

SUMMER OLYMPICS PREVIEW

The Salt Lake Tribune

Utah to Rio

Meet athletes with ties to the Beehive State competing in Brazil

Is Rio Ready?

Brazil welcomes the world under a barrage of criticism and variety of troubles

How winning a medal would make
Jazz guard Raul Neto a legend in Brazil

Plus breakdowns for basketball, swimming, gymnastics and track



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ABOVE: LEAH HOGSTEN | The Salt Lake Tribune

REST OF PAGE AND COVER | File photos, The Associated Press and the Tribune

OUR TEAM IN BRAZIL

The Salt Lake Tribune will have you covered in Rio de Janeiro. The Tribune is sending three veteran journalists to cover the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, led by columnist Kurt Kragthorpe, center, an Olympics veteran who has covered six Summer and Winter Games dating to Nagano in 1998. Kragthorpe will be joined by Olympics and winter sports beat writer Christopher Kamrani, left, who is covering his first Games, and longtime Tribune photographer Rick Egan, who is also covering his third Olympics. The Trib trio will focus their coverage on the 22 athletes with Utah ties who will be competing in Rio, but will also stay on top of the big stories and give readers a regular taste of the sights and sounds of perhaps the most exotic locale ever chosen to host an Olympics. You can find their coverage across all of The Tribune's publishing platforms, including the print edition and www.sltrib.com. That's where you'll also find the Trib's Olympics blog, which will be up and running on Friday.

LEGENDARY UTAH OLYMPIANS

When dreams come true

It remains, in nearly every person's mind, the greatest single collection of talent on one basketball team. The original 'Dream Team' in 1992 captivated the world in Barcelona, Spain, routing opponents with a style and personality that remains vivid in the minds who watched. The Utah Jazz were one of two NBA teams to have two players on the Dream Team as John Stockton, left, and Karl Malone both won gold medals — then added gold medals in 1996 in the Centennial Games in Atlanta.

Associated Press file photos



LEGENDARY UTAH OLYMPIANS



Golden memories

Representing the United States in basketball has proven to be a winning endeavor for many Utahns. Legendary girls prep star Natalie Williams, center, who went on to fame in the WNBA, helped lead the U.S. women's team to a gold medal in 2000. While Stockton and Malone were the original Jazzmen playing for the U.S. in the Olympics, Deron Williams, left, and Carlos Boozer continued the tradition. Boozer played on the 2004 team that settled for bronze, but he and Williams won gold in 2008 in Beijing.

(MEN'S BASKETBALL) CHRIS DETRICK | *The Salt Lake Tribune*
 (WOMEN'S BASKETBALL) FILE PHOTO | *The Associated Press*

LEGENDARY UTAH OLYMPIANS



Mission accomplished

Cael Sanderson left college with four NCAA titles, an unbeaten record and the unofficial title of the greatest wrestler in college history. But he didn't stop there, continuing on the world stage until earning gold in 2004 in Athens.

Associated Press file photos



LEGENDARY UTAH OLYMPIANS

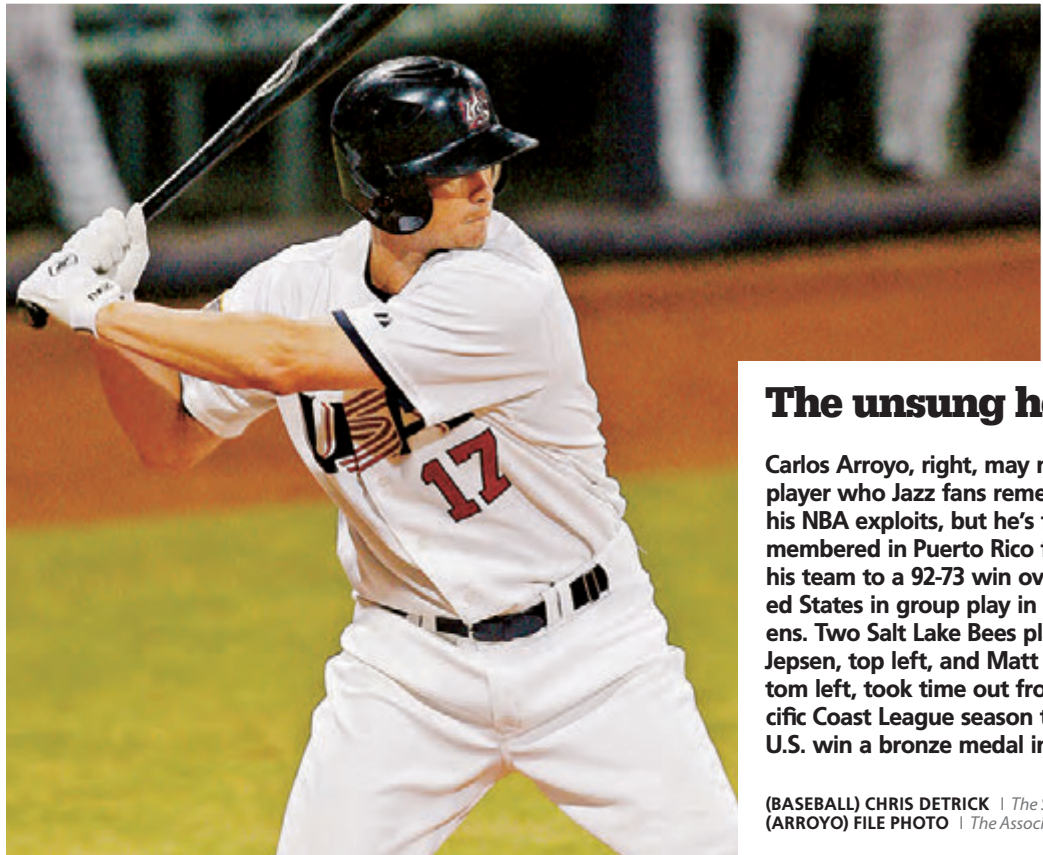
**You can't fake the emotion**

Hugh McCutcheon is one of the most recognizable names in BYU volleyball, as a player in the early 1990s then as an assistant at the start of his coaching career after graduating. McCutcheon led the U.S. men's team to the gold medal in 2008, its first in 20 years, to cap an emotional event in which McCutcheon missed three matches to be with his family after his father-in-law was killed in Beijing and his mother-in-law was seriously injured. One of McCutcheon's top players in 2008 was Ryan Miller, bottom right, another former Cougar. Women's volleyball star Logan Tom, a Highland graduate, was the anchor of a United States team that enjoyed success of its own, winning silver medals in 2008 and 2012 and playing in four Games overall.

CHRIS DETRICK | *The Salt Lake Tribune*



LEGENDARY UTAH OLYMPIANS



The unsung heroes

Carlos Arroyo, right, may not be a player who Jazz fans remember for his NBA exploits, but he's forever remembered in Puerto Rico for leading his team to a 92-73 win over the United States in group play in 2004 in Athens. Two Salt Lake Bees players, Kevin Jepsen, top left, and Matt Brown, bottom left, took time out from the Pacific Coast League season to help the U.S. win a bronze medal in 2008.

(BASEBALL) CHRIS DETRICK | *The Salt Lake Tribune*
(ARROYO) FILE PHOTO | *The Associated Press*

LEGENDARY UTAH OLYMPIANS**A moment caught in time**

Blaine Lindgren of Salt Lake City, top, clears the last hurdle in the 110-meter hurdle race in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. Lindgren crossed the line believing he had won, but because he did not break the tape, Hayes Jones of Detroit, left, was awarded the gold and Lindgren was given silver.

Associated Press file photo

SPOTLIGHT • HOW TO WATCH THE GAMES

Little will escape NBC's eyes in Rio



**SCOTT
D. PIERCE**

On Television

If you could record and watch every bit of NBC's coverage of the Rio Olympics on all of its platforms — broadcast TV, cable TV and online — it would take almost 281½ days.

And that's watching the 6,755 hours with no time for sleeping, bathroom breaks or getting something to eat.

And yet, there will be those who complain about what NBC does. I can almost hear them whining already, because we've heard it before:

» There's too much focus on Americans.

Well, duh. NBC is airing the Games in the United States. And Americans are, overall, more interested in Americans.

» There are too many warm-and-fuzzy features about the athletes.

I could live with fewer of those myself. NBC's theory is that they have to make viewers care about the athletes to engage their interest ... and it seems to work.

» Tape-delaying some events is not just annoying, it's downright un-American!

Actually, it's quintessentially American. NBC paid \$1.23 billion for the rights to the Rio Olympics and will spend hundreds of millions more in production costs, and it has every right to air what it wants when it wants. Holding some events for prime-time maximizes ratings and advertising dollars.

It comes as a shock to some, but there is no constitutional right to watch the Olympics live. Although with just



The Barra da Tijuca beach is seen in Rio de Janeiro. The city has been overshadowed by security threats, violence, the Zika virus and a political scandal ahead of the Olympic Games, an event which will be covered thoroughly by the NBC family of networks.

FELIPE DANA | The Associated Press

a one-hour time difference between Rio and New York, NBC promises these will be the "most live Olympics ever."

The sheer volume of what NBC plans is astounding. NBC telecast 15 hours from the 1964 Winter Games and 37 hours from the 1972 Winter Games, and the network's first effort of the modern TV era — the 1988 Summer Games — totaled 179½ hours.

When NBC was here in Utah for the 2002 Winter Games, it amped things up considerably — to a now-paltry seeming 375½ hours (on NBC, CNBC and MSNBC).

Any way you look at it, the

Rio numbers are simply staggering. Including:

» The NBC broadcast network (including Utah affiliate KSL-Ch. 5) will air 260½ hours of the Games — from the Opening Ceremonies to the Closing Ceremonies and all manner of high-profile events in between.

» Cable channels Bravo (94½ hours), CNBC (42 hours), the Golf Channel (115 hours), MSNBC (78½ hours), NBC Sports Network (330 hours) and the USA Network (110½ hours) will all air Olympics coverage — as will two "special channels provided to distribution partners,"

one devoted to basketball and the other to soccer.

We don't have a list of which providers will carry the basketball and soccer channels, but you've got to figure that Comcast — which owns NBC — will be on board with the 779 hours of coverage planned for the two channels.

» NBC's Spanish-language channels — broadcast network Telemundo and cable's NBC Universo — will carry 273½ hours of Olympics coverage.

That will be a different version of what's airing in English, so you could deduct nearly 11½ days from the

281½-day viewing total.

» And online, NBCOlympics.com and the NBC Sports app will live stream 4,500 total hours. That includes all Olympic competition, including what we'll see on TV.

So, OK, if you want to see all the events it will only take you 187½ days.

Which is still pretty amazing.

Just think of how much that will give viewers to complain about.

Scott D. Pierce covers TV for *The Tribune*. Email him at spierce@sltrib.com; follow him on Twitter @**ScottDPierce**.

SPOTLIGHT • ZIKA VIRUS

U of U doctor spearheading study

Byington part of group studying the disease's effects.

By CHRISTOPHER KAMRANI

The Salt Lake Tribune

The reports from Brazil started flashing on Dr. Carrie Byington's computer screen last summer.

Physicians in the country that will be hosting the 2016 Summer Olympics filed reports for health care professionals around the globe to read and digest. A specialist in general pediatrics and pediatric infectious disease at the University of Utah, Byington started seeing stories from Brazil of a mysterious disease that physicians feared had a direct correlation to a growing number of newborns entering the world with microcephaly — a condition in which a baby's head is significantly smaller than normal, more often due to abnormal brain development.

A few months later, Byington addressed medical students and full-time physicians at University Hospital. She asked the audience how many in attendance had ever heard of Zika.

"No hands went up," Byington said in a recent interview.

Zika, she explained, was about to become a new infectious disease with which every doctor, nurse and medical student in the world would need to become "very familiar." In that meeting, she told attendees that the virus was emerging as a new congenital syndrome out of Brazil. Around the same time, information from research on the disease confirmed the scariest medical suspicions: Zika had potentially devastating effects on pregnant women and their children.

Soon, Byington became the

face of domestic Zika research. It started with a phone call.

The U.S. Olympic Committee's chief medical officer phoned the Utah doctor and the pair ended up having a two-hour conversation. On March 4, it was announced that Byington was going to serve as the chairwoman of a USOC panel formed to advise, follow and study the Zika virus before and after the Games.

PART OF THE PROCESSING CENTER » Last Sunday, Byington began posting updates on her Twitter account from Houston. The updates continued through the week. Athletes and coaches associated with U.S. archery, rowing, cycling and shot put all voiced their support — and agreed to serve as study subjects — in the research led by Byington.

Her team aims to enroll 1,000 U.S. athletes, coaches and staffers before the Rio Games kick off. Before reaching the athlete-processing center in Houston, the group already had enrolled about 200. Byington said the team was going to see upward of 600 athletes, coaches, health care professionals and executives associated with the USOC before Friday's Opening Ceremony. The hope is to keep the remaining 200 slots open for Paralympians scheduled to travel to Brazil weeks after the Aug. 21 Closing Ceremony.

In the same arena where Olympic superstars and medal hopefuls pick up their athlete identification and Opening Ceremony uniforms, they'll also be whisked by Byington's Utah-based team to hear the pitch. "We're one more piece of the processing," Byington said. Athletes will be asked if their blood can be drawn before traveling to Brazil and after their return stateside.

The purpose of the study is to be able to give athletes, coaches and others associated



CHRIS DETRICK | The Salt Lake Tribune

Dr. Carrie Byington is chairwoman of a USOC panel studying the Zika virus.

with the USOC a definitive yes or no on Zika. The study will feature antibody tests, in which the team will look into the RNA (ribonucleic acids), which can carry the genetic information of the virus.

Much of the study is also based on self-collection. There will be a finger poke in the kit to test blood, a saliva swab and a receptacle for a urine sample supplied to those who agree to participate.

Research has shown that four out of five people who are infected with the virus don't show symptoms. But regardless of whether someone shows symptoms in Rio, the tests Byington's team will conduct would still define whether Zika was in someone's system. The study was recently funded by the National Institutes of Health, specifically to be conducted for USOC members. Byington said the plan is to share real-time information with physicians across the globe once data collection begins.

"There's a lot of men and women going [to Rio], and they want to know," Byington said.

The Utah doctor says the study will include as many women as possible. A key to understanding the virus, however, requires equal numbers of men and women because it affects the reproductive

health of both sexes. Right now, studies have shown that Zika can remain active in men's sperm for as long as six months if a person showed symptoms of the virus. The goal of the study is help ensure that those going to Rio can safely plan time to conceive.

U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said in a conference call last week that the world is learning about the real-time evolution of the Zika virus, which first emerged in the 1940s in Africa and parts of Southeast Asia.

"Despite the fact that it's been around, only in the last year that we discovered that this a virus that can be transmitted through sex," Murthy said. "There's more and more that's being understood each day."

The study of athletes will not be particular to any sport or venue, Byington said. The same amount of track and field athletes will be sought as swimming or basketball. It's equally likely that every athlete is going to have exposure to mosquitoes.

'A PRETTY UNIQUE SITUATION' » Zika symptoms are akin to getting the flu. They typically last five to seven days and include fever, joint pain, rashes, eye pain and red eyes. There is no specific drug to treat Zika, so if athletes become sick, treatment will be based on symptoms.

However, the anxiety about Zika has begun to subside in recent weeks. The Olympics will take place during Brazil's winter season, when mosquito activity is at a minimum. Marty Cetron, director of the Division of Global Migration and Quarantine for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), said this past week that reported Zika infections in Brazil have declined dramatically since the epidemic peaked in March.

Still, with about 350,000 to

500,000 athletes, media and spectators about to converge on Rio, Byington said people should not let their guard down.

"The mosquito populations decline in winter, but you have to remember where Rio is: It's a tropical country ... they don't disappear," Byington said. "You're never going to get a mosquito bite in the winter here. That is not going to be true in Rio."

Preventing contact with mosquitoes is the first and the most ideal line of defense. While the disease can be transmitted sexually, the mosquito remains public enemy No. 1. Byington said being housed in areas with glass or screens is a priority to avoid exposure to the insect. And because mosquitoes can thrive inside in tropical climates, it's critical guests leave their windows and doors shut at all times. The USOC is also recommending U.S. athletes travel to Brazil with DEET-containing mosquito repellent.

"All the things that we can do to try to limit their mosquito exposure, we've talked about," Byington said. "But it's a world out there, and if they're going to be interacting in the environment, there's no way to prevent 100 percent from mosquito exposure. Just trying to have them prepared as possible."

These Olympics could be remembered for the multitude of challenges facing the host city, and Zika is big part of that equation.

Hosting an Olympiad in the midst of an epidemic?

"I feel like it's a pretty unique situation," Byington said. "I think a majority of athletes, they've worked so hard to get to this point and there's very little that's going to stand in their way."

Tribune reporter Alex Stuckey contributed to this story.
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SPOTLIGHT • THE PROBLEMS IN RIO

There's trouble in paradise



**KURT
KRAGTHORPE**

Seeking some assurance about the Olympic experience awaiting me in Rio de Janeiro, I arranged to meet my all-time favorite Brazilian, Jonathan Tavernari.

