



A 13-year-old Joseph Schooling (Inset) may have idolised Michael Phelps, but yesterday the now-21-year-old faced off against the American in the 100m butterfly and stunned even himself as he defeated his hero to bring Singapore its first Olympic gold. PHOTOS: REUTERS



Schooling spoils Phelps's party

Bolt hits Rio tracks

ATIQUÉ ANAM from Rio de Janeiro

Nineteen-year-old American swimmer Katie Ledecky turned her last race at the Rio Olympics into a pool party by winning the 800m freestyle in record time and setting a new landmark for women's all-round swimming at the Olympic Aquatics Centre on Friday night. The latest in a line of American phenoms, Ledecky won the race -- her fourth gold medal in five events -- by more than 12 seconds on way to breaking her own world record and setting a new landmark of winning the 200m, 400m and 800m at the same event for the first time since Debbie Meyer in 1968.

The Washington native was so dominant in this long-distance race that she allowed herself time to take off her goggles and cap and watch the rest of the field approach the wall. "I had a lot of fun tonight. I just wanted to push myself and see what I could do," she later said.

On the penultimate night dominated by Americans at the pool, there were quite a few upsets including Katinka Hosszu's defeat to America's Madeline Dirado in the 200m backstroke. Trailing for the better part of the race, Dirado accelerated at the final turn and took the gold by 0.06 seconds to deny Hungary's Iron Lady a fourth gold in four events.

However, the biggest shock of the night was reserved for the men's 100m butterfly where Michael Phelps was beaten to gold by Singapore's Joseph Schooling. The 21-year-old Singaporean, who once took an autograph of the Baltimore Bullet during the 2008 Beijing Games, beat his idol by 0.75 seconds for an Olympic record. It brought back memories of 2012 where Phelps was outdone by a young Chad le Clos in the 200m butterfly. Interestingly, Chad, Michael and their long-term rival Laszlo Cseh finished second in a three-

way dead-heat behind Schooling on Saturday night.

Phelps later reiterated his stance of quitting the sport after Saturday's 4X100m medley relay.

"No. I am not going four more years. And I'm standing by that," Phelps said. "I've been able to do everything I've ever put my mind to in this sport. And 24 years in the sport. I'm happy with how things finished."

While the greatest Olympian of all time was preparing for a final flourish, another modern day great, Usain Bolt, was hitting his strides at the Olympic Stadium tracks on Saturday morning, with his pace as well as showmanship.

Taking part in the 100m heats, the Jamaican great ambled his way to qualification, clocking a languid 10.07 seconds while teasing his closest competitor Andrew Fisher of Bahrain.



The 29-year-old Jamaican, who is gunning for an unprecedented triple triple with a 100m, 200m and 400m haul at these games, like always, stepped up a gear after a slow start and soon surged past the rest of the field, with Fisher turning on his afterburners to catch the Jamaican.

Bolt looked over his shoulder, and sensing Fisher was still behind, took his foot off the gas a bit yet ambled to a comfortable first-place finish. The best time of these heats was clocked by America's Justin Gatlin, the man who is expected to mount the main challenge to Bolt's search for a third consecutive gold medal at this event, at 10.01 seconds. Bolt's compatriot and London 2012 Silver medallist Yohan Blake clocked 10.11 seconds.

Singapore erupts with joy

AFP, Singapore

Singapore exploded in celebration Saturday after hometown swimming hero Joseph Schooling beat US legend Michael Phelps in the 100m butterfly in Rio to win the tiny republic's first ever Olympic gold.

The 21-year-old Asian champion set a new Olympic record of 50.39sec as he edged out his American idol Phelps, who ended in a sensational dead heat for silver alongside South Africa's Chad le Clos and Laszlo Cseh of Hungary.

In Singapore cheers broke out across housing estates and social media erupted in celebration as Schooling won in Brazil.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong and President Tony Tan, who was in Rio to cheer Team Singapore, led an outpouring of congratulations for Schooling, whose mixed European and Asian heritage has resonated in the immigrant society of 5.5

million people.

"It is an incredible feat, to compete among the world's best, stay focused, and emerge victorious," Lee said in a Facebook post.

Schooling will receive US 743,000 dollars for his gold medal as part of a programme aimed at encouraging studious Singaporeans to excel in sport.

