



(LEFT) Controversial Laure Manaudou will look to defend her Olympic crown while (CENTRE) Yao Ming's towering presence should aid the Chinese quest for medals. (RIGHT) Michael Phelps is on a mission of his own as he looks to upstage Mark Spitz's record of eight gold medals.

Brazilian runner Vanderlei Lima was far ahead of the field and 7km from the finish when a defrocked priest, Cornelius Horan, leapt from the crowd and began to push and shove the bewildered athlete. Lima ended the race third after the distraction but was awarded a special medal. Athens 2004.

To help finance their Olympic preparations the "Matildas," as the Australian women's soccer players are known, posed nude for a calendar. Sydney 2000.

**TENNIS**

**RAFAEL NADAL (ESP)**  
With three consecutive Roland Garros titles between 2005-2007, an insatiable will to win every single point and a brutal, pummeling style of play, Spain's Rafael Nadal is the undoubted king of the clay court.  
The bullish Mallorcan is one

eight and at 16 was the youngest man to ever win an ATP game at the Mallorca International series of 2002.  
Such is the draw to take part at what should be a truly unforgettable Beijing Games that Federer, Nadal and most of the world's top players of either gender will be vying for gold out on the hard courts in

superstar status in his native Thailand but he soon became equally well-known for blowing the 600,000 dollars he earned from his Athens win on card games, soccer betting and excessive partying.  
His stepped back from the ring and his wife left him, but he made a successful comeback when he was

be eagerly watched not just by Thailand but by boxing fans around the world.

**BASKETBALL**

**YAO MING (China)**  
China's leading athlete the giant 2.26 metre tall Yao Ming broke into basketball's showpiece league the NBA to become an international

achievement for the basketball mad nation, who recently finished way down the rankings at the 2006 world championships in Japan, where however Yao was the tournament's top scorer with an average of 25.3 points per game.  
Born in 1980, he stands at a colossal 2.26 metres and

services.  
The Texan outfit had to haggle hard for his release from the Shanghai Sharks with the Chinese authorities, who gained guarantees of his release for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

**CYCLING**

**REBECCA ROMERO (GBR)**  
If Britain's cycling world champion Rebecca Romero wins on the track at Beijing she will make Olympic history by being only the second woman to take medals at two different sports.

Romero, 28, won quadruple skulls rowing silver in Athens 2004 adding a world championship gold a year later, before she got fed up and left the sport.

A chance call led her to the new discipline of cycling and in true Olympian style Romero took to the

task with relish, winning silver - after only a year in the saddle - in the 3km individual pursuit at the 2007 world championships.

A year later, she became the world champion in the same distance, overpowering American Sarah Hammer in the individual pursuit, before helping Britain to gold in the team event.

Brimming with enthusiasm for her newfound passion, this special amphibious athlete may just be on her way to making Olympic history.

Britain's Linford Christie won the 100m gold at Barcelona, but he was disqualified from the event after two false starts. Atlanta 1996.

All three medals in the shot-put were won by athletes who had previously served doping bans. This was the first time it had happened. Barcelona 1992



(LEFT) Russian legend Yelene Isinbayeva is a sure bet for the pole vault gold while (RIGHT) Brazil star Ronaldinho looks to lead a young team to an elusive team gold.

The story goes that an angry Mohammad Ali threw his Olympic gold medal of 1960 into the river after being barred from a "whites only" Ohio restaurant. The IOC replaced it after 36 years. Atlanta 1996.

of the few men stopping Roger Federer from total domination of the game and seemingly has sport in his genes, with his uncle the ex-Barcelona defender Miguel Angel Nadal playing at three World Cups for Spain while another uncle, Toni Nadal, is Rafael's coach.  
Born in 1986 he was playing tennis by the age of four, was entered at competition at

China 2008.  
**BOXING**  
**MANUS BOONJUMNONG (THA)**  
Manus Boonjumnong came to prominence when he beat world champion Willy Blain and fancied Cuban Yudel Johnson Cedenon on his way to winning the light welterweight (64kg) boxing gold at Athens. It propelled him to

crowned Asian Games champion in 2006, only to be knocked out early at the 2007 World Amateur Boxing Championships in Chicago.  
The 28-year-old, whose brother Non won a welterweight silver at the 2007 worlds, claims he is now a reformed character after spending time in a monastery. How he fares in Beijing will

megastar who earns untold dollars in the marketing arena.  
He was his nation's flag bearer at the last Games and the emblematic athlete will now face the mouthwatering challenge of leading China, under intense scrutiny, to an unprecedented Olympic medal when the Games take place in Beijing in 2008.  
It would be a significant

enjoys such remarkable coordination he had US scouts scrambling for his signature following an impressive performance at the 2000 Summer Games in Sydney.  
In the 2002 draft he was picked first, something a foreigner had never experienced, and it was the Houston Rockets who were the lucky team to secure his



Stephanie Rice has heated up more than the pool of late. The glamorous Australian is all set to dominate the Water Cube this time.