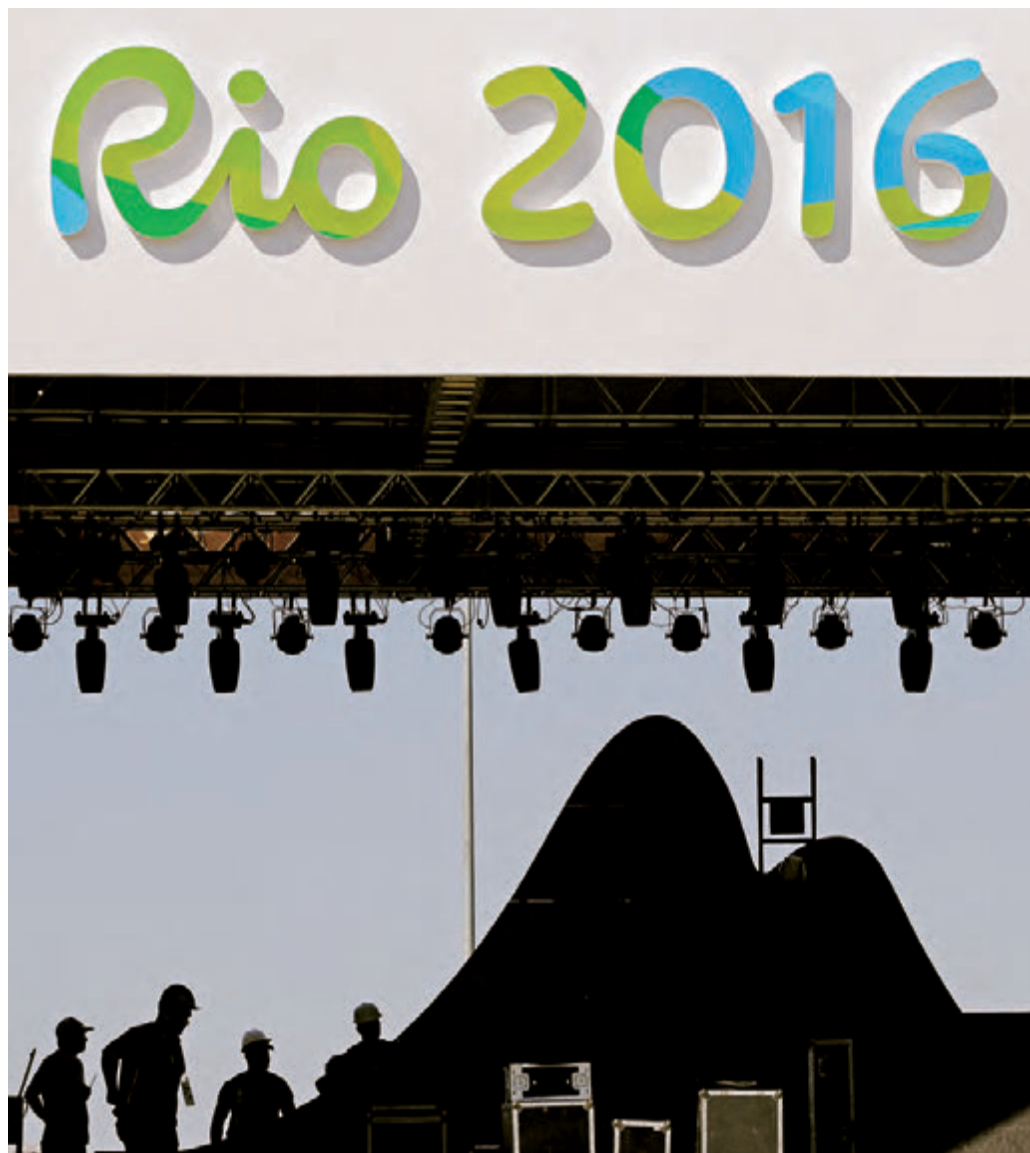
This breakfast conversation would follow the tradition of asking for insight from natives of Olympic host countries, including my Chinese next-door neighbors, Canadian golfer Mike Weir and Russian basketball player Andrei Kirilenko, who promised me, "You'll love it."

To my surprise, after all of the concerns about security and other issues, I did love Sochi. So in my chat with Tavernari, a former BYU basketball star, amid reports of the troubles Rio is having in preparing for the Games, this became the critical question: "How can you assure me that it will all be ready?"

The problem? Tavernari rhetorically was posing that question, rather than me asking him. If A.K. was relentlessly encouraging about Sochi, J.T. was doggedly realistic about Rio.

As he described himself in comparison to his friend, Jazz guard Raul Neto, having played with him in Brazil's national team program, "I'm outspoken. He's completely the opposite of me."

Understand, Tavernari is a very friendly, engaging person, and he offered suggestions about my safety and satisfaction of covering the Games. He's hoping his



CHARLIE REIDEL | The Associated Press

Workers prepare a stage at Olympic Park as they make preparations for the upcoming Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Preparations have been plagued by issues surrounding housing, water quality, politics, crime and terror concerns.

hometown successfully stages the Olympics and makes a good impression, gloss over all of the problems regarding transportation, housing, pollution in outdoor water venues and crime. I mean, we've all heard about body parts washing up on Copacabana, site of the beach volleyball competition.

Tavernari laughed. "That ain't nothing," he said. "That's daily news."

And welcome to Brazil.

Having grown up in Sao Paulo, Tavernari attributes his excellent English partly to watching "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air," although I wonder if Will Smith character's Philadelphia vernacular truly was a good influence or if he ever used "fiasco" as a verb.



Tavernari » 'I know there's going to be a way they're going to fix this.'

But J.T. sure made it work in this context. "I'm Brazilian," he said. "I know there's going to be a way they're going to fix this."

And then one of us said, "You can't fault me for being worried."

Again, that was J.T., you know, trying to be helpful.

Russian President Vladimir Putin may have authorized doping-related cheating and other violations of the Olympic spirit, but I'm thankful to him for spending that \$50 billion to make the 2014 Games work. That kind of money buys efficient transportation and dependable security, everything I want in an Olympics.

In contrast, Brazil's economy hardly resembles its levels of 2009, when the country was awarded the Olympics. And now, picturing these Games being staged in Chicago instead of Rio is only natural, if counter-productive.

Tavernari remembers being in Provo in '09 when the announcement came of Brazil's landing the Olympics. His first thought had nothing to do with pageantry or patriotism, but was just pragmatic. He wondered what they would do about the favelas, the slums within urban areas. Since then, plenty of other issues have surfaced.

Concerns emerge in the run-up to every Olympics, and then everything seems to turn out well. This might be the one time the problems overwhelm the Games, though. "I pray nothing bad happens," Tavernari said.

He'll watch the Games interestedly with his wife and 3-year-old son in Riverton, while preparing for another basketball season in Italy (he's half-Italian, as he likes to clarify). After breakfast, J.T. assigned me some homework in the interest of understanding the culture. The two "Tropa de Elite" movies would be instructive, he said — "a 100 percent accurate depiction of Rio de Janeiro," showing the interaction of drug lords and corrupt police.

Again, not helping.

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TEAM UTAH • ATHLETES WITH STATE TIES COMPETING IN RIO

Meet your 2016 Utah Summer Olympians

Nearly two dozen athletes will be of interest to Utahns in Rio.

By KURT KRAGTHORPE

The Salt Lake Tribune

The usually accurate Sports Illustrated projections say only one athlete with Utah ties will win a medal in the 2016 Olympics — and she grew up in eastern Washington, played just one season of basketball for the University of Utah and is competing for Australia.

Leilani Mitchell may be Team Utah's only medal favorite in Rio de Janeiro, but she's hardly the only interesting contestant. These 22 athletes (including alternates) who graduated from a Utah high school, attended college in the state or currently play for a Utah professional team will represent nine countries in nine sports.



FILE PHOTO | The Salt Lake Tribune

Andrew Bogut

Australia, men's basketball

Having injured his knee during the NBA Finals while playing for Golden State, Bogut is recovering on a timetable that may make him available for Australia's opening game, Aug. 6 vs. France. The final roster is due the previous day. Bogut played for the Aussies in the 2004 Olympics prior to his sophomore season at Utah and competed again in 2008, but was injured in 2012. Bogut, 31, has been traded to the Dallas Mavericks.



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

Boris Diaw

France, men's basketball

The Utah Jazz acquired Diaw in a trade with San Antonio in early July, while he was helping France qualify for the Olympics. He's the French captain and a national team fixture. Jazz teammate Rudy Gobert may take some of Diaw's playing time after not playing in the qualifying tournament, but the 6-foot-8 Diaw will remain vital to the team as a scorer, rebounder and passer. France will meet the U.S. team Aug. 14, the last day of preliminary play.



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

Kim Gaucher

Canada, women's basketball

The former Kim Smith is the only Ute women's basketball player to have her jersey retired, so her No. 4 hangs alongside Bogut's No. 4 in the Huntsman Center. Gaucher recently spent two seasons on the Utah administrative staff, but since has returned to pro basketball in France. At age 32, she remains one of Canada's top players and is one of three former Utes expected to have big roles for a team that's ranked No. 9 in the world.



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

Jake Gibb

USA, beach volleyball

Gibb reached the quarterfinals in Beijing in 2008 and London in 2012 with former partner Sean Rosenthal, and now the University of Utah alumnus from Bountiful will team with former BYU volleyball player Casey Patterson in Rio. Gibb, 40, is motivated for another Olympics. "If I feel like I have a real chance at medaling at an Olympics, I want to go," he said. "I don't want to sneak in just to be an Olympian."



FILE PHOTO | The Salt Lake Tribune

Rudy Gobert

France, men's basketball

The Jazz encouraged Gobert to target "active rest" and "strength development" during the summer, after he missed about one-fourth of the 2015-16 season with a knee injury. Team officials secretly may have hoped France wouldn't qualify for the Olympics, but they're supporting his participation in Rio. France will rely on him as an inside presence, particularly against USA centers DeMarcus Cousins and DeAndre Jordan.

TEAM UTAH • ATHLETES WITH STATE TIES COMPETING IN RIO



FILE PHOTO | Courtesy University of California-Berkeley

Long Gutierrez

Mexico, men's swimming

Now attending the University of California, Gutierrez graduated from Brighton and holds 50 swimming records in Utah, counting prep, short-course and long-course competition. He qualified for the 100 butterfly in Rio and may draw Michael Phelps in a preliminary race. Gutierrez was born in Mexico City and his family moved to Utah when he was 2. He swam for three of Cal's winning relay teams in the 2016 Pac-12 Championships.



FILE PHOTO | The Salt Lake Tribune

Joe Ingles

Australia, men's basketball

The Jazz's Gordon Hayward cited his expectant wife's late July due date as his reason for turning down a U.S. Olympic invitation, but skipping the Games never was a consideration for Ingles, whose wife, Renae, delivered twins (a boy and girl) July 25. Ingles, who averaged 4.1 points for the Jazz in 2015-16, is an Olympic veteran and a key player for the Boomers. He posted 11 assists in an exhibition win over the Pac-12 All-Stars.



FILE PHOTO | Courtesy USA Rowing

Devery Karz

USA, women's rowing

A graduate of Park City High School, where she competed in cross country and track and field, Karz, right, teamed with Kate Bertko to earn a spot in Rio in the women's lightweight double sculls event. Karz had never tried rowing until she attended Oregon State and she ended up being named the team's Most Valuable Oarswoman in 2011. She's only the second Oregon State rower ever to qualify for the Olympics.



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

Leilani Mitchell

Australia, women's basketball

The 5-foot-5 Mitchell thrived in her only season as a Ute active player, averaging 16.8 points, 7.5 assists and 4.1 rebounds as the Mountain West Player of the Year in 2008. Former Utah coach Elaine Elliott labels Mitchell "the best pure point guard" in her long tenure. The WNBA veteran's mother is Australian, and Mitchell has played her way onto the team at age 31. Sports Illustrated picks the Opals to win a bronze medal in Rio.



FILE PHOTO | The Salt Lake Tribune

Raul Neto

Brazil, men's basketball

With a big gap in age from 33-year-old Marcelo Huertas to the 24-year-old Neto among Brazilian guards, Neto is a major part of the team's future. He appeared in only three of Brazil's six games in London in 2012, but will be in the rotation in Rio, if not the starter. Neto started 53 games for the Jazz last season while Dante Exum was injured, but will face increased competition this year with the team having traded for George Hill.



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

Chirine Njeim

Lebanon, women's marathon

A former Ute skier, Njeim will become the 28th woman to compete in both the Summer and Winter Olympics, historian Bill Mallon told the Chicago Tribune. Njeim, 31, who grew up in Beirut and attended Rowmark Ski Academy in Salt Lake City, skied for Lebanon in three Olympics, most recently in 2010. Now living in Chicago, she took up running and beat the Olympic qualifying standard of 2 hours, 45 minutes in the Houston Marathon in January.

TEAM UTAH • ATHLETES WITH STATE TIES COMPETING IN RIO



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

Thretton Palamo

USA, rugby

The former Ute running back and defensive end did not make the 12-man U.S. roster for the rugby sevens tournament, but is competing for one of three reserve spots that would get him to Rio. Palamo completed his Utah football career in 2013 when he appeared in all 12 games and made 13 tackles. He was encouraged to try football by Utah rugby club coach Blake Burdette, a former Ute tight end.



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

Casey Patterson

USA, men's beach volleyball

The former BYU volleyball player describes himself as "a burst of energy and excitement," teaming with the comparatively subdued Jake Gibb. The team is seeded No. 6 in the Olympics. The 6-foot-6 Patterson, from California, was named the MVP of the Puerto Rican indoor league in 2010 and the AVP Best Offensive Player on the beach in 2013. Gibb has labeled his 2013 choice of Patterson as his teammate "a leap of faith."



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

Michelle Plouffe

Canada, women's basketball

One of Utah's last recruits of the Elaine Elliott era, Plouffe is joined on the Canadian team by her twin sister, Katherine, who played for Marquette. Michelle Plouffe is a 6-foot-3 forward who completed her Ute career in 2014 under former coach Anthony Levretts, having totaled 2,100 points (No. 2 all-time) and a school-record 1,155 rebounds. She plays professionally in Mondeville, France, with Canadian teammate Kim Gaucher, another ex-Ute.



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

Taylor Sander

USA, men's volleyball

Sander starred for the 2013 BYU team that reached the NCAA final match before losing to UC Irvine. In 2014, he was named the AVCA Player of the Year nationally. His brother, Brenden, currently plays for the Cougars. Now playing professionally in Italy, Sander is one of eight first-time Olympians on the U.S. roster. Coming off a disappointing fifth-place finish in 2012, the Americans will open the tournament Aug. 7 vs. Canada.



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

MyKayla Skinner

USA, women's gymnastics

Having deferred her enrollment as a Ute gymnast from 2015 until later this month, Skinner barely missed making the U.S. team. She will travel to Rio as the first alternate, available for the Aug. 7 team qualifying meet if any of the five U.S. gymnasts is unable to compete. Skinner performed wonderfully in the Olympic trials, finishing fourth in the all-around competition, but the team filled its event-oriented needs with other picks.



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

Shona Thorburn

Canada, women's basketball

Thorburn played the same four years at Utah with Canadian teammate Kim Gaucher, helping the Utes reach the NCAA Tournament's Elite Eight in 2006. She broke her leg during the 2015 FIBA Americas Championship in Edmonton, Alberta. Canada won the tournament without her to qualify for the Olympics. Thorburn, 34, averaged 10.5 points and 4.5 assists in 2012 as Canada reached the quarterfinals in London.

TEAM UTAH • ATHLETES WITH STATE TIES COMPETING IN RIO



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

Kim Tillie

France, men's basketball

France could have activated Evan Fournier, but other than bringing in Rudy Gobert, team officials chose to stick with the roster that won a qualifying tournament in Manila. Although he played only scored 3.3 points per game, Tillie started 30 games for the 2008-09 Utah team that shared the Mountain West regular-season championship, won the tournament title and played in the NCAA Tournament. Tillie, 28, plays professionally in Spain.



FILE PHOTO | Courtesy BYU

Tatenda Tumba

Zimbabwe, men's track and field

Tumba, a BYU sprinter, has spent time training with Usain Bolt in Jamaica and may compete against him in a heat of the 200 meters in Rio. Tumba qualified for the 2015 World Championships in Beijing and won the 200 in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation indoor meet this past winter. He ran a personal-best 20.44 in the 200 to qualify for the Olympics, but barely missed the standard for the 100.



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

Elder Torres

Honduras, men's soccer

The Real Monarchs midfielder played for Honduras' U-23 national team in pre-Olympics exhibitions and was named to the roster July 21. He has posted one goal and two assists for the Monarchs, affiliated with Real Salt Lake. He was loaned to the Monarchs by CD Social Vida of his native Honduras. His team will open play Aug. 4 (the day before the Opening Ceremonies) vs. Algeria in the primary soccer host, the Olympic Stadium.



FILE PHOTO | The Associated Press

Maka Unufe

USA, men's rugby

Unufe was academically eligible to play football only as a senior at Provo High School, making a big impact for the Bulldogs as a receiver and Tribune All-State defender in 2009. He was publicized as committed to Utah, but never graduated from high school. He found a niche in rugby, initially with the Utah Warriors, and then with the national team. Having watched him overcome trials, his mother, Leslie, said, "I look forward to seeing what's next."