"It's amazing that Singapore finally has a gold medal at the Olympics, I don't think anyone thought this was possible," Madeleine Lim, 62, told AFP.

"Schooling winning shows that even hometown athletes can win an Olympic medal and I think it's a good example for our youth that sporting greatness is possible," said real estate agent Michael Tan, 35.

In a country where people are obsessed with the lottery, tickets for Schooling's winning time "5039" sold out by late morning while others called for a public holiday to celebrate the win.

On the internet Pokemon-themed memes celebrated Schooling's evolution from fanboy to champion, while schooling puns abounded.

Schooling met Phelps when the US Olympic swim team visited Singapore in 2008, and the American helped inspire the young Singaporean to move to the United States for extensive training at 14. Schooling is now based at the University of Texas.

He pulled off one of the biggest upsets in Rio, interrupting the 31-year-old Phelps' quest for what would have been his fifth gold in Brazil and 23rd Olympic gold of his career.

Schooling's father Colin, who hosted a viewing party at his home in Singapore, wept when his son won.

"If I cry in front of all of you all, it's because I have nothing to be ashamed of," he told reporters.

"My love for my son is nothing I can describe to you all."

QUOTES OF THE DAY

"Doping is my training, my doping is Jesus -- otherwise I'm crystal clear."
- Ethiopia's Almaz Ayana shrugs off speculation after her 10,000m world record

"Most of the time I listen to music related to our leaders"
- North Korea's Rim Jong-Sim reveals her choice of music

"We learned that chemistry is not an exact science"
- Games spokesman Mario Andras as organisers struggle to turn the green diving pool back to blue

Ash targets BCL

SPORTS REPORTER

Mohammad Ashraful hopes to return to competitive cricket through the Bangladesh Cricket League, the country's premier four-day cricket competition, which is scheduled to begin next month.

Ashraful, whose suspension ended yesterday, awaits a certificate of good conduct from the ICC. Once the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) receives that certificate, he will be able to take part in tournaments organised within the jurisdiction of the BCB except for the Bangladesh Premier League, the board's CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury informed reporters yesterday.

The 32-year-old former national cricketer who returned home from America yesterday afternoon said that he had been "waiting for this day" for a long time.

"I really want to play in the BCL. If a team decides to pick me, then good, or else I will have to keep waiting. My fitness is not a concern. For the last three years, I have done everything that a cricketer needs to do in order to be fit. I have waited for this day for three years and at the back of my mind I always told myself that I wouldn't let my return get further delayed due to fitness issues," Ashraful told The Daily Star yesterday.

"Recently in America, I ran for 14 kilometers and I didn't have any problem. So playing longer version cricket will not be an issue for me. I am 32 right now, but my age won't be a barrier for my return. There are players like Misbah who are excelling even now. It's not the same in Bangladesh, but I am ready to take up this challenge," he added.

Ashraful will not be eligible for international selection until 2018 but he does not seem to be worried currently about that aspect.

"At this point of time my dream is to prove myself in domestic cricket. I definitely want to play for Bangladesh, but that's not what I am thinking about at the moment," he said.

He was also aware of the stern criticism his possible return could face.

"It's very natural that my return won't be accepted by many. I made a mistake and I admitted that and I have also received my punishment. I hope that I can be forgiven."

"I am in touch with Mashrafe [Bin Mortaza] and some of the other national players. If the senior players can accept my return, then I think that will be a boost for me. People outside cricket may also not accept my return, but I have to ensure that I stay focused," he said.

BCB chief selector Minhajul Abedin, who will be entrusted with the task of selecting the players for the upcoming Bangladesh Cricket League has said that the committee will not think about considering Ashraful as long as they don't receive a directive from the BCB.

"The board hasn't given us any directions, which suggests that Ashraful is available for selection. Once the board tells us that he is available, we may start thinking about his chances," Minhajul told The Daily Star yesterday.

Younis puts Pak in command

AFP, London

Younis Khan's superb double century and three wickets from Yasir Shah left Pakistan eyeing a series-levelling win after they dominated the third day of the fourth Test against England at The Oval on Saturday.

Younis's 218 was the centrepiece of Pakistan's first-innings 542 all out.

His sixth innings of 200 or more in Test cricket was a dramatic way for the 38-year-old to end a run of low scores.

Younis had managed just 122 runs in six previous innings this series, with a best of 33 in Pakistan's first Test win at Lord's.