**True Spirit**

AT the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics on August 8, a member of the Chinese team will take an oath on behalf of the 12,000 assembled athletes to abide by the Games' rules "in the true spirit of sportsmanship."  
Sadly, a few competitors have ignored these high principles at past games with win-at-any-cost tactics, outright cheating and drug use.  
"There are a few bad apples who spoil the entire spectacle," says Olympic historian John Lucas. "It is easy to forget that there are far more patriotic and high-minded athletes than there are robber barons and drug cheats."  
Indeed, since the modern games began in 1896, there have been hundreds of outstanding acts of sportsmanship - often unheralded and forgotten - that embody the Olympic ideal. Here are some of the best.

**A Helping Hand**  
**Lucien Duquesne (Amsterdam, 1928)**  
Paavo Nurmi, the legendary Finnish long-distance runner, carried a stopwatch while racing to pace himself. During a qualifying race in the 3000-metre steeplechase, Nurmi fell at a water jump and dropped his watch.  
Lucien Duquesne of France stopped, lifted his rival to his feet and helped him retrieve his watch from the water.  
Rather than forge ahead, Nurmi ran the rest of the race by Duquesne's side and at the finish line offered the Frenchman first place. Duquesne declined.  
**The Good Loser**  
**Ralph Hill (Los Angeles, 1932)**  
In one of the most controversial track events in Olympic history, Ralph Hill of the United States came from last place in the 5000-metre race to

challenge the leader, Lauri Lehtinen of Finland, who held the world record in the event. With 50,000 spectators cheering him on, Hill tried to pass Lehtinen twice, and both times the Finn blocked his path. Lehtinen won the race by centimetres.  
Hill was clearly fouled, but he declined to pursue a formal protest. He said he could not believe Lehtinen would purposely cheat to win.  
"Besides, what's wrong with a silver medal?" he was quoted as saying in the New York Times.  
Word of Hill's gesture spread around the world, and the Swedish newspaper Dagens Nyheter called him "the hero of boys and girls who turn out for track and sports in every school."  
**For the Love of a Horse**  
**Shunzo Kido (Los Angeles, 1932)**  
Shunzo Kido, a member of the Japanese equestrian team, was leading the steeplechase event when he

noticed his horse, Kyu Gun, was fatigued and faltering. Kido dropped out of the race rather than risk injuring the animal.  
Two years later, a California humane society erected a plaque in Riverside, California, to honour the gesture. It reads that Kido, in choosing to save his horse, "heard the low voice of mercy, not the loud acclaim of glory."  
**Shared Glory**  
**Lanny Bassham (Montreal, 1976)**  
In the small-bore rifle three-position shooting event, Bassham and another American, Margaret Murdock, tied for first place. After a painstaking examination of all the targets, the judges decided that Bassham's shooting had been slightly better and awarded him the gold medal.  
Bassham thought the ruling was based on an absurd technicality, and during the medal ceremony he pulled Murdock up to the gold platform and

put his arms around her for the playing of the national anthem. Officially, Murdock won the silver medal and became the first woman to ever receive an Olympic medal for shooting.  
**A Class Act**  
**Anton Jospovic (Los Angeles, 1984)**  
In the light-heavyweight boxing semi-final, American Evander Holyfield knocked out Kevin Barry of New Zealand. Holyfield appeared headed for the gold medal match against Anton Jospovic of Yugoslavia until the referee disqualified him for fouling his opponent. Barry was declared the winner, but under Olympic rules couldn't fight again for at least 28 days after being knocked out. Anton Jospovic of Yugoslavia was awarded the gold medal by default.  
Defying calls by American officials to boycott the medal ceremony, Holyfield showed up to collect his

bronze medal. The pro-Holyfield crowd booed during the Yugoslavian national anthem. But when Jospovic reached down and invited the American to join him at the top of the platform, the spectators gave him a standing ovation.  
Years later Holyfield would say: "I've been involved in boxing ever since I was a kid. What Jospovic did, that was the classiest thing I've ever seen."  
**To the Rescue**  
**Larry Lemieux (Seoul, 1988)**  
During a race in the one-man Finn Class sailing competition, Larry Lemieux of Canada was in second place when he spotted Joseph Chan of Singapore, who was competing in a different race, flailing in turbulent water well away from his capsized boat. Chan had been thrown from his small craft and was in danger of drowning in the rough seas.  
Lemieux veered off course,

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