FILE PHOTO | The Salt Lake Tribune

Jared Ward

USA, men's marathon

Ward's race is not until Aug. 21, the final day of the Games. The graduate of Davis High School and BYU qualified for the U.S. team by finishing third in the Olympic trials in Los Angeles, ahead of Judge Memorial alumnus Luke Puskedra. Ward is a BYU adjunct statistics professor whose masters thesis was based on pacing strategy in a marathon. He has trained in Park City and other high-altitude Utah areas.



FILE PHOTO | Courtesy Penn State

Cody Sanderson

USA, men's wrestling coach

Sanderson is the associate head coach at Penn State, working for his brother Cael, a 2004 Olympic champion. Cody Sanderson will coach Frank Molinaro in Rio, where the former Penn State wrestler will try to cap his unlikely rise to the Games with a strong performance. He is a Nittany Lions assistant coach who qualified for the Olympics in the 65kg/143-pound freestyle division, and was seeded No. 9 going into the Olympic trials.

Running the numbers

BYU adjunct statistics professor Jared Ward's analytical approach prepares him for the Rio marathon.

By **CHRISTOPHER KAMRANI**
Photos by **RICK EGAN**



In one of the world's distinguished Olympic towns, the soon-to-be Olympian wears a thick mustache, backward visor and blinding electric-green top as he swings his son by his ankles.

It's a warm, windy June day at City Park in Park City, and Jared Ward just finished off a 30-minute run. He swings 4-year-old Paul, while wife, Erica, does the same with their 2-year-old daughter, Ellie. On a paved trail a dozen or so yards away from the patch of grass, runners and cyclists zip by, glancing at the young family. Paul challenges his dad to a race on the trail. Ellie follows her big brother, and as always, Jared obliges.

Ward, 27, has gone from Davis High standout to BYU star to qualifier for the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Suddenly, he's in demand all the time. He's asked to speak to young, enterprising runners. He has an engagement at the Salt Lake City Running Company in about an hour, so after Paul and Ellie beat him in their latest race, he places his son on his shoulders, his daughter in his arms and walks briskly to their car.

Erica, who is pregnant, is not far behind. They're high school sweethearts, and she recalls watching her future husband run, asking herself how that thin, lanky kid grew faster as races went on. She realized in high school that Ward could potentially someday become an Olympian.

"If that's something he chose to do," she said, "he could do it."

PROFESSOR WARD » When Erica Ward calls her husband "a numbers guy," she means it. If he's not keeping an internal clock motoring on in his brain or calculating times and mileage and speed, he's teaching advanced statistics as an adjunct professor at his alma mater.

Ward's mind has worked to his advantage during his meteoric rise in marathon running. It's all up there. If there are numbers that need crunching, or probability percentages hammered out, Ward's usually on it. Two-time Olympic runner and BYU track & field coach Ed

Eyestone said the calculations Ward can do help his pacing and round out his skill set.

"Everything just all combines to make him a pretty special athlete in regards to understanding the big picture, understanding what it takes, and coupling his talent and his hard work and his perseverance and his passion with the knowledge [from] his statistical background helps him have an even fuller understanding," said Eyestone, who still serves as Ward's coach.

His master's thesis was based on pacing strategy in a marathon. Seriously.

A ROAD FILLED WITH CROSSING SHEEP » This stay in Park City isn't the first. The Wards spent some time there before the U.S. Olympic Team Trial in Los Angeles. Athletes — especially distance runners — welcome the altitude training, and in Park City, Ward's running as much as 120 miles a week over 7,000 feet.

But his path to Rio also took them in search of alternative training areas. While teaching a semester at BYU, they stayed near Strawberry Reservoir in Wasatch County. Then there were the weekends where they moved to Lyman, a suburb — if you can call it that — of Loa in Wayne County. It's about a 30-minute drive to Capitol Reef National Park. The elevation there is higher than that of Park City. There were days when Erica would drive to and from the rental house where stops were required due to the flocks of sheep that took their sweet time crossing the road.

Ward's first marathon came in October 2013, in Chicago. Eyestone suggested it as Ward waited through his four-year battle with the NCAA over eligibility. His appeal to have his fourth year of eligibility was reinstated by a subcommittee after the NCAA previously ruled Ward's participation in a recreational "fun run" gave him a "competitive advantage." He was given the green light a month after his first marathon.

Prepping for Chicago wasn't that much of a change. To a guy who was running 90 or 95 miles a week, what's another 20 or 25? The workouts



Former BYU runner Jared Ward holds his 2-year-old Ellie, as he races his 4-year-old son Paul, on the Rail Trail in Park City.

Meet Jared Ward

Age » 27

Sport » Marathon

Hometown » Kaysville

High school » Davis High School

College » BYU

The professor » Ward is also an adjunct statistics professor at BYU, teaching two advanced courses

Running career » Four-time All-American at BYU (Outdoor 10,000 meters twice, cross-country, 5,000 meters). Chicago Marathon, 2013 (2:16:17), Twin Cities Marathon, 2014 (2:14:00), L.A. Marathon, 2015 (2:12:56), U.S. Olympic Team Trials, 2016 (2:13:00)

Men's marathon in Rio

» Aug. 21, final day of Games

and intervals were tweaked. Ditto for the tempo of his runs.

"Everything became a little bit longer and slower," Ward explained. "Training during that [Chicago] marathon, I fell in love with that distance, fell in love with training for a marathon before ever racing in a marathon. It seemed more natural."

An All-American in the

3,000- and 5,000-meter events at BYU, Ward suffered a stress reaction fracture in his leg his senior year that developed into a fully fractured fibula when he ran at the NCAA regional meet that year. After recovering, Ward consulted Eyestone, Erica and other running peers about the possibility of turning this into a career. He told himself he was cut out for distance running.

"I don't think I had anything further than a dream of making the Olympic team," he said.

That suddenly became a realistic goal on a hot day in Southern California.

FORTY SECONDS » Once 2012 Olympic silver medalist Galen Rupp announced his entry into the trial marathon, Eyestone told Ward the three available spots had been cut down to two. Rupp is the premier American distance runner, so Eyestone needed to keep expectations realistic.

That aside, Eyestone said, "A marathon isn't so much about beating all these competitors as much as it's beating the 26.2 miles — if you can control the controllable. You can't control what other people do in their race, but you can control what you do."

Said Ward: "If there were three people who finished faster than me and I put on my best race, then that's OK."

Once Mile 16 rolled around, Ward found himself alone in fourth place when Tyler Pennel, who had pulled away from Ward at Mile 21 at the 2014 Twin Cities Marathon in Duluth, Minn., was making a familiar surge. Rupp and Meb Keflezighi joined Pennel.

Ward did not. He waited, calculating when he would make his own move. Pennel faded around Mile 19. Ward glided right by as the temperatures grew warmer. In third place, Ward didn't relent.

Rupp finished first at 2 hours, 11 minutes and 12 seconds. Keflezighi came in second, over a minute later. Then there was a 40-second break.

At 2 hours, 12 minutes and 50 seconds, Ward picked up speed down the straightaway. Exhausted, a smile crept across his face as he saw the finish line inch closer. Rio became reality at 2 hours and 13 minutes even.

'SKY'S THE LIMIT' » Jared Ward won't lace them up until the last day of the Rio Games on Aug. 21. That same night — if he's feeling up for it — he'll sport his all-white Polo Ralph Lauren ensemble in the Closing Ceremonies. But what about the two-plus weeks leading to that point? Lots of relaxing. Ward said he's planned two or three quality workouts before the marathon.

Eyestone is going, as is Lynn Ward. Erica and the kids won't be there, so Ward will be without his support staff before the biggest race of his young marathon career.

Pacing and speed and planning is what Ward's best at, but there is more to his success. That's Erica and Paul and Ellie. His wife believes that's why he's such a productive distance runner. He stays out of his head.

"Not all his eggs are in the running basket," she said. "Other things can make him happy."

There's always family time, running time and teaching time. When they lived in Provo, Ward would take the kids to the park to play, then meet up with running partners and then tend to office hours.

"Perfect," said Ward.

"People enjoy being around him for that very reason," Eyestone said. "You hang up the phone after talking to him, and you feel like the sky's the limit in terms of what you can do, as well."

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Mr. Cool & Mr. Boom

Utah's Gibb, BYU's Patterson put
aside school rivalries for Rio.

By CHRISTOPHER KAMRANI



THIS PAGE: File photo, The Associated Press
NEXT PAGE: RICK EGAN | The Salt Lake Tribune

“

That was the toughest part. There were a ton of pros and then cons? He's a BYU alum."

JAKE GIBB

A Utah graduate, on teaming with former Cougar star Casey Patterson in beach volleyball.

The flames on the grill did their job, the other adults chatted, while the kids probably rocked cannonballs into the pool, but when Jake Gibb and Casey Patterson finally found time to sit down in the Huntington Beach backyard, the first topic broached that day in 2013 was the 2016 Olympics.

Gibb, a two-time Olympic beach volleyball star from Bountiful, was recently dumped by longtime partner Sean Rosenthal. The pair had finished fifth overall in the previous two Olympics in Beijing in 2008 and again in London in 2012. At the time, they were the No. 1-ranked team in the world. Patterson, once a BYU indoor volleyball player from Southern California, was in the same boat. His former partner Ryan Doherty joined forces with Todd Rogers, leaving Patterson solo.

There they were: a Utah grad (Gibb) and a former Cougar (Patterson) stuck in limbo at a family barbecue in the backyard of close friend Tyler Hildebrand, who would eventually become their coach. Gibb pressed Patterson. Then he told him of his goals, that a medal in Rio de Janeiro was a must.

The boisterous, blond 6-foot-6 man, who earned the nickname "Mr. Boom" from his professional days in Puerto Rico, didn't hesitate.

"I'm on board to do whatever it takes to get to the Olympics," he told Gibb.

Gibb, with the previous two fifth-place finishes still eating away at him, found his guy. He told Patterson that he had unfinished business, and that he was to be the partner to help him get to Rio. Patterson still laughs telling the story.

**Meet Casey Patterson**

Age » 36

Sport » Beach volleyball

Hometown » Van Nuys, Calif.

College » BYU

Residence » Huntington Beach, Calif.

Volleyball career » Former BYU indoor volleyball star was part of the 2004 National Championship squad. Joined forces with Gibb in 2013. The team qualified sixth worldwide for the Rio Games. At 2015 Beach World Championships, the duo finished fifth and was eliminated by Brazil.

"It couldn't have been a cooler barbecue," he said.

Dropped by Rosenthal, Gibb had his pick of anyone. Patterson was one of three finalists. Gibb consulted with close friends in the sport as well as his wife.

It was all on him. He

Meet Jake Gibb

Age » 40

Sport » Beach volleyball

Hometown » Bountiful

High school » Bountiful High School

College » Utah

Residence » Huntington Beach, Calif.

Volleyball career » Two-time Olympian, finishing fifth overall in 2008 Beijing Games and again in 2012 London Games. Started playing volleyball when he was 21. Gibb and Patterson were named USA Volleyball's Beach Team of the Year in 2013 and AVP's 2014 Men's Team of the Year. Won 2015 St. Petersburg Grand Slam with Patterson and was named tournament's MVP.

wasn't pressed by USA Volleyball to lean one way or another. So he chose Patterson, the former Cougar opposite-side hitter.

"That was the toughest part," Gibb jokes. "There were a ton of pros and then cons? He's a BYU alum."

MR. BOOM AND MR. COOL

» Once named the MVP of the Puerto Rican indoor volleyball league, Patterson's habit of screaming "boom!" every time he smacked the ball took off. Fans made T-shirts and started hash-tagging the phrase on social media. When describing himself and his style of play, the former BYU player said he's a mixture of "a burst of energy and excitement."

Gibb? He is, for the most part, the calmer, more focused one. But the duo did its best to adapt to one another's attributes in the sand. And it worked. Patterson's more reined in and Gibb shows a pinch more emotion.

A few months into their tenure together, they won a gold and silver and two Grand Slams on the AVP World Tour. Patterson, predominately a right-sided player in his earlier beach days, seamlessly switched to the left.

From August 2014 to August 2015, the pair won 27 straight AVP matches. At the 2015 FIVB St. Petersburg Grand Slam, they won gold. The transition process was brief. The tandem that had never once played together, not even setting a ball for the other to destroy into the sand, was rolling along. They continued their impressive run into the crunch-time of qualifying, before the reality of Rio became more in focus.

"It's gnarly — that's the only word that comes to mind," Gibb said. "It's high pressure for a year-and-a-half. Everyone wants it and it's kind of this awkward energy when you're competing against the other Americans."

Patterson, whose previous best World Tour finish before joining forces with Gibb was ninth, said once they started off 2013 in the manner that they did, he knew Rio was a possibility. They went from never playing together to being named the 2013 USA Volleyball Beach Team of the Year. They topped some of Brazil's very best that first year, too.

It was foreshadowing the inevitable.

PULLING FOR A PODIUM »

Once they were officially in

points-wise, Gibb and Patterson were at a USA Volleyball team dinner in Russia. Their inclusion wasn't announced as official, but the Americans were going. They were going to get to vie for an Olympic medal on the Copacabana Beach, in the shadow of Sugarloaf Mountain.

When Gibb started talking about what to expect, Patterson's eyes welled up. During the qualification process, they went dark. On social media, they stayed quiet. When the notion of Rio was brought up, they changed the subject. The two looked on as other American teams posted their aspirations of the next Games, flaunting hashtags like "Road-ToRio" whenever possible. But they needed to make it first, before being able to hit send on anything online notifying the world.

"It was finally something we were talking about as a team," Patterson said. "To finally be able to listen, to absorb and be excited about it was an amazing feeling."

On June 12, USA Volleyball announced their names along with three other American pairs. Gibb and Patterson enter Rio sixth in the Olympic rankings. It's all new for Patterson, who says he's still soaking in the actuality of his Olympic inclusion. For Gibb, it's simply another shot.

The two fifth-place finishes serve as a reminder of how close he got, but also how far he and his new partner have to go to one-better those results from Beijing and London. Gibb admits it was hard on his desire for another Olympic Games four years ago.

"It's hard to re-motivate and risk again," he said. "It's hard to put yourself out there again. That was hard, but then what ultimately determines it is, if I feel like I have a real chance at medaling at an Olympics, I want to go. I don't want to sneak in just to be an Olympian. That wasn't interesting to me."

The Ute and Cougar didn't sneak in. They're a known matching commodity.

"Hybrids," Patterson said.

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A full-page photograph of Taylor Sander, a male volleyball player, in a dark blue USA jersey with the number 3. He is in mid-air, performing a spike, with a yellow and blue volleyball above his head. Another player in a similar jersey is visible in the background. The background is a blurred blue wall.

Center of it all

Ex-BYU volleyball star Taylor Sander is looking to make the most of his opportunity with the U.S. team.

By **CHRISTOPHER KAMRANI**

More than a dozen Olympic hopefuls were summoned to a single room three weeks ago in a Rio de Janeiro hotel.

The U.S. men's volleyball team had just been handled by the Brazilian national team 3-1 — its first loss of the 2016 FIVB World League campaign. The Americans were playing nervously, stressed and just a little too tight for head coach John Speraw's liking.

So right there, in the same city the U.S. would return to six weeks later to vie for an Olympic gold medal in Rio, Speraw and the coaching staff told the players that plans to announce the Olympic team sometime in mid-July were now out the window. They were told that in one hour, each player would be informed whether or not he'd have a return ticket to Brazil the first week of August.

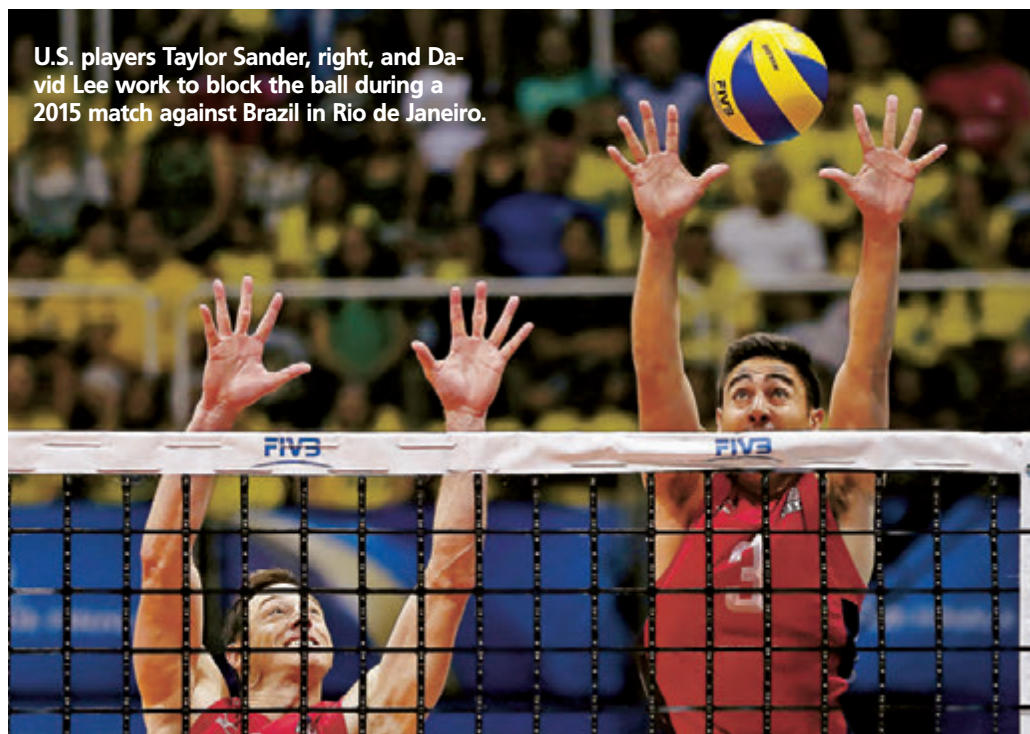
One of the eventual 12 Olympians was Taylor Sander. The four-time former BYU All-American outside-hitter, just like every other one of his teammates, felt the onrush of anxiety. All the soaring leaps off the floor he's known for, all the times his paw slammed a ball down into the corner of a court, all those moments — it all led to this. The Huntington Beach, Calif., native could do nothing but wait and then listen.

