manuel became the first African-American woman to medal in an individual Olympic swimming event and she set an Olympic record too, swimming the 100m freestyle in 52.70s to win gold.

It was awesome to watch her post-race interview as she was overcome with emotion about her achievement. She said, "It's for all the people after me who can't - who believe they can't do it. And I just want to be an inspiration to others, that you can do it."

She takes home 2 golds and 2 silver medals from Rio.

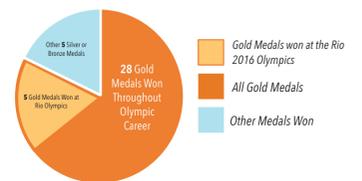
4. KATIE LEDECKY SMASHES THE 800M FREESTYLE WORLD RECORD

American Katie Ledecky smashes the world record in the 800m freestyle. She was able to lower her seven-month-old world record by 2 seconds resulting in a finish time of 8 minutes 4.79 seconds. She finished 11.38 seconds ahead of Britain's second place winner, Jazz Carlin with 8.16.17.

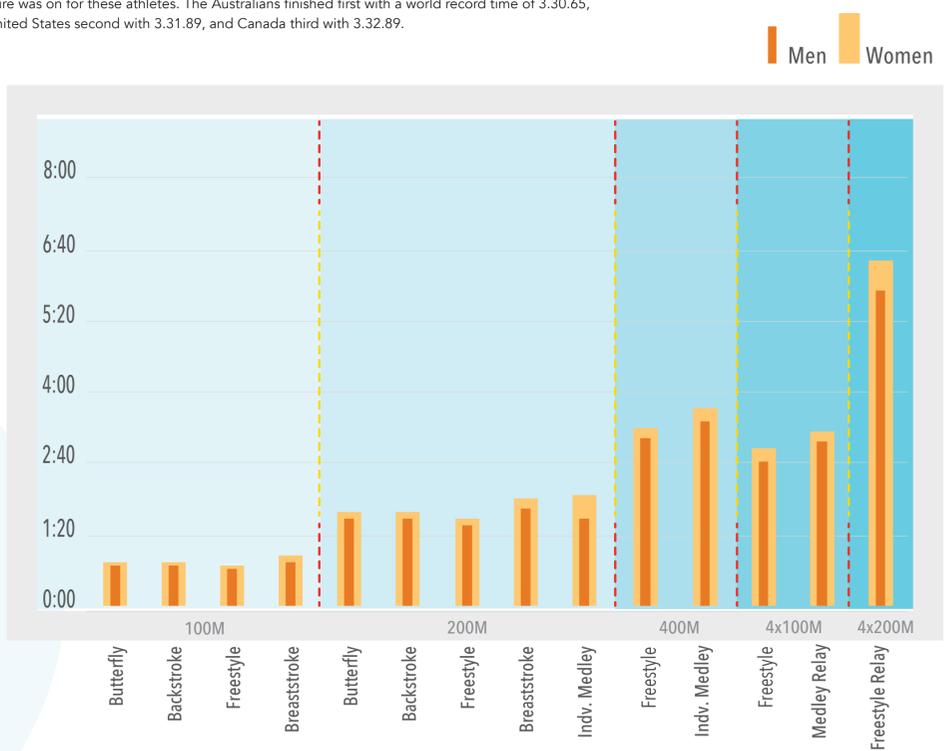
Katie Ledecky takes home 5 Rio medals, 4 gold and 1 silver. She's the first woman to sweep the Olympic 200, 400 and 800 freestyle events in 48 years. Many claim Katie to be the most dominant swimmer and best female swimmer in the world at the moment.

5. AUSTRALIA'S WOMEN WIN GOLD WITH WORLD RECORD TIME IN 4X100M FREESTYLE RELAY

The Australians were expected to win as they had won at the London 2012 Olympics so the pressure was on for these athletes. The Australians finished first with a world record time of 3:30.65, the United States second with 3:31.89, and Canada third with 3:32.89.



1. Michael Phelps earned five gold medals and one silver medal at the Rio 2016 Olympics. These medals bring him to a total of 23 gold medals and a grand total of 28 medals, making him the most decorated Olympian as of 2016.



TOP 3 NATIONS WITH THE MOST MEDALS IN THE 2016 OLYMPICS

Only a handful of nations have proven truly invincible in the pool. These teams can be classified as undisputed powerhouses, gravitating towards the top of the podium since the first modern Olympic Games held in Athens in 1896.

How does one account for such stellar national and international performances? Is Olympic dominance born of financial commitments or of a deeply-rooted cultural affinity for the sport? Here is a definitive guide to why the top three medal-producing countries dominate the Summer 2016 Olympics.

Since its Olympic debut in 1896, the United States has continuously tightened its stranglehold on competitive swimming. It tops the charts for most podium finishes by a single entity, capturing one third of all swimming medals ever distributed at the Olympic Games.

Michael Phelps himself boasts more gold than the island of Japan, bagging a total of 23 over the span of 16 years. USA National Team Managing Director Lindsay Mintenko attributes this to the nation's indomitable team spirit - a "unique sporting ethos" that emphasizes collective unity over individual glory. "We make sure that everyone is pulling in the same direction," she writes, prompting swimmers to focus on the "bigger picture" over individual results. America's team-first philosophy manifests itself at all life stages - summer leagues introduce it; the collegiate system reinforces it; the Olympic Games cement it. A platform to professional career paths, the NCAA is often hailed for breeding such unique talent.

No population inherits as much zeal for swimming as the Australian public. For many, the sport holds an unusually prominent place in national identity, an "important cultural practice" that has bred the likes of Ian Thorpe and Grant Hackett.

The country's water craze is also reflected in public policy, with 100% of Australian kids taught to swim as part of state law. This is primarily a product of the nation's favorable geography, with 85% of the population residing in close proximity to the coastline.

Adding to this is Australia's ideal climate, which supports mild temperatures of 60 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit on an annual basis. As one mid-nineteenth century observer so lucidly points out, "Where there is so much bathing it may naturally be supposed there are good swimmers."

On a per capita basis, Hungary trails just behind Australia with the second highest medals-to-population ratio in the world. The historical basis of this dominance is rooted in ideology, with the communist party playing a pivotal role in the popularization of sport throughout the 1980s.

In recent times, however, the Hungarian Swimming Association's "Talent Selection System" has constituted a formidable path to Olympic success. This program monitors swimmers from an early age, classifying individuals into six distinct age categories based on times achieved at national championships.

It has paid particular attention to the development of 11-12 year olds, instituting a "Champions of the Future" program that offers intensive training across nine regions. Despite Katinka Hosszu's recent clash with the Hungarian Swimming Association, which saw her complain about "inadequate facilities" and "outmoded training methods," the federation still merits praise for its investment in future generations.