Leg-spinner Shah then took three wickets for four runs in 22 balls as England, in their second innings, slumped to 88 for four at the close -- still runs 126 behind.

Gary Ballance was four not out and Jonny Bairstow 14 not out.

England now needed something remarkable if they were to deny Pakistan victory with two days left in the game.

If the four-match series ends 2-2,

Pakistan could go top of the world Test rankings but England must avoid defeat at The Oval to keep their hopes of replacing Australia at the summit alive.

England, 214 runs adrift on first innings, suffered a setback early in their second knock when captain Alastair Cook (seven) was squared up by a lifting Wahab Riaz delivery and debutant Iftikhar Ahmed, going to his right, held a good catch at first slip.

Alex Hales had been fined for showing dissent towards the third umpire after being caught by Shah in the first innings.

Saturday saw him fall lbw for 12 to Shah's sixth ball of the day, with England wasting a review in the process.

His exit left Nottinghamshire opener Hales with a series tally of just 145 runs at an average of 18.12.

SCORES IN BRIEF

ENGLAND: First innings 328 all out

PAKISTAN: First innings 542 all out (Shafiq 109, Younis 218, Azhar 49; Finn 3-110, Woakes 3-82)

ENGLAND: Second innings 88 for 4 (Root 39; Shah 3-15)



Pakistan batsman Younis Khan added yet another feather to his illustrious cap with a fine 218 against England during the third day of the fourth Test at the Oval yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

RIO SNIPPETS

ATIQUÉ ANAM from Rio de Janeiro

BRING BACK THE PENNY

Canadian swimmer Penny Oleksiak is having a ball at the Rio Aquatic Centre. The 16-year-old has already won four medals, almost half of the total medals won by Canada at the Rio Olympic Games so far, with a gold, a silver and two bronze medals and has become a national icon in her country.

Her popularity has soared to such a level that one particular fan has urged the government to re-issue the Penny, the one-cent coin which the Canadian government has stopped minted since 2013.

BRAZIL'S SILVA-LINING

Brazil have so far won four medals from the Rio Olympic Games and three of those have come from judo.

Interestingly two of those medals have come through judokas named Silva.

Rafaela Silva, the lady from the favela had won the country's first gold medal last week and has since become an international star. Now another Silva, one with Rafael as a given name instead of Rafaela, has won a bronze medal from the same discipline. It seems like Silvas bring a good omen for Brazil or at least for the Brazil judo team.

THAT'S FOR YOU BRO

Michael Phelps does know how to enchant people. He does it in the pool, with almost superhuman skills, and then he does it at press conferences with his deadpan humour.

The most decorated Olympian had just been beaten to the 100m butterfly gold by young Singaporean Joseph Schooling, and would expect that Joseph should get his fare share of the lime-light. But Phelps being such a magnet, most of the questions were directed at him as Schooling sat listening like a mere spectator.

The American tried to divert some of the spotlight to the Young Singaporean: "Joe should be getting most of the questions," he told reporters. "This kid just won a gold medal, guys. Let's ask him some more questions."

When a journalist obliged by asking Schooling how it felt to become "the go-to butterfly in the world right now", the 21-year-old hesitated and glanced to his left at Phelps. "That's for you bro, don't look at me," Phelps told him.



MEDALS TALLY

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze
United States	21	14	17
China	13	10	16
Great Britain	8	10	6
Germany	8	4	3
Japan	7	3	14
Australia	6	6	7
Republic of Korea	6	3	4
Russian Federation	5	9	8
France	5	8	5
Hungary	5	3	3
Italy	4	7	4
Spain	3	0	2
New Zealand	2	6	0
Canada	2	2	6
Kazakhstan	2	2	3
Netherlands	2	2	3
Thailand	2	1	1
Croatia	2	1	0
Switzerland	2	0	1
DPR Korea	1	2	2
Sweden	1	2	1
Brazil	1	1	2
Poland	1	1	2
Romania	1	1	2
Belgium	1	1	1
Slovenia	1	1	1
Colombia	1	1	0
Slovakia	1	1	0
Vietnam	1	1	0
Czech Republic	1	0	2
Chinese Taipei	1	0	2
Ethiopia	1	0	1
Greece	1	0	1
Argentina	1	0	0
Fiji	1	0	0
loa	1	0	0

(The medals tally was updated at 10:00pm Bangladesh time)