There waiting for the 24-year-old was his green light.

"They brought me in and after they told me, it's just a special moment," Sander said. "I still think about it today. It's cool to see all your hard work paying off. It was a shocker. None of us really expected it to be that fast."

Four years earlier, Sander received notice that he was not bound for the Olympic Games in London via email. He was at home in Huntington Beach, a 20-year-old rising college star in Provo. It wasn't unexpected. The coaches told him that of the four outside-hitters, he was on the outside looking in. The previous regime was giving him a shot to prove himself, but it was more a matter of building experience for the next cycle.

U.S. players Taylor Sander, right, and David Lee work to block the ball during a 2015 match against Brazil in Rio de Janeiro.



In March 2013, Speraw, a two-time Olympic assistant, got the head coaching nod. Soon after, he and Sander spoke of what lay ahead.

"He had goals for me," Sander said. "That's when I thought about [Rio]."

'OH MY GOSH' » Shawn Olmstead had seen Sander play. He saw how opponents struggled to contain the 6-foot-4 hitter with a 42-inch vertical. But it wasn't until an alumni game that BYU's future men's volleyball coach saw it unfold up close. Maybe a little too close. A former libero for the Cougars from 2000 to 2004, Olmstead spearheaded an alumni squad that a year prior actually beat the current men's team.

There was excitement to try and repeat. Sander ensured no such thing.

"Just his speed and quickness, none of our guys had really, up to that point, played against guys that quick and that fast," Olmstead said. "It was like, 'Oh my gosh. This kid is going to be really, really special.'"

During his senior year at BYU, Sander was named the 2014 AVCA Player of the Year. The accolades were stacking higher and higher. He's the owner of several BYU records. Later that year, he was named the MVP and Best Spiker of the 2014 FIVB World League

About Taylor Sander

Age » 24

Sport » Men's volleyball
Hometown » Huntington Beach, Calif.

College » BYU

Residence » Huntington Beach, Calif.

College career » Four-time AVCA All-American at BYU, three-time first-team All-American. Named 2014 AVCA Player of the Year. 2013 and 2014 MPSF Player of the Year. 2013 and 2014 MPSF Tournament MVP.

International career » Named 2014 FIVB World League final MVP and Best Spiker, helping U.S. win gold medal. Made his national-team debut at the 2014 World Championship qualifier.

final, pacing the U.S. to a gold medal in his first year with the national team.

"He's the new franchise player," USA middle-blocker and team captain David Lee said in 2014. "He's considered one of the best players in the world first year out. It's phenomenal what he can do."

During his playing days at BYU, Sander admittedly didn't think much about the professional volleyball

scene. It wasn't until he starred with the U.S. junior team — ironically in Brazil — that agents started making inquiries. That's when he got his first taste that, as his volleyball career in Utah County continued to blossom, there was a scene after graduation.

In June 2014, he signed a contract to play in Verona, Italy. The eight-month seasons were taxing. He battled bouts of being homesick. He missed family and friends. The former global studies major was getting an enterprising course in professional life outside of the states. It helped diversify his game, he said. After two seasons in Italy, Sander and his wife will hit another country.

He signed a contract to play in Beijing, China, starting in September, a few weeks after Rio wraps up. The seasons are just five months. Globetrotting professionally and with the national team the last two years, Sander will want a break after Brazil.

SKY-HIGH EXPECTATIONS »

When Sander was 6, he would crash his older sister's volleyball practices in Huntington Beach. Basketball was his first sport of choice, but little brother always looked on during the practice sessions. There were times when an errant hit rolled to him. He'd pick it up, give a good

whack and then keep watching. Eventually, he picked up the sport. In fact, the club director of the same volleyball team suggested he try out.

"I was always able to jump high," Sander said. "That's helped me through the years."

It's an attribute synonymous with the former BYU high-riser. Olmstead was able to watch Team USA compete in Dallas during the FIVB World League final last week. In his conversations with those watching, the jumping ability was approached. As Olmstead tells it, folks he talks to say Sander's always playing "three or four inches" higher off the ground than everyone else.

Will Sander's ability lead to a starting role in Rio? That's up in the air. He's one of the 12 now, and vows to be ready for whatever position is presented to him by the coaching staff.

"I don't even think about that, really," he said. "I think we all have to be ready to play. I think whatever my role is, I'm going to embrace it. That's exactly how everybody on our team is going about it. We all want to play, but again, we want our team to be successful. However that is, that's how we've got to support each other. I think that's how we've been the last four years."

The No. 5-ranked Americans will compete in Olympic Pool A in Rio, which includes No. 4 Italy, No. 10 France, No. 10 Canada and No. 24 Mexico. And, No. 1-ranked Brazil. Their first official Olympic match this summer kicks off Aug. 7, against Canada. Up next is Italy, before the big showdown against the hosts on Aug. 11.

"Every team there is really talented," Sander said. "We're looking forward to playing every single team."

With a fifth-place finish in London still fresh in their minds, the Americans are out to replicate the finish of the previous Olympic Games when they won the gold medal in Beijing in 2008. In Rio, the U.S. may need to call on the former Cougar to launch himself off the floor and deliver those patented swats.

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ROWING SPOTLIGHT • DEVERY KARZ

Sacrifice pays off for Park City grad

Years of dedication is rewarded with a trip to the Games.

By CHRISTOPHER KAMRANI

The Salt Lake Tribune

Another hellacious day of training over, Devery Karz loosened her grip on the oars she'd been grasping and took a moment for herself. It was rush hour in Austin, Texas, and one more session of what the Park City-raised rower called "the crazy barn" had come to a close.

Karz took that moment in the early spring to look at the lush green landscape around the Colorado River, at the still-shining sun, at the turtles swimming nearby in the water. The lasting memories of those days in "the crazy barn" — what she described as a vicious team selection cycle that lasted three months — was watching the cars stacked in lines on the bridge into town.

At this point, Karz ended the brief respite. She picked up her oars for a recovery paddle from another testing day of training to reach shore.

It was those months in Austin that eventually churned out the pair of Karz and Kate Bertko, the latest success in a rowing career for the Utahn who didn't pick up an oar until she went to college at Oregon State University.

'A REALLY FUN FIND' » Oregon State coach Kate Maxim recalls those early-morning training sessions on the Willamette River. One of hundreds of newcomers to the novice team, Karz sat in the stroke seat of the eight-person boat as the raindrops collided with the water.

The month-long tryout for the novice team featured around 200 rowers. By the end of the year, that group

was down to 14. In that mix was Karz, the former Park City High cross-country and track and field athlete who also grew up an avid mountain biker.

"Rowing is fun and exciting, but it's not something that's action-packed," Karz said. "So for a lot of people, their mind is not occupied by something other than pain — and pain. I think it turns a lot of people off."

Dubbed "a really fun find" at the time by Maxim, Karz went on to letter for the Beavers for three years and was named the team's Most Valuable Oarswoman in 2011.

Her rise in the sport took her to the national-team level, where she eventually starred with the U.S. U-23 team. In 2009, she won a silver medal at the Under-23 World Championship — held in, of all places, Rio. Then the rise slowed to a halt. Karz broke her elbow and missed her senior year at Oregon State. She minored in Mandarin in school, so she chose to move to China and teach English.

"I guess it was time for me to continue on with a standard lifestyle — or something," Karz said.

ONE OR THE OTHER » She watched the 2012 Olympic Games in London. She saw friends and competitors on the TV and realized then she wasn't done with rowing. Hired as an exporter of medical supplies to China in the fall of 2012, Karz moved to Washington, D.C., simultaneously starting that "standard lifestyle" she spoke of and getting back into the boat.

Upon joining the Potomac Boat Club, she got worked over nearly every day as her body readjusted to life on the water. Working full time, but also striving to get back into the national team picture, Karz started to realize if the push she felt while watching the London Games was going



COURTESY | U.S. Rowing

Park City's Devery Karz, right, and partner Kate Bertko stroke their way to qualification for the Rio Games at the 2016 U.S. Olympic Team Trials in Sarasota, Fla., in April.

to take her to Rio, she'd soon have to choose. At national team trials that year, she finished second to another racer by two seconds.

"That's hard to take," Karz said, "but I took it."

It had to be one or the other. Full-time in the office or full-time in the seat, an oar in each hand. Karz quit her job and moved to a training center in Oklahoma City in early 2014.

FINDING THE RIGHT MIX » In 2015, Karz qualified the lightweight double sculls boat for Rio with Michelle Sechser. But neither punched a ticket to Brazil. They merely qualified the boat for the Olympic Games, only to see later which rowers would be selected to compete at the trials for a shot at those seats.

Karz won bronze at a World Cup last year, and later at the World Championships in August 2015 in France, the lightweight double boat qualified for the Olympics by a 10th of a second. The top 11 boats qualified for Rio, and that 10th of a second over Sweden earned the Americans a spot.

The "crazy barn" helped Karz grow accustomed to the mentality of the unknown during the run-up to the trials. Those countless hours of rowing on the river in Austin prepped her for whatever lie ahead.

"You put four-to-eight years of your life into one race that

is either you accomplish your goal or you don't," she said. "That's really hard, because it doesn't mean you haven't accomplished anything, it's just the goal you set for yourself, you didn't accomplish 100 percent of that."

A 12-SECOND LEAD » For all her natural talents as an athlete, Devery Karz has always asked her family to steer clear until any race is over. During the state cross-country meets in high school, Rob and Linda Karz would have to watch intently, but quickly hide behind a cluster of trees when Devery ran by. The added pressure messed with her timing and focus, Linda said.

So Rob and Linda had the task of making a grand surprise at the Olympic trials an undercover siege. Aunts and uncles flew down to Florida — as did Devery's older brother, his wife and their kids. Most family members had never seen her row before. And here she was rowing for Rio. The crowd on April 24 was sizable but still, Linda and Rob and Co. had their hiding spots picked out.

Out in front for nearly the entire qualifying race, Karz and Bertko kept heaving. It wasn't until the last 250 meters of the race — when Karz noticed a 12-second lead — that she knew the past eight years had a fitting finale. At 7 minutes and 18.50 seconds,

Meet Devery Karz

Age » 28

Sport » Rowing

Class » Lightweight women's double sculls

Hometown » Park City

High school » Park City High

College » Oregon State

Club » Vesper Boat Club

Current residence »

Moorestown, N.J.

Rowing career » Five-time U.S. national team member, won bronze in lightweight double sculls at a 2015 World Cup ... finished 10th in lightweight double sculls at the 2014 World Rowing Championships ... Finished fifth in lightweight quadruple sculls at 2010 World Rowing U-23 Championships. ... Won a silver medal in lightweight quadruple sculls at 2009 U-23 World Championships.

the first finishers on the water, Karz and Bertko could finally let go of their oars.

"You have all these endorphins built up ... that you have under lock-and-barrel because you couldn't let it affect your day-to-day practice," Karz said. "Still, every day, it sinks in that I get to go to Rio, represent the United States and get to try to take down every other boat on the race course."

During the medal ceremony, the Karz crew blended in. It wasn't until Linda took her grandson and sprinted toward Devery, who was in a roped-off area, that she realized who all was in attendance.

"I'm still sort of pinching myself a little bit," Linda Karz said. "I knew this was absolutely within her realm, but when you get there, it's, 'Oh my gosh. She's going to the Olympics.'"

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SOCCER SPOTLIGHT • UNITED STATES

World Cup champs eye gold medals

Mighty Americans feel “a really cool buzz” heading into Rio Games.

By KURT KRAGTHORPE

The Salt Lake Tribune

Meghan Klingenberg remembers the feeling of winning the World Cup last summer, when the U.S. Women’s National Team generated record television ratings and drew big crowds across Canada on the way to the title.

Soccer can become lost in the Olympics with so many sports being contested, in contrast to the exclusive window of the World Cup. For the players, though, the Olympics represent another major tournament — with the same stakes, only in a different setting.

“There’s a different vibe around the Olympics than there is around the World Cup ... a really cool buzz,” Klingenberg said.

And for avid followers of women’s soccer, such as University of Utah coach Rich Manning, the Olympic tournament is as meaningful as the World Cup. “It’s the same,” Manning said. “These are the only two major events we have to look forward to, so this is great. It’s still the pinnacle.”

Unlike the U23 men’s competition, Olympic women’s soccer features senior teams. Manning cites the Atlanta Olympics of 1996, when women’s soccer was added to the program and the USWNT won the gold medal, as a significant boost for the sport in this country.

Having coached Alex Morgan as a teenager and faced the likes of Hope Solo, Christen Press and Kelley O’Hara as a college coach, Manning closely watches the USWNT’s evolution. This summer, the team is moving on offensively after the retirement of Abby

U.S. women’s Olympic soccer schedule

Aug. 3 » vs. New Zealand at Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Aug. 6 » vs. France at Belo Horizonte, Brazil

Aug. 9 » vs. Colombia at Manaus, Brazil

Wambach. Last summer, one theme was the emergence of young defenders such as Julie Johnston and Klingenberg, and they responded well in the World Cup.

In an exhibition series with Japan in early June, the Americans allowed three goals in a draw in Colorado, but then posted a 2-0 shutout in a lightning-shortened game in Cleveland.

“They challenged us in ways that we haven’t been challenged all year,” Klingenberg said in June from Portland, Ore., where she plays for the Thorns FC of the National Women’s Soccer League. “In the second game, we were a much better team.”

Klingenberg was an alternate in 2012 in London, where she got to “see what the Olympics are all about, but I didn’t feel it,” she said. “I want to feel that buzz, because there’s nothing like that setting, with athletes that are the best in the world.”

Manning is always interested to see which unlikely team becomes a contender, while expecting a strong performance from the Americans. “I think they kind of found their game halfway through the tournament last year ... and they’ll have the rush of confidence that you get from winning,” he said.

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DAVID DERMER | *The Associated Press*

Meghan Klingenberg dribbles upfield during the second half of a friendly against Japan in June in Cleveland, Ohio. The United States won 2-0 as part of its Olympic preparations.

BASKETBALL SPOTLIGHT • RAUL NETO

Jazzman has big role for the hosts

Guard hopes Games will turn out “great for our people.”

By KURT KRAGTHORPE
The Salt Lake Tribune

Raul Neto played a total of 29 minutes for Brazil’s basketball team in the 2012 Olympics. Neto will have a much bigger role for the host country in this year’s tournament, and that’s not the only way his life has changed in four years.

In those days, nobody could have imagined Neto’s becoming the Jazz’s starting point guard for much of the 2015-16 season as a rookie, two years after the team acquired his rights. The future is unclear for Neto in Utah, with Dante Exum returning from a knee injury and the Jazz roster overstocked with point guards, but he’s thrilled about playing for Brazil.

Brazil is in Group B for preliminary play, so Neto would meet the United States, Australia (with Jazz teammate Joe Ingles) or France (with Rudy Gobert and Boris Diaw) only in the quarterfinals or later.

Amid all of the turmoil in the country and the problems associated with staging the Games, Neto spoke hopefully during the Jazz’s exit interviews in April about the Olympics becoming a positive development for the country.

“It’s more than just sports, more than just basketball,” he said. “I think Brazil is going through a bad moment — politics, everything. The Olympics is going to be a way for people to forget about things and just focus on all the sports. I think it’s going to be great for our people.”

That might be a naive view of the circumstances in Brazil and the impact of the Games, but Neto can be forgiven for



Ingles » Represents Jazz with Exum out.



Diaw » Helped lead France in qualifying.



Gobert » First Olympic Games for Frenchman.

Jazz in the Olympics

The Jazz will have an unprecedented four players in the 2016 Olympics. The franchise’s all-time roster of Olympians (players under contract to the Jazz at the time):

Year	Player	Country	Medal
2016	Boris Diaw	France	
2016	Joe Ingles	Australia	
2016	Rudy Gobert	France	
2016	Raul Neto	Brazil	
2008	Carlos Boozer	USA	Gold
2008	Andrei Kirilenko	Russia	None
2008	Deron Williams	USA	Gold
2004	Carlos Arroyo	Puerto Rico	None
2004	Carlos Boozer	USA	Bronze
2000	Andrei Kirilenko	Russia	None
1996	Karl Malone	USA	Gold
1996	John Stockton	USA	Gold
1992	Karl Malone	USA	Gold
1992	John Stockton	USA	Gold

his optimistic approach. The Olympics are important to him, personally and patriotically. From a competitive perspective, Brazil’s success or failure will be judged by what happens in men’s and women’s soccer, but basketball also matters.

And much is expected from Neto as he shares the point guard position with 33-year-old Marcelo Huertas, a European basketball veteran who played for the Los Angeles Lakers as a rookie last season.

“Down there, they have a lot of respect for [Neto],” said former BYU forward Jonathan Tavernari, a Brazil native. “They have really high hopes for him.”

Tavernari witnessed Neto’s development from the time his mother, Thelma, a legendary youth coach in Brazil, faced Neto’s team. “It was

crazy to see that every year, he got better,” Tavernari said. “You could see his progress.”

Neto essentially replaced Tavernari on the national team roster in 2010, although that had more to do with NBA players at Tavernari’s position joining the program. Although he was deep on the bench in London in 2012, when Brazil reached the Olympic quarterfinals, Neto emerged as an important player in the

2014 FIBA World Championship. He scored 21 points on 9-of-10 shooting in a victory against Argentina in the round of 16.

NBA veterans including Nene, Leandro Barbosa, Alex Garcia and Anderson Varejao will join Huertas and Neto in Rio, hoping to produce Brazil’s first basketball medal since a bronze effort in 1964. And then Neto will fight for a roster spot and playing time with the Jazz, after averaging 5.9 points and 2.1 assists in 18.5 minutes per game last season, appearing in 81 games.

Neto performed “beyond our expectations,” said Jazz general manager Dennis Lindsey, crediting Neto’s pro experience in Spain as “a very good training ground.”

Through his work with assistant coach Igor Kokoskov, Neto impressed the Jazz by

shooting 39.5 percent from 3-point range. He also blended in well with the team as a 23-year-old rookie. Lindsey cited Neto’s “great spirit ... as far as being a professional.”

Neto’s role changed in late February when the Jazz acquired point guard Shelvin Mack in a trade with Atlanta. Neto stayed in the rotation ahead of Trey Burke, who was traded to Washington in July.

Neto figures to play behind the newly acquired George Hill, Exum and Mack in 2016-17, and the Jazz also drafted guards Marcus Paige and Tyronne Wallace in June. More moves are possible, and some combination of Neto, Paige and Wallace could play in the D-League at times.

First comes the Olympic tournament. Neto enjoyed the London opportunity, but playing at home and having greater value to his team will make Rio more meaningful to him. “It’s going to be a great experience,” he said.

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HANNAH FOSLIEN |
The Associated Press

BASKETBALL SPOTLIGHT • JOE INGLES

This 'Boomer' having an eventful August

Forward will be in Rio after wife recently delivered twins.

By KURT KRAGTHORPE

The Salt Lake Tribune

Joe Ingles, a first-time father of two children, is about to become a three-time Olympian.

Ingles will return for a third season as a forward with the Jazz, following an eventful summer that includes another Olympic basketball tournament with Australia. Ingles' wife, Renae, delivered twins on July 27; she was due to deliver the twins the day before the start of the Olympics, which Ingles planned to attend regardless of if the children had been born yet.

Renae Ingles, an Australian star in netball — a sport that resembles basketball and is played internationally, but not in the Olympics — supports her husband's approach. "She's a sports person and she understands," Ingles told *The Advertiser of Adelaide*. "She knows what it feels like to represent Australia."

While playing professionally in Spain, Ingles grew into a major role with the Australian team in the 2012 Olympics in London. He averaged 15.6 points in six games as the Boomers reached the quarterfinals, before losing 119-86 to the United States. Ingles played all 40 minutes of that game, scoring 19 points — finishing as the game's second-leading scorer, next to Kobe Bryant (20).

At age 20, he had appeared in each game for Australia in Beijing in 2008, scoring 11 points against the Americans in a quarterfinal loss. "I've played for my country since I was allowed to, really," Ingles said in April, during the Jazz's exit interviews. "I'm definitely excited to play. It means a lot to represent my country, especially at an Olympic Games. ... I love it. Obviously, I'll continue to do it until they don't want me anymore — which might be soon."

Ingles punctuated that sentence with his usual, wry smile. He'll be 32 in 2020, creating the possibility for a fourth Olympics with the Boomers. Having averaged 9.9 points per game in 81 games in 2015-16, his second season with the Jazz, he's expecting to contribute significantly to Australia's effort in August and is hoping for a stronger showing against the Americans. The teams will compete in Group A with China, Venezuela and two qualifiers from July tournaments. The Boomers will meet the U.S. team Aug. 10 in preliminary play.

Ingles believes that with seven NBA players potentially on their roster, the Australians will be less intimidated by the Americans this time.

"They're still superstars," he told *The Advertiser*. "But there's seven of us playing against them and, in a couple of instances, with them every night. They lose a bit of that aura."



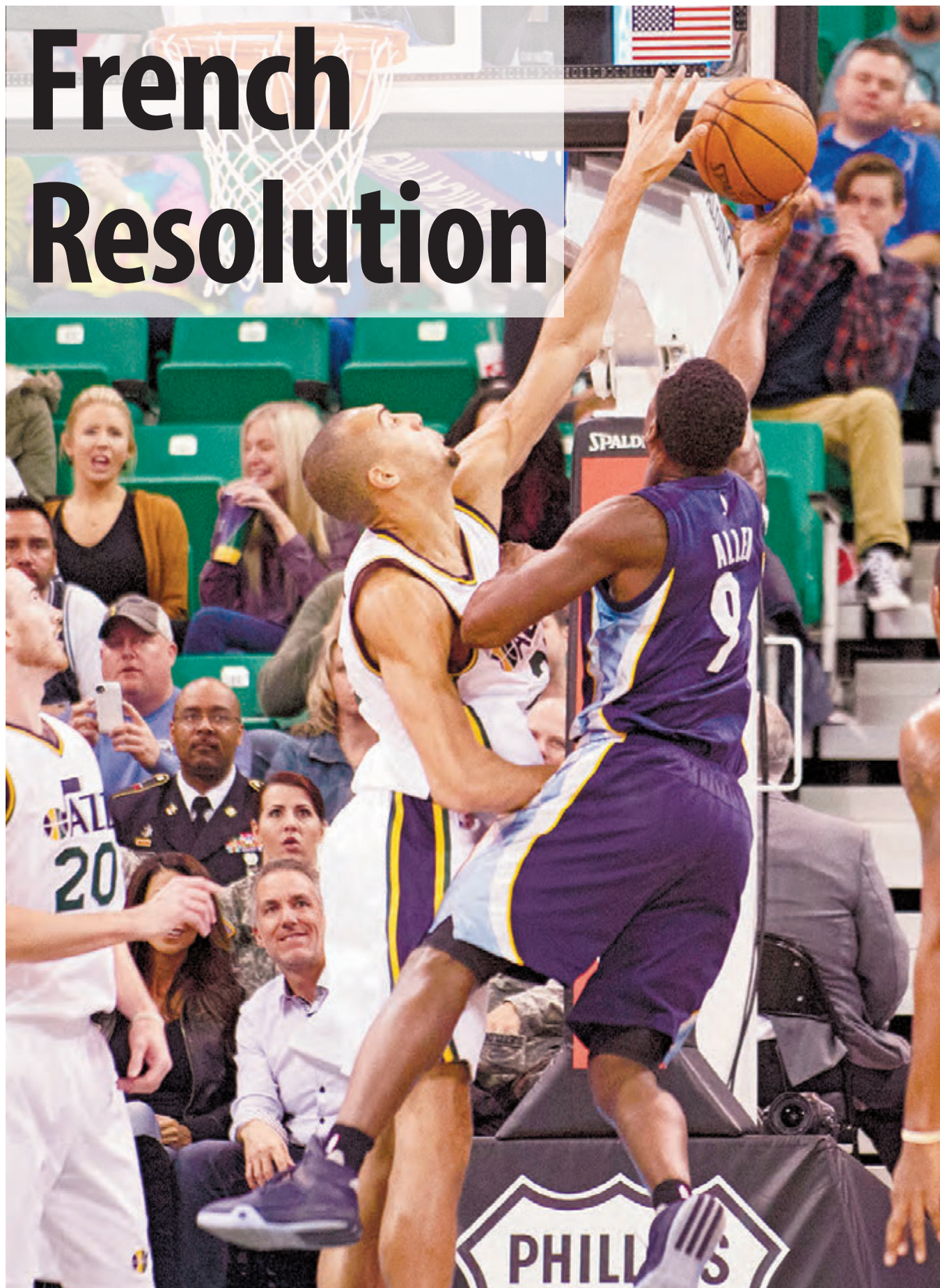
MARK RALSTON | *The Associated Press*

Before he was a Utah Jazz forward, Joe Ingles scored 19 points while playing the entire game for Australia in a quarterfinal loss to the United States during the 2012 London Olympics. Rio will be Ingles' third Games.

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BASKETBALL SPOTLIGHT • RUDY GOBERT



Center dreams of leading France into medal contention.

By TONY JONES

The Salt Lake Tribune

Las Vegas » The dangers and concerns over the Olympic Summer Games in Brazil are real. But for Rudy Gobert, the opportunity to take part in the Olympics was too much to pass up.

For Gobert, the Jazz's towering French center — this is a pinch-me moment.

Are the Jazz concerned for his health and well being? Sure. Is there the chance that Gobert could be fatigued heading into training camp? Yes. But Gobert sat out of the qualifying round in order to rest and remain in Salt Lake City to work on his game.

"I'm not going to stop playing basketball," Gobert said. "You can get hurt anywhere and anytime on a basketball court. I just wanted to make sure this was the right decision. I've always dreamed about it, and I think we can do something great. So let's do it."

The opportunity for France to be competitive and to possibly medal played a role in Gobert's decision. With Gobert, Diaw and Tony Parker, France is stocked with talent, and has the ability to advance far in the tournament.

And Gobert's presence will mean plenty to France, as is the case with the Jazz. He's their rim protector and rebounder, a player who not many teams outside of the U.S. and Spain have an answer for. Gobert has also always felt a deep sense of loyalty to his country. And now that he's a prominent member of their national program, he's ready to take on the challenge.

"The only concern for the Jazz, they want to make sure I don't hurt and that I take care of myself and take care of my body," he said last month. "The Zika virus isn't that big of a concern to me. I just can't stop playing basketball because there's the risk of being hurt. I just think this is a great opportunity and I want to take advantage of it."

LENNIE MAHLER | Tribune file photo

Jazz center Rudy Gobert has no fear of injury playing for France in the Olympics even with contract extension talks looming.

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BASKETBALL SPOTLIGHT • BORIS DIAW



BULLIT MARQUEZ | The Associated Press

Mr. Reliable

The 34-year-old forward and newest Jazzman played a big role in France's qualifying for Rio.

By KURT KRAGTHORPE

The Salt Lake Tribune

Forever scarred by point guard Dante Exum's knee injury last summer, Jazz general manager Dennis Lindsey agonizes about the wear and tear his players absorb in international competition.

Even so, Lindsey cited Boris Diaw's workload in France's successful Olympic qualifying effort to prove a point. If anyone wondered about Diaw's fitness at age 34, the French team captain's averaging 32 minutes of play in four games over six days should answer that question, Lindsey said.

The Jazz acquired Diaw during the qualifying tournament earlier this month, giving San Antonio the rights to 2015 second-round draft pick Olivier Hanlan and adding a 6-foot-8, 250-pound veteran

whose versatility and passing skills will give them "a much different look," Lindsey said.

Lindsey was involved in the move that revived Diaw's NBA career in March 2012, bringing him to San Antonio after a contract buyout in Charlotte. Diaw helped San Antonio produce a first-round sweep that spring in the Jazz's most recent playoff appearance and became a vital player for the Spurs' 2014 championship team. The Spurs needed room to sign free agent Pau Gasol this summer and Lindsey accommodated them, while strengthening his own roster.

Diaw will team in Utah with countryman Rudy Gobert, who promised to play in the Olympics if Diaw and his French teammates qualified in Manila — as they did July 10 with an 83-74 defeat of Canada in the finals.

Evan Fournier of Orlando

was not added to France's roster after the qualifying tournament, as former University of Utah center Kim Tillie remained with the team. So France's NBA contingent includes San Antonio's Tony Parker, Charlotte's Nic Batum, Denver's Joffrey Lauvergne, Gobert and Diaw, a longtime anchor of the national team.

Diaw averaged 10.4 points in 2013 when France finished third in EuroBasket and posted 8.0 points, 6.0 rebounds and 3.2 assists in four games this month in Manila. In the 2012 Olympics, Diaw helped France reach the quarterfinals. Although his team lost to Spain, he recorded 15 points, eight rebounds and five assists.

The Jazz expect that kind of multidimensional game from Diaw, as he provided the Spurs in the 2014 NBA Finals. He averaged 6.2 points,

8.6 rebounds and 5.8 assists against Miami, including an 8-9-9 effort in Game 4.

"Boris pretty much does the same thing every night, as far as helping us be a smarter team at both ends of the floor," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said after that game. "He knows what's going on most of the time. At the offensive end, he's a passer. He understands mismatches. ... At the defensive end, he knows when to help. He's active. So he just helps the whole team have a better IQ."

With Diaw having moved from the bench of a Charlotte team that would finish the lockout-shortened 2011-12 season with a 7-59 record, Parker said, "I just think the Bobcats were not the right fit for him, because he's the ultimate team player and he needs a system and stuff like that. He's a perfect fit for us."

Once traded from Atlanta to Phoenix in a package involving Joe Johnson, now his Jazz teammate, Diaw had joined former Jazz guard Raja Bell in moving from Phoenix to Charlotte. After the buyout by the Bobcats, coach Paul Silas said, "I think if he had played all out, the way he should have, it would have been a much, much better club."

That never was an issue for Diaw with the Spurs or the French team. He'll remain valuable to France in Rio, although Gobert's addition will reduce his playing time. Diaw averaged only 17.7 minutes in nine playoff games for the Spurs this past season, but as he proved in the Philippines, he's available for whatever workload any team gives him.

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BASKETBALL SPOTLIGHT • UNITED STATES

Road to gold started with bronze

Disappointment of 2004 brought a new approach.

By KURT KRAGTHORPE

The Salt Lake Tribune

The season after Carlos Arroyo personally ruined USA Basketball — or improved it, as viewed historically — the Jazz honored their point guard by distributing souvenir lunch boxes that featured him.

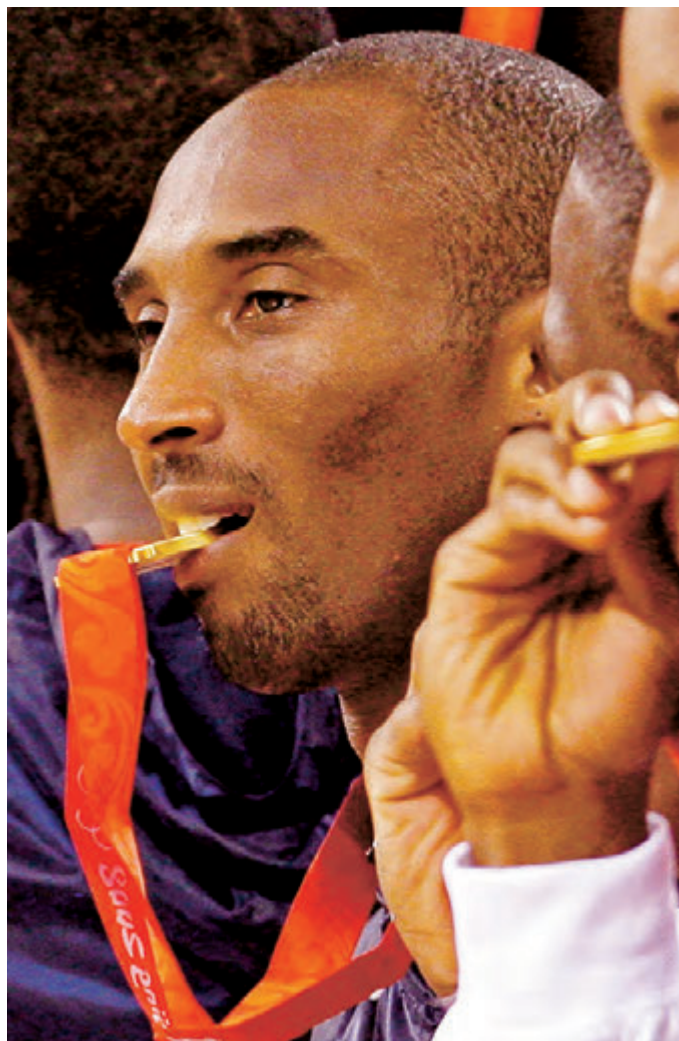
Arroyo was gone soon afterward, unceremoniously traded to Detroit in the middle of the season, but the symbolism of those lunch pails remains intact internationally. By exposing the Americans' defense with his outside shooting in Puerto Rico's upset that emboldened other opponents in the 2004 Olympics, Arroyo showed USA Basketball what was missing.

Future U.S. teams would need guards who defended the 3-point line — or just cared about playing defense and working hard. Arroyo's effect on USA Basketball is evident, 12 years after what happened in Athens.

He's one of the opponents who made the 'Redeem Team' necessary. And the legacy of the gold medal-winning 2008 team that followed the underachievers of '04 is a major theme of USA Basketball going into the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro, according to current players on the roster.

Kobe Bryant, Chris Paul, Deron Williams and others from '08 "kind of turned the culture of USA Basketball around, so you have to give them a lot of credit," Kevin Durant said.

"Those guys put USA Basketball back where it's supposed to be," Jimmy Butler said. "I think they changed the game for everybody. Just the way they approach the game ... and the fact that they



ERIC GAY | The Associated Press

Kobe Bryant bites on his gold medal after leading the USA to a gold medal in 2008, the start of a run in which the Americans have not lost in international play.

want to compete against each other, because they know that since they were the best, they could only make each other better."

The '04 team was poorly constructed, partly because some top-tier players chose to stay home. Arroyo, who scored 24 points, and his Puerto Rico teammates provided the map to beating the Americans, exploiting the defense of guards Allen Iverson and Stephon Marbury in a 92-73 victory to begin the tournament. The team also lost to Lithuania in pool play, then to Argentina in the semifinals.

Having the likes of Bryant and Williams, then a Jazz star,

join the team in '08 solved those defensive issues. The other effect of '04 was having a gold medal become an achievement again, after the original Dream Team of 1992 with Karl Malone and John Stockton skewed the outlook. After the semifinal loss in '04, U.S. assistant coach Gregg Popovich said, "The thrill to get it done now will be a much greater thrill than any time in the past, when it was a joke."

The Americans responded with gold medals in Beijing in 2008 and London in 2012, restoring USA Basketball's worldwide status.

The selection of players for Rio somewhat resembled the

Athens process, with six of the 10 players on this year's All-NBA first and second teams withdrawing because of injuries or other issues. Those defections created opportunities for former Weber State guard Damian Lillard and the Jazz's Gordon Hayward, who also declined.

Yet the depth of the U.S. personnel pool and the level of international competition make the Americans overwhelming favorites in Rio. The biggest reason is their defense — the willingness to do it and a recognition that defending 3-pointers is critical in the international game.

U.S. coach Mike Krzyzewski is suggesting this might be the best defensive team in USA Basketball history. The players are embracing that potential distinction. In its first three exhibitions, one vs. Argentina and two vs. China, the team allowed 62.6 points. Even with the qualifier of 40-minute games, that's impressive.

The other dynamic that will make the U.S. worth watching is how Durant blends with Klay Thompson and Draymond Green, now that he's coming to Golden State this coming NBA season.

"We are going to grow together, and that starts with Team USA," Thompson said.

The Americans are in Pool A in Rio with the Australian team of Jazz guard Joe Ingles and the French team featuring the Jazz's Rudy Gobert and Boris Diaw. Serbia, also in that group, is considered a top medal contender, along with Group B's Spain, the runner-up in 2008 and '12.

Those teams may provide some resistance, but the lessons of '04 still resonate. Asked what he learned from Athens, four-time Olympian Carmelo Anthony said, "Just enjoy the moment. Take advantage of the moment."

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STORYLINES

Which group is tougher?

Group A is more top-heavy, with the U.S., Serbia and France finishing 1-2-3 in the Basketball World Cup two years ago. But Group B appears to be deeper, with Spain (No. 2), Lithuania (3), Argentina (4), Brazil (9) and Croatia (12) all among the top dozen teams in the world.

This'll take some time

The tournament runs nearly the entire length of the Games, making the first round of the NBA playoffs seem speedy. Competition begins Aug. 6, the day after the opening ceremony, and the medal games are Aug. 21, the day of the closing ceremony.

Try, try, try again

Spain sure hopes this is the year it can break through, after pushing the U.S. deep into the final minutes of the past two gold-medal games. The Americans emerged with a 118-107 victory in 2008 and held on to win 107-100 in London. The Spanish bring back veterans such as Pau Gasol, Jose Calderon and Juan Carlos Navarro for a final shot.

Golden goodbye?

This certainly seems like the end for Argentina's greats, who won gold in 2004, bronze in 2008 and narrowly missed another medal when they finished fourth in 2012. Manu Ginobili, Luis Scola and Andres Nocioni are back.

U.S. group schedule

Aug. 6 » China, 4 p.m.
Aug. 8 » Venezuela, 4 p.m.
Aug. 10 » Australia, 4 p.m.
Aug. 12 » Serbia, 4 p.m.
Aug. 14 » France, 11:15 a.m.

BASKETBALL SPOTLIGHT • UNITED STATES

Pioneers for the modern game

By DOUG FEINBERG

The Associated Press

New York » There was much more at risk for the 1996 Olympic women's basketball team than winning the gold medal when they took the floor against Brazil in Atlanta.

An 18-month journey was coming to an end and anything less than a gold medal would have been considered a failure for the Americans. But a defeat also could have been a major blow to the two professional startup leagues in the U.S. looming on the horizon.

"We knew what was at stake," guard Dawn Staley said. "We knew there was a WNBA in waiting, there was the ABL in waiting. It was all depending on how successful we were as a team. And we also wanted to show America, our nation, that women playing at the peaks of their careers was truly something special."

They didn't disappoint the 32,987 fans at the Georgia Dome. The U.S. cruised to a 111-87 victory over Brazil. That was the first of five straight gold medals for the Americans. That team, led by Lisa Leslie, Katrina McClain and Sheryl Swoopes, still holds several U.S. Olympic records, including scoring average (102.4), points (819) and assists (207).

"We were on a mission. We trained for a year and half together. That was the first time USA Basketball had ever put a group of women together," said Nikki McCray, currently an assistant on Staley's coaching staff at South Carolina. "We were machines. Credit Tara VanDerveer and her staff for just getting us ready, and we were unstoppable. To go 60-0? That's never been done before, and we were not going to fall short of winning the gold medal and to win it was truly remarkable."

That team, which started training together in 1995, was

SUSAN RAGAN | *The Associated Press*

U.S. women's basketball team members wear their gold medals during ceremonies at the 1996 Centennial Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta, including former Utah Starzz player Jennifer Azzi, far left. That team was the foundation for the launch of the ABL and the WNBA.

the foundation for the launch of the ABL and the WNBA. The ABL lasted only two years, but the WNBA is now in its 20th season. Players earned \$50,000 the year they toured with the team. They traveled around the world, flying more than 100,000 miles and winning 52 games before the Olympics.

Without the gold in 1996, the WNBA may not be around.

"Those players, not only did they represent us on the court in winning a gold medal in such a huge fashion, but they were publicizing and promoting the women's game and basically got two leagues off the ground and one has withstood

everything, the WNBA," said New York Liberty assistant coach Katie Smith. "So we are indebted to them, a huge 'thank you' for what they did."

Because of the 1996 team, Los Angeles Sparks star Candace Parker was part of a generation who grew up looking forward to playing in a pro league — in the United States.

"I was on my couch and heard they were starting this new league, and I remember thinking how excited I was," said Parker of her 10-year-old self. "I went out to my driveway and started shooting, and I no longer had to pretend to play in the NBA, I could pretend to play in the WNBA."

Parker wasn't the only current WNBA star the 1996 team influenced. Tamika Catchings was on the USA women's junior world championship qualifying team. After a practice in Colorado, she and her teammates were told

a surprise awaited them. In walked Leslie, Swoopes, Staley and the rest of the 1996 Olympic team.

"It was so cool," Catchings said. "It was the first time for me that I saw players like Lisa and Dawn and Sheryl. It was someone that I wanted to be like. A female basketball player to look up to. But watching the Olympic team, I was like, 'Oh, my God. One day I want to be there, and I want to represent my country and have that opportunity.'"

The 1996 team didn't just leave their impact with the WNBA and Olympic success. Five players from that squad are coaching in college now — Jennifer Azzi, Katy Steding, McCray, Staley and Swoopes.

"It was a magical year," coach VanDerveer said. "Although I don't know that our players would say that. It was really a fantastic trip. I loved the whole experience."

STORYLINES

Dominant U.S.

No team has been more dominant at the Olympics over the past 20 years than the U.S. women's basketball team. With nine players, including Sue Bird, Diana Taurasi and Tamika Catchings, returning from the London Games, the U.S. is a heavy favorite to win another gold medal. Olympic newcomers Elena Delle Donne, Brittney Griner and Breanna Stewart will add a dynamic mix to the veteran core. The U.S. is in a difficult group with Serbia, China, Canada, Spain and Senegal.

A little revenge

The U.S. is also out for a little bit of revenge. The last time they played in Brazil at the 2006 World Championship, they lost to Russia in the semifinals. It was their only defeat in either the Olympics or worlds since 1992.

Medal contenders

France was the silver medalist in 2012 and Australia has won either a silver or bronze at every Olympics since 1996. Other candidates for a medal could be Serbia, which won the European championship, and Canada.

Golden girls

If the U.S. does win another gold, Taurasi, Bird and Catchings will join Teresa Edwards and Lisa Leslie as the only basketball players to win four gold medals.

U.S. group schedule

Aug. 7 » Senegal, 9 a.m.

Aug. 8 » Spain, 9 a.m.

Aug. 10 » Serbia, 12:30 p.m.

Aug. 12 » Canada, 12:30 p.m.

Aug. 14 » China, 9:15 a.m.

TRACK & FIELD SPOTLIGHT • THE EATON FAMILY

Power couple

While Ashton is the favorite to win in the decathlon, his wife Brianne is a contender to win in the heptathlon.

By PAT GRAHAM

The Associated Press

Ashton Eaton crouched in the dirt and concentrated on conquering his latest rival — weeds overwhelming his backyard.

The Olympic decathlon champion and world-record holder dominated those pesky intruders, with his wife posting his handiwork on social media.

Just a snapshot into the life of the Eatons — your ordinary neighbors in Eugene, Ore. Ashton frequently toils in the yard while Brianne Theisen-Eaton does the grocery shopping and cooking.

“There it is for you: She hunts and gathers and I take care of the nest,” Ashton said, laughing.

But this power couple is far from ordinary. Ashton hopes

to defend his Olympic decathlon title at the Rio de Janeiro Games for the U.S., while Brianne, who competes for Canada, figures to be a favorite in the heptathlon.

“We feel like pretty normal, boring people, to be honest,” Brianne said.

A little history on the first family of multi-events: Ashton, 28, and Brianne, 27, met at the University of Oregon as teenagers and married in July 2013. Their coach, Harry Marra, officiated the wedding.

“Most nervous I ever was in my life!” Marra exclaimed.

The couple trains together. They celebrate together, with Ashton embracing Brianne after her gold-medal performance in the pentathlon at the world indoor championships in Portland two months ago — and vice versa when Ashton won the heptathlon.

They motivate one another as well.

“Our lives are more organized because if one of us gets lazy, the other is snapping their fingers to say, ‘OK, get back to it,’” Brianne said.

Date night for them is dinner and a movie. At least, they strive for that. Most times, it’s simply watching a show on Netflix (the couple spent the spring watching “Making a Murderer”).

“It’s definitely beneficial to have the support of someone who’s also trying to do the same,” Ashton said. “When you have someone else going through this it’s like, ‘Oh, you know what? I’m not the only one suffering here.’”

The couple also has a shared passion for clean water. The Eatons are big supporters of Team World Vision, which raises money through

running events to benefit children in Africa. The Eatons traveled to Kenya last fall and met the child they help sponsor. They even demonstrated what they do — using a stick as a javelin and a rock as a discus.

“It’s us sharing these experiences together,” Brianne said. “Because when we both are able to go somewhere and show up and show that it’s a family supporting it, it’s even stronger.”

Marra has been a part of Team Eaton since the early stages, realizing right away they weren’t your typical athletes. Take Brianne, who had a long talk with Marra after the 2012 London Games when she didn’t medal.

“She said, ‘Coach, I don’t want to be 10th anymore. I don’t want to continue to do this unless I can be a factor,’”

Marra recounted. “We had some ideas and made the commitment to step it up to move to the next level.”

It’s worked, too. She’s finished second at the past two world outdoor championships.

Ashton’s drive has long been legendary, but kicked up a notch after taking silver at the 2011 worlds in South Korea.

Since then, he’s won two world outdoor titles, an Olympic crown and broken the world record twice, the most recent time last summer at worlds in Beijing when he finished with 9,045 points. It was six points better than the mark he set at U.S. Olympic Trials in 2012.

During training, they sometimes change things up to have fun. A few months ago, Ashton asked Marra to place a piece of rope into sand during long jump practice. Then, Ashton tried to leap past the string. That’s something Ashton used to do as a kid after watching Carl Lewis compete in the Olympics.

“It brought Ashton back to his childhood,” Marra said. “And he got technically done what he wanted to get done, but had fun doing it.”

The days are going to be long for athletes and coach in Rio. Brianne competes on Aug. 12-13 and the plan is to train Ashton in between sessions, so both can root for Brianne.

Ashton would take center stage Aug. 17-18, with a chance to become the first decathlete to win back-to-back Olympic titles since British star Daley Thompson in 1980 and ’84.

“Would it be nice to see (Brianne and Ashton) win and then after the dust settles — a month or so later — sit back in my garden with a nice big glass of wine and say, ‘Yeah, that was pretty good.’ Sure, it would be,” Marra said. “But you can’t do that now.”



ALIKE KEPICZ | *The Associated Press*

Ashton Eaton of the United States, left, talks to his wife Brianne Theisen-Eaton of Canada as they compete at the 2014 Athletics Indoor World Championships in Poland. Eaton is a favorite in the Rio decathlon, while Theisen-Eaton will be in the heptathlon.

TRACK & FIELD • STORYLINES

Doping overshadows the athletes



ALL PHOTOS | The Associated Press

With so much focus on Usain Bolt's injured hamstring and the Russian team's ban amid charges of systematic doping, it's easy to lose track of who could be making the headlines at the Olympics in Rio de Janeiro.

Even if he was fully fit, Bolt, the world record-holder and two-time defending champion in the 100- and 200-meter sprints, will have plenty of competition. World championship silver medalist Justin Gatlin recorded the two fastest times of the season to July 3 with a 9.80 and 9.83 at the U.S. Trials, holding off Trayvon Bromell in 9.84.

Gatlin won the 100-200 double at the trials, a feat 2011 world champion Yohan Blake matched at the Jamaican championships after Bolt withdrew.

After edging Nickel Ashmeade to win the 100 in 9.95, Blake — the silver medalist in the 100 and 200 in London — said he felt his confidence coming back.

— The Associated Press

Semenya is ready

Caster Semenya has been just about unbeatable this season over 800 meters and is the favorite for gold at Rio. Semenya has had a tumultuous career since winning the world 800 title at age 18 in 2009. The issue of gender verification and hyperandrogenism — the presence of high levels of testosterone in female athletes — gained global attention after that win and Semenya was ordered to undergo testing. She was cleared to compete and won silver in the 800 at the 2012 Olympics to get her career on track. In April, Semenya said she felt like she was starting to enjoy the sport again.



World's fastest women

Dafne Schippers wants to break the Jamaica-U.S. dominance in the women's sprints by improving one place on her performance at the World Championships, where she won the 200 and took silver in the 100. Her personal best of 10.81 is well off the world-leading 10.70 set by Elaine Thompson at the Jamaican trials. Thompson's time equaled the Jamaican record Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce set in 2012, and relegated the defending Olympic champion to second place. That's not a position that sits well with Fraser-Pryce, who has the chance to be the first woman to win the same individual event at three successive Olympics.



Setting the bar high

The absence of Russian world record-holder and two-time Olympic champion Yelena Isinbayeva will leave a hole in the women's pole vault competition — particularly for American Jenn Suhr. "I always said I wanted to compete against the best," said Suhr, who won Olympic gold in 2012 on a countback from Yarisleys Silva and took silver behind Isinbayeva in 2008 at Beijing. Suhr missed a medal at last year's worlds but her best mark of 4.91 places her second on the all-time list behind Isinbayeva.

Another Super Saturday?

Rule Britannia echoed around the Olympic stadium in 2012 when Mo Farah, right, won the 10,000, Jessica Ennis-Hill won the heptathlon and Greg Rutherford won the long jump to give Britain three gold medals on one Saturday night. The way the schedule works out for Rio, they have the chance to do it again on Aug. 13. All three won their events at the world championships last year.



GYMNASTICS SPOTLIGHT • SIMONE BILES

Gold is the only goal remaining

Olympic glory would highlight a dominant career.

By WILL GRAVES

The Associated Press

The greatest gymnast Mary Lou Retton has ever seen is a wonder.

She has the power to get such height on the vault it seems as if she's bungee jumping from the roof.

She has the energy to make the final tumbling pass of her boundary-pushing floor exercise — when most of her peers are breathless and counting the seconds until the music stops — as fresh as her first.

She has the poise to flip and swoop and turn on a 4-inch-wide slab of wood 4 feet off the ground so fluidly it's like an X Games version of ballet.

"The God-gifted ability of explosiveness and just her athleticism, you can't teach that," said Retton, the 1984 Olympic champion. "You cannot teach that. You can teach somebody to be a little bit more graceful. You can teach someone more skills, but you can't teach that special unique quality that Simone has."

Get ready to know Simone Biles. In her sport, the live-wire 19-year-old from Spring, Texas, enjoys first-name only status, the byproduct of a three-year run that includes 14 world championship medals with a record 10 golds and three all-around titles.

"We're joking she should have to compete with the guys," Retton said. "She's so good. She pushes it. She's just special."

For all of the awe Biles inspires, the one thing she lacks is "that Olympic all-around gold medal, the Queen Bee, the most important," Retton



JAE C. HONG | The Associated Press

“Typically you can have an athlete that’s head and tails above the rest, they might rest on their laurels a little bit. They might slide a little bit. She doesn’t.”

SEVEN-TIME OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST SHANNON MILLER | about Simone Biles

said. “Yeah I think she needs it as part of her repertoire.”

“It’s like you still need that one puzzle piece,” said 2004 Olympic champion Carly Patterson. “It’s just crazy. You really need to have that checkmark to be looked at as one of those tops. That’s what it seems like. Her career is incredible and you wonder if that creates so much pressure.”

For Biles, it’s not about her scores. Biles doesn’t pay much attention to them. It’s not about winning, maybe because every meet she has entered since the 2013 U.S. Championships has ended the same way: with Biles atop the podium ducking her head so the latest medal to her ever-growing collection can be draped around her neck.

It’s not even about her highly GIF-able routines either, the ones that leave her peers in awe. If Biles is being honest, she doesn’t even know the formal terms for some of the skills she does anyway.

“They’re like, ‘Oh, you did a ...’ and I’m like, ‘I did a what?’” Biles said. “No, I flipped twice. I twisted twice. They go ‘it’s called a ...’ and I’m like ‘Why do I need to know that? I just need to go and do that.’”

The sport’s code of points — overhauled over a decade ago to get rid of the 10-point system in favor of one designed to create a higher risk/reward factor — forces its competitors to make a choice between aggression and precision. Biles is the rare gymnast who doesn’t have to choose. She can do both.

“Typically you can have an athlete that’s head and tails above the rest, they might rest on their laurels a little bit,” said seven-time Olympic medalist Shannon Miller. “They might slide a little bit. She doesn’t. She’s at the top of her game every time.”

The ultimate stage awaits.

GYMNASTICS • STORYLINES

Karolyi looks for a golden sendoff

After 40 years helping some of the greatest gymnasts of all time soar to Olympic gold — from Nadia Comaneci to Mary Lou Retton to Nastia Liukin — Martha Karolyi is retiring after the 2016 Games.

The five-woman group Karolyi is bringing to Rio — Simone Biles, Gabby Douglas, Aly Raisman, Madison Kocian and Laurie Hernandez — has the perfect going away present in mind: Gold. Lots and lots of gold. Maybe all six available, something that's never been done by one country in a single Olympiad.

It's a testament to the empire Karolyi has built since taking over the program in 2001 that it's not merely hype but entirely plausible, a luxury afforded when you have the three-time reigning world champion (Biles), the defending Olympic champion (Douglas), a three-time Olympic medalist (Raisman) and the reigning uneven bars world champion (Kocian) on the roster.

The gap between the U.S. and the rest of the world has grown since the "Fierce Five" rolled to the team gold four years ago. The chance of anyone overcoming it is akin to the odds of Michael Jordan and the original "Dream Team" falling in Barcelona in 1992. No one came close back then. If the Americans do what they've done at every major international event since 2011, Karolyi's final meet will be more of an extended victory lap.

— *The Associated Press*



ALL PHOTOS | The Associated Press

Encore for golden girl

Gabby Douglas, right, is attempting to become the first reigning all-around champion to repeat in nearly 50 years. While topping Biles seems unlikely, the 20-year-old Douglas could follow in the footsteps of Comaneci, who won the all-around in Montreal in 1976 and earned silver in Moscow in 1980. Douglas' path back to the Olympics has been bumpy of late. Though she was runner-up to Biles at the 2015 World Championships and captured the American Cup in March, she struggled at times during the selection process and parted with coach Kittia Carpenter in early July.



The British are coming!

While longtime powers like Romania and Russia have slipped in recent years, Great Britain's program has been on the rise. The Brits finished third in the team competition at worlds last fall, the first-ever team medal at the world championships in the program's history. The core of that group: sisters Becky and Ellie Downie, Claudia Fragapane, Amy Tinkler and Ruby Harrold, will try to take an even greater step in Rio.



No 'T' in 'team' for Japanese star

Kohei Uchimura, below, has nothing left to prove. The only question surrounding the effortlessly elegant 27-year-old is if he is the greatest male gymnast of all time. Another Olympic all-around title to bookend the one the Japanese captured in London four years ago would settle the debate, perhaps for good. Yet Uchimura is more focused on helping his country return to the top of the podium. Japan ended a losing streak to China when it triumphed at the 2015 World Championships.

Uchimura — who isn't ruling out sticking around until the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo — would love nothing more than to fill the one hole left on his peerless resume.

Steady Sam

Sam Mikulak, below has spent most of the past four years as easily the best American gymnast, reeling off four straight national titles with relative ease. Yet he's struggled to make an impact on the international level, his only medal coming as part of the U.S. team that won bronze at the 2014 World Championships. The 23-year-old moved to the U.S. Olympic Training Center after graduating from Michigan but continues to be bothered by small mistakes that force him to play catch-up.



SWIMMING SPOTLIGHT • KATIE LEDECKY

Fueled to be a champion

At 19, she already may be the best ever.

By **DAVE SHEININ**

The Washington Post

In many of her races, Katie Ledecky is leading before she even touches the water.

In the 800-meter freestyle final at the 2012 London Olympics, which produced her first Olympic gold medal; in six of her nine individual swims at the 2015 World Championships, where she pulled off an unprecedented sweep of the 200 through 1,500 freestyles; in the 800 free final at the 2014 Pan Pacific Championships, a world record; and the finals of both the 400 and 800 free at the 2012 U.S. Olympic trials — in all of those races, and in many others, Ledecky was the first swimmer off the blocks, her reaction time the fastest in the field.

It is not a skill Ledecky, 19, needs or cares about. There isn't much benefit in beating opponents off the blocks by a couple hundredths of a second when you typically win your core events by several seconds, or even tens of seconds. And where fast starts are a part of her practice routine, it is only in the larger context of the first 15 meters as a whole.

But as a symbol of Ledecky's sheer athletic brilliance, her perfection of the first movement of a race is illustrative. Getting off the blocks fast requires some combination of hard work, athleticism, intense focus and perfectionism. And try as people might to find some simple explanation for Ledecky's

dominance of swimming, the truth is more complex, and it lies somewhere in that recipe.

"This is a one-in-a-billion human being," said Washington Capitals and Wizards owner Ted Leonsis, a longtime friend and associate of Ledecky's family. "She has a very special family, and she's an incredibly gifted person — with a high, high self-actualization and self-awareness, otherworldly good instincts and intelligence, a gifted physiognomy, plus an incredible drive to be the best. And it's all natural."

Ledecky already may be the most dominant athlete in sports. At the 2015 worlds, against the best competition the globe could offer, she won the 1,500 freestyle by more than 14 seconds and the 800 free by more than 10. When she set the most recent of her 11 world records, in the 800 free at a meet in Austin in January, her margin of victory was 17.81 seconds.

"She's the greatest athlete in the world today by far," said Michael J. Joyner, an anesthesiologist and researcher for the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., specializing in human performance and physiology. "She's dominating by the widest margin in international sport, winning by 1 or 2 percent. If [a runner] won the 10,000 meters by that wide a margin, they'd win by 100 meters. One or 2 percent in the Tour de France, over about 80 hours of racing, would be 30 or 40 minutes. It's just absolutely remarkable."



Ledecky »

The best in the world in freestyle.



MARK J. TERRILL | The Associated Press

SWIMMING • STORYLINES

Phelps returns for a final farewell

Michael Phelps is back for a sequel to his Olympic farewell. This time, he insists, it really is goodbye.

After retiring and then un-retiring, Phelps will be in Rio as the first U.S. male swimmer to compete in five Olympics. He is already the most decorated athlete in the history of the games, with 18 golds and 22 medals overall, and at age 31 remains the biggest star in a sport that will also feature Katie Ledecky and an increasingly diverse pool of potential champions.

Look for Phelps to add to his medal total. He qualified for his three best individual events and will likely be part of all three men's relays on the powerful U.S. team.

Just don't expect another comeback.

"This is it," Phelps said. "No more."

Phelps initially retired after the London Games, only to backtrack on that decision about 18 months later.

Looking back to four years ago, Phelps said he didn't really want to be at the Olympics, even though he was still good enough to capture four golds and two silvers. He came back with a rekindled passion for swimming, only to run into another major challenge when he was arrested for the second time on drunken driving charges.

That led Phelps to overhaul his personal life. He went into therapy, gave up alcohol, got engaged, made peace with his father and became a father when son Boomer was born in May.

No matter what happens in Rio, this is how he wants to go out.

— *The Associated Press*



ALL PHOTOS | The Associated Press

Not so busy for two U.S. stars

Missy Franklin, bottom left, was one of the stars in London, winning four golds and a bronze. The 21-year-old will have a lot more free time on her hands this time after a disappointing performance at the U.S. Trials. Franklin qualified for only two individual events and her relay duties will be limited to the 4x200 freestyle. It's a similar story for another U.S. great, Ryan Lochte, bottom right. The 11-time Olympic medalist sustained a groin injury on the first day of the Trials and managed to qualify for only one individual race — a far cry from the six events (four individual, two relays) he had in London.



Aussie comeback

Australia has traditionally been the second-strongest swimming nation behind the U.S., but the team endured a dismal showing in 2012. Look for a big comeback in Rio. The Aussies returned to form at last year's world championships with seven golds and 16 medals overall. Sisters Cate and Bronte Campbell lead the way, along with Emily Seebohm and Mitch Larkin, right.



Home team

While Brazil will field its largest squad and have the crowd on its side, the home team will be missing its biggest star. World-record holder Cesar Cielo, a three-time Olympic medalist, stunningly failed to qualify at the Brazilian trials. Even so, the local fans should have plenty of reasons to cheer. Established swimmers such as Thiago Pereira, Bruno Fratus and Joana Maranhão are joined by up-and-comers Larissa Oliveira and Etienne Medeiros.

Late nights

For the second time in three Olympics, the schedule has been altered so the swimming events can be televised live in the U.S. during prime time. The change isn't quite as drastic as eight years ago in Beijing, when preliminaries were held in the evening and the finals the following morning. In Rio, the prelims have been moved back to 1 p.m. local time, while the finals won't begin until 10 p.m. — both about three hours later than most meets.

Shadow of doping

Gold medalists Sun Yang of China and Park Tae-hwan, right, of South Korea will both swim in Rio after serving suspensions for doping. And Yuliya Efimova, one of Russia's top medal contenders, was only banned on Monday by FINA after originally being cleared to take part in the Olympics despite her second positive test, drawing the ire of many top swimmers. American Elizabeth Beisel said she is worried the competition in Rio won't be clean.



SPOTLIGHT • GOLF



Golf's return to the Olympics after a 112-year absence will not include the top four players in the world — Jordan Spieth, Rory McIlroy, Dustin Johnson and Jason Day have each withdrawn.

If they're out, why is golf in?

Players don't seem to be embracing the Olympic spirit.

By DOUG FERGUSON

The Associated Press

For the longest time, golf's biggest headache in preparing for a return to the Olympics was getting a new course built in Rio de Janeiro.

That seems like a nuisance compared with its next hurdle: Who's going to play?

Eighteen eligible players over the past two months have pulled out of the Olympics, several specifically citing concerns about the Zika virus.

Rory McIlroy, a four-time major champion with the broadest global appeal among young stars, was the most prominent player to withdraw. That was until Jason Day, the No. 1 player in the world, said he would not be going.

Shane Lowry and Branden Grace are planning to start families and will stay home because of Zika.

Dustin Johnson joined that group, then Jordan Spieth pulled out before the British Open, citing the Zika virus.

The International Golf Federation stopped responding to each withdrawal in June because it was repeating the



FELIPE DANA | *The Associated Press*

The Olympic Golf Course had some struggles being developed before its completion in the spring.

same statement: It is disappointed, but understands that each player has to decide on his own.

"Unfortunately with what's going on with Brazil and Rio with the Zika virus, there's a small chance it could happen, and I just can't put my family through that, especially with the future children we're looking at having," Day said.

While the sport is assured a spot in 2020 in Tokyo, the International Olympic Committee will vote next year to decide if golf stays longer than that. And it doesn't help when there's an All-Star roster of players who won't be there for whatever reasons.

IGF executive director

Antony Scanlon, who has been involved in nine Olympics, believes golf still can put on a good show.

"We gave a commitment to have the best players there," Scanlon said. "The decision they're making are personal. We can't make those decisions for them. All you can do is understand the decision they're making. After the games, we'll have two worthy champions, gold medalists that history will look back on. When the IOC members come to the venue, they're going to have a great time. They'll experience a sport where you can get close to the players and see their passion and determination.

"All we can do is make sure we deliver a great event."

It wasn't supposed to turn out this way.

When golf made its pitch to get back into the Olympics for the first time since St. Louis in 1904, the IGF presented video support from Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson and other top players who offered enthusiasm and unconditional support for Olympic competition.

That was in 2009, before Brazil was devastated by political corruption and an economic meltdown, before concerns over polluted water and whether Rio could provide adequate security. And that was before Zika.

"The Olympic committee has to look at this and go, 'Look, it was a weird situation, so don't penalize golf because of a weird situation,'" Bubba Watson said.

But is it as simple as blaming it on Rio?

No women eligible for the Olympics have dropped out. Then again, the women do not have the chance to play on a big stage like the Olympics. All three of their U.S. majors are held the week before the men's majors and often get lost in coverage.

The perception is that Zika is an easy way out from going to South America for an Olympic competition that has little history behind it in golf. And the leading organizations did themselves no favors by cramming their biggest events into the summer ahead of the games.

After the Olympics, PGA Tour players go right into the FedEx Cup, and then for Americans and Europeans, it's off to the Ryder Cup.

"Other athletes have been training four and eight years to go to the Olympics. I can see why they're going because it's the pinnacle of their sport," Lowry said. "It's not the pinnacle of golf yet. It could be in 20 years' time. But it's not like winning the U.S. Open or winning the Masters or playing in the Ryder Cup."

SPOTLIGHT • POLITICS OF THE GAMES

Sometimes, athletes find a way to compete

This year's 'Refugee Team' not a unique occurrence in Games.

By SAMANTHA PELL

The Associated Press

The IOC decided not to allow Russian runner Yulia Stepanova to compete in Rio after previously, there were indications she would

have been allowed to compete while the rest of the Russian team was banned. Stepanova had previously been sanctioned for doping but had served as a valuable whistleblower, assisting authorities in their investigation. The IOC thanked Stepanova for her help but stated that her case did "not satisfy the ethical requirements for an athlete to enter the Olympic Games." Stepanova almost join this list of Olympians who competed under unusual conditions.



MICHAEL SOHN | *The Associated Press*

Yusra Mardini from Syria will be one of 10 refugees competing at the 2016 Olympics under the Olympic flag.

1956, 1960, 1964 Summer and Winter Games

From 1956 to 1964, East Germany and West Germany came together and participated as the Unified Team of Germany. In the case of the Germany Olympic soccer team, the West and the East played each other for the right to represent Germany in the Olympics. The team's Olympic flag looked like the German flag, except with white Olympic rings in the middle. Germany reunited as one nation in 1992.



Associated Press file photo

West and East Germany used to compete under the same flag.

1980 Moscow Summer

Under the direction of U.S. President Jimmy Carter, 65 countries decided to participate in a U.S.-led boycott of the Olympics because of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. However, some athletes from boycotting countries participated in the games under the Olympic flag. Britain was one of those countries that competed under the Olympic flag. Sebastian Coe, now president of the IAAF, won the first of his two gold medals in the 1,500 meters under the Olympic flag. The Olympic Anthem replaced the athletes' national anthem at the medal ceremonies.



STEVE CREUTZMANN | *The Associated Press file photo*

Gymnasts from a Unified Team made up of 12 former Soviet republics is congratulated by the Japanese team after winning the men's team competition at Barcelona, Spain, during the 1992 Summer Olympics.

1984 Los Angeles Summer

Starting in 1984, Taiwanese athletes began participating at the Olympics as "Chinese Taipei," after competing earlier as both the Republic of China and then Taiwan. The term is deliberately ambiguous because China does not recognize Taiwan politically. At the flag ceremony at the Olympics, the National Flag Anthem of the Republic of China is played instead of the National Anthem of the Republic of China.

1992 Albertville Winter

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, six states — Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan — came together and created a "Unified Team." The team won 23 medals overall.

1992 Barcelona Summer

The Unified Team consisted of 12 of the 15 former Soviet Union republics — Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The team earned 112 medals, 45 gold. Athletes from Yugoslavia and Macedonia also competed as independent participants, with Macedonia not having its national Olympic committee formed and Yugoslavia under United Nations sanctions.

2000 Sydney Summer

At the 2000 Summer Olympics, athletes from East Timor competed as independent athletes under the Olympic flag. East Timor was in transition to becoming independent at the time.

2012 London Summer

Four athletes competed as independent Olympic athletes in 2012. They hailed from the former Netherlands Antilles and from South Sudan. The Netherlands Antilles Olympic Committee had its membership withdrawn in July 2011, but three athletes who qualified for 2012 were still allowed to participate under the Olympic flag.

2014 Sochi Winter

Three athletes from India entered the games as independent participants because of the suspension of the Indian Olympic Association by the IOC since 2012. However, on Feb. 11, four days after the start of the games, the IOC reinstated the Indian Olympic Association and allowed the remaining two athletes who had yet to participate to compete under the Indian flag.



2016 Rio Summer

Under the name of the Refugee Olympic Team, 10 refugees will be competing in Rio de Janeiro under the Olympic flag. The refugee athletes range in origin from Syria, South Sudan, Ethiopia and Congo. The IOC also authorized athletes from Kuwait to compete under the Olympic flag in Rio because their national Olympic committee remains suspended over government interference.

SPOTLIGHT • HOW MEDALS ARE MADE



DAVID J. PHILLIP | The Associated Press

By TIM REYNOLDS

The Associated Press

Gold medals are the ultimate prize in Olympic sport.

They're also a misnomer.

There's no such thing as a "gold" medal, not at the Rio Olympics — and really, not ever. Second-place finishers get silver medals and oddly enough, so do the winners, albeit theirs are plated in a tiny amount of gold.

That factoid caught even some of those who were put in charge of making the 5,000 or so medals needed for these Rio Games by surprise.

"Our operators and some of our developers had the same question," said Victor Hugo Berbert, who managed the medal-making process and was part of a team of about 100 people at the Brazilian Mint who were part of the project. "We can produce medals out of pure gold. But we know how expensive they are. So gold medals ... are not exactly pure gold."

They're barely gold at all.

The medals given to champions at

Precious metal

Gold medals in Rio are barely gold at all. Here's why.

these Olympics will weigh just over a pound, so to make them entirely from gold would have cost about \$23,500 apiece. By taking the silver medals and then plating them in a tiny amount of Brazilian gold, the actual value of the metal inside those medals is about \$600. Not that the athletes will mind.

Though there are a number of exceptions, it's not uncommon for the medal-making process to fall to the host country's national mint. That was the case this year, with Berbert saying it took about two years for the entire process to play itself out — starting with discussions on design with the host organizing committee, sketches, ideas, budgeting and ultimately approval from the IOC.

The medals for the Olympics are done. Work is ongoing on the medals for the Paralympics, which follow in Brazil later this summer.

"We needed to develop the whole concept of the medal. We worked a lot with the committee about the art, about the design, about the materials," Berbert said. "We tried to catch what they wanted to show in a Olympic medal and we took our experience, our know-how in producing medals and turn that into what they want. The art came from the committee, but our team needed to sculpt them."

The gold is certified to have a certain amount of purity and is considered very high quality. The silver and "bronze" medals (and by the way,

they're not really bronze) are largely made from recycled materials, which is a source of pride for the team that Berbert represents.

The silver for both the first- and second-place medals was culled in part from mirrors and plates. The bronze medals are made in part from the same copper that goes into Brazilian coin, so the mint had plenty of that to use in the Olympic project. About 40 percent of what was needed was already on hand when the process started.

The mint will store the medals and basically deliver them to the organizing committee on a day-to-day basis — the medals that will be awarded on a given day will be kept safe as can be until needed.

"We have special dates with the committee where they want them delivered," Berbert said. "There are logistics on how to transfer them to them ... until then, we keep the medals in a safe room. But all the Olympic medals are packaged now, identified by the event and competition, all organized and ready to be delivered."

SPOTLIGHT • THE COSTS OF COMPETITION



Digging deep (into their pockets)

The hardest part about making the games for some is affording it.

MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ | The Associated Press

By COLBY ITKOWITZ

The Washington Post

As a decathlete, Jeremy Taiwo needs different shoes for nearly every event. He has high jump shoes and long jump shoes. He has shoes for sprinting and shoes for distance running. He needs three different pairs for shot put, javelin and discus. Then he needs special spikes for his shoes for the pole vault.

There's weekly massage therapy. There are coaches' fees and travel costs. There's nutrition, and Taiwo must consume daily the caloric intake of several average men.

For Taiwo, 26, of Seattle, the expenses were a constant stress, and sometimes, when money was tight, it was hard to remember if the struggle was worth it.

This is the reality for many Olympic athletes. Being one

of the best in the world at an Olympic sport comes at a price.

Many athletes scrimp and save, and look for ways to raise money on their own. They take side jobs, but their full-time occupation is training, and their bodies need rest. Dick's Sporting Goods started a program last year to hire Olympic athletes to work in its stores, offering a generous hourly wage and flexible schedules. Taiwo got one of those jobs but had to cut back to once a week because of his training schedule.

More than 100 athletes have started GoFundMe pages asking for donations for new gear, to fly family to Rio and for living expenses.

Taiwo was among them. Since launching his fundraiser last year, he has surpassed his goal of \$15,000. That money, most of which he said he's

“

"I can't express — I just, I felt beyond grateful and I felt I didn't deserve it, but I also felt a lot of pressure. These people are helping me and giving me their money. What if I don't make the team? What if I don't realize my dream?"

JEREMY TAIWO

Of using GoFundMe to raise money for his track expenses

already spent, has allowed him to focus on his training.

"I can't express — I just, I felt beyond grateful and I felt I didn't deserve it, but I also felt a lot of pressure," Taiwo said

in an interview. "These people are helping me and giving me their money. What if I don't make the team? What if I don't realize my dream?"

Although superstars in such high-profile sports as swimming and gymnastics can sign endorsement deals that pay six figures, and winning a medal does come with a (taxed) cash prize, generally there's not a lot of money coming in for Olympic athletes. And only a fraction of the USOC's budget goes to modest stipends for direct athlete support.

And for lesser-watched sports there's almost no money allocated, let alone aid for the athletes. Jennifer Wu, for example, plays table tennis. In Beijing, where she's from, it's a highly regarded sport, but not in the United States. Wu wasn't confident that she could make the Olympics

with the Chinese team, so she moved to the United States eight years ago with the goal of becoming a citizen and joining Team USA. She moved to New York not knowing a word of English but studied hard between her four to five hours of almost daily practice.

Wu, 26, is headed to Rio, but she, too, struggles with finances. She coaches for extra income, but that cuts into her training. She started a GoFundMe page for money to train and compete back in China, where she can hone her skills. She's yet to hit her \$25,000 goal.

"China is the best in the world; it's like the NBA is here, so very popular, everyone loves to watch, everyone loves to play, but I will try my best," Wu said. "I don't want to just go [to Rio] for fun, I want to do my best."

SPOTLIGHT • ENDORSEMENT SUPERSTARS

Advertisers reaching outside mainstream

The 'face of the Games' may not be somebody who you've ever heard of.

By EDDIE PELLIS

The Associated Press

This year more than ever, the so-called "face" of the Olympics could be a wrestler, or a fencer, or an athlete who most of the world has never heard of before.

Armed with data that measures popularity in much deeper ways than in years past, and in hopes of picking the perfect storytellers to share their own stories, many top sponsors for the Summer Games are digging deeper into the roster of athletes for their marketing campaigns.

For every Kerri Walsh-Jennings making an Olympic pitch to consumers, there are two Jordan Burroughs. For every Missy Franklin, there's another Ibtihaj Muhammad.

"The distinctiveness and depth of the marketing is much more pronounced this Games than it has been previously," said Lisa Baird, the chief marketing officer of the U.S. Olympic Committee. "Its partners are going to the less-known athletes, and realizing the faces of the Games could be someone very different."

Burroughs is leading the way among this generation of "new" faces. Though the thoughtful, family-man wrestler is a defending Olympic gold medalist, he certainly doesn't have the same name recognition as Usain Bolt or Michael Phelps. That didn't stop Hershey, Chobani and Ralph Lauren — three major players on the USOC's sponsorship roster — from using him prominently as part of their campaigns.

Burroughs is married with a newborn and a 2-year-old. On his well-maintained personal website, he describes himself as an avid reader, fond of video games and interested in owning his own shoe

and clothes store sometime in the future.

A self-styled normal guy, he has 140,000 Twitter followers, though that number only scratches the surface of the data available to advertisers as they seek the perfect pitchman.

MVP Index, a company co-founded by Jordan Spieth's father, helps sponsors dig deeper into an athlete's or entertainer's overall social-media impression. It looks at not only how many posts a celebrity makes, but how much attention those posts draw. Using a formula, it puts a value on certain types of posts depending on how well they draw an audience and where they're posted. It makes the same judgments about the sort of views and responses those posts receive.

For example, Burroughs' Instagram posts generated 1.5 million impressions for Chobani over a 90-day period with 21,400 "engagements" — people who respond to the posts. Because of that, and many other numbers, Burroughs ranks second behind U.S. soccer player Alex Morgan among the Olympians MVP Index is tracking.

"Social media is more than a sentence," says the company's chief marketing officer, Kyle Nelson. "A sentence is a post. Social media is a conversation. I want an athlete who's going to build me into the conversation. It's, how often can I be in front of an audience? Even if that audience is far smaller than what everyone else has, the totality of that conversation is going to be more meaningful."

And yet, as much as the companies appreciate numbers that help them break down audiences into finer and finer portions, "the athlete has to fit within the story



Associated Press file photos



U.S. Olympic gold medalist wrestler Jordan Burroughs, above, and fencer Ibtihaj Muhammad, left, are leading the way among a generation of 'new faces' of athletes who most of the world has never heard of who advertisers expose to a broader audience.

and campaign we're trying to do," said David Palmer, who leads partnership and sponsorship at Hershey, which is in its first Olympics with the USOC.

Burroughs is a big part of Hershey's "Hello From Home" campaign — and the commercial he shot, in which he receives a box of candy bars, along with some heartfelt, handwritten letters from back home, is a genuine tearjerker.

Visa, an Olympic sponsor for the past three decades, has a long list of the well-known — Walsh-Jennings, Franklin, Carli Lloyd — along with those who are not yet household names. Namely Muhammad, the Muslim fencer who chose her sport in part because it allowed her to compete while wearing a hijab.

The story of the

out-of-the-box campaigns is being run by TD Ameritrade, which is focusing on building for the future. One of the ads paired four current Olympians — including track's David Oliver and diving's David Boudia — with four teenagers who may compete in 2020.

The names Tia Jones (track), Damion Thomas (track), Jordan Windle (diving) and Sylvie Binder (fencing) may not resonate with many outside their own sports now. But four years from now, in Tokyo, they very well could.

"We wanted to do something different, so we started thinking about our brand message," said Dedra M. DeLilli, the company's director of corporate sponsorships. "There's the concept of everyone needing to plan for the future. That certainly resonates for the next generation of hopefuls. It's an avenue to tell that story in a way that's authentic to our brand."

The take-home message for the advertisers this year: Make your money count. Sports marketing expert Joe Favorito said, "you can't do it anymore by just saying, 'So and so has 3 million Twitter followers, let's go get him.'"

Which is how TD Ameritrade also ended up with the 38-year-old Bryan Brothers of tennis doubles fame ("Probably nearing retirement. Fit our core demographic," DeLilli said) and why Hershey is turning things upside-down in a quirky Reese's ad campaign that features skier Lindsey Vonn (Winter sports stars like summer sports, too).

"A company can still go out and buy an audience," Favorito said. "But more and more, they're looking for authentic return on the investment. They want an engaged audience. They want a unique audience. They want people to understand what their business is, and that's what we're seeing in some of these Olympic campaigns."

30-year-old from Maplewood, N.J., has been widely circulated in the run-up to the Olympics. Visa chose her not only for her well-spoken poise, but also to be part of a campaign that emphasizes "acceptance" — dovetailing the Olympic ideals of the world coming together with the company's longstanding pitch of having the globe's most-accepted card.

"We said, 'Every single face on team Visa is not just going to be a super athlete, but they're going to have a story behind them and some form of character that draws us to them and represents the concept of acceptance,'" said Visa's chief brand and innovation marketing officer, Chris Curtin.

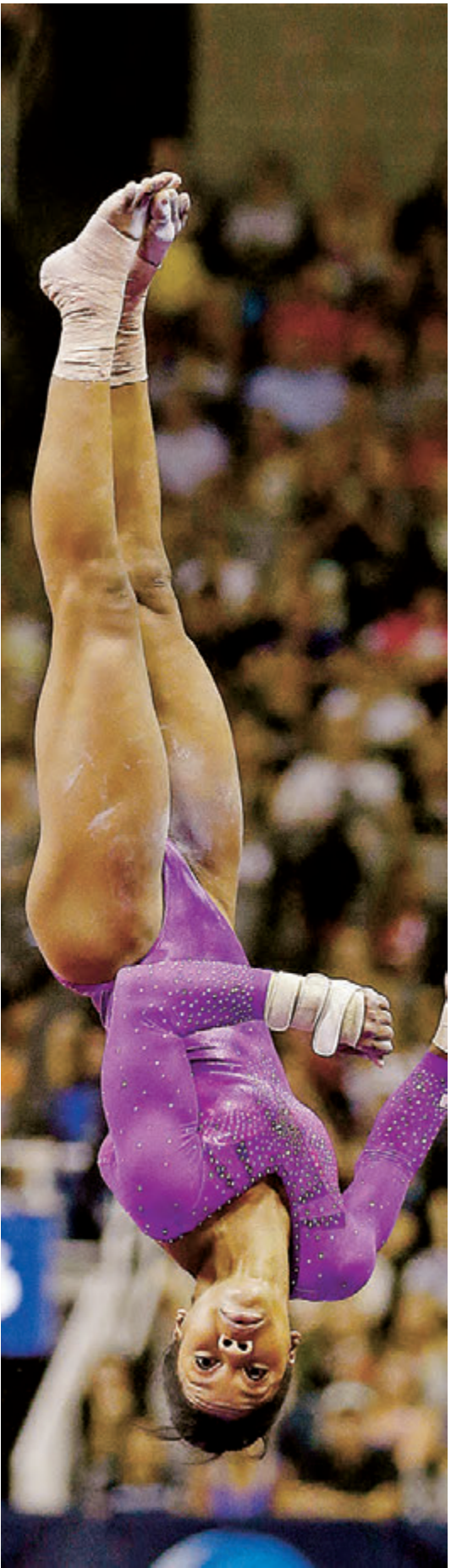
Visa's list of 18 athletes covers 11 sports and nine countries, and that's not including the support it plans to give to refugee athletes who will compete under the Olympic flag this summer.

Possibly one of the most

RIO 2016 SCHEDULE SNAPSHOT

	AUGUST																		
SPORT	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Archery			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•									
Athletics										•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
- Marathon												•							•
- Race Walk										•							•		
Badminton									•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Basketball				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Beach Volleyball				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Boxing				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Canoe Slalom					•	•	•	•	•	•									
Canoe Sprint													•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Cycling																			
- BMX															•	•	•		
- Mountain Bike																		•	•
- Road Race				•	•														
- Road Time Trial								•											
- Track									•	•	•	•	•	•					
Diving					•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Equestrian																			
- Dressage								•	•	•			•						
- Eventing				•	•	•	•	•											
- Jumping												•		•	•		•		
Fencing				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•							
Golf									•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	
Gymnastics																			
- Artistic				•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•				
- Rhythmic																	•	•	•
- Trampoline										•	•								
Handball				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Hockey				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		
Judo				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•								
Marathon Swimming				•	•								•	•		•		•	
Modern Pentathlon																	•	•	
Rowing				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•								
Rugby				•	•	•	•	•	•	•									
Sailing						•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			
Shooting				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•							
Soccer	•	•			•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•	•		•	•	
Swimming				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•								
Synchronized Swimming												•	•	•		•	•		
Table Tennis				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•				
Taekwondo															•	•	•	•	
Tennis				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•							
Triathlon																•		•	
Volleyball				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Water Polo				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•							
Weightlifting				•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•					
Wrestling												•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

All competition schedules are subject to change.
Source: Rio 2016



BEN MARGOT | The Associated Press
Gabby Douglas competes on the vault during the U.S. Trials in San Jose, Calif., earlier this month. Douglas and the U.S. will compete from Aug. 8-11 and Aug. 14-16.

AP



SUMMER OLYMPICS

All the games in Rio de Janeiro and across Brazil will take place from August 3-21.

BARRA OLYMPIC PARK

BRAZIL

ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

Manaus
Amazônia Arena

Salvador
Brasilia
Belo Horizonte
Rio de Janeiro
Sao Paulo

Fonte Nova Arena
Mané Garrincha
Mineirão Stadium
Maracanã, Olympic
Corinthians Arena

Sources: Maps4News/HERE; Rio2016

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