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The mayor of Beijing Wang Qishan waves the Olympic flag

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MEDAL COUNT

International Medals

MEDAL COUNT

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	United States	35	39	29	103
2	China	32	17	14	63
3	Russia	27	27	38	92
4	Australia	17	16	16	49
5	Japan	16	9	12	37

New Zealand Medal Count

Gold 3
 Silver 2
 Bronze 0

Athens / Aquatics

Phelps Sets New Standard



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 Reuters

Paul Verich on efforts of kiwi swimmers at Olympics
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31/08/2004 01:50 PM
 Julian Linden
 Swimming went more than three decades before discovering someone to better the Olympic records set by Mark Spitz, but the wait to find a challenger to the mark set by Michael Phelps could last another century.

Spitz set the benchmark for Olympic swimming by winning seven gold medals at the 1972 Munich Games but Phelps raised the bar even higher in Athens.

The American teenager, unrivalled as the star of the pool in Athens, won eight medals, including six golds, to match Soviet gymnast Alexander Dityatin's 1980 record for the most medals at one Games.

He had been promised US\$1 million if he could equal Spitz by winning seven golds but he could potentially earn 50 times that amount after creating his own legacy.

"I just wanted to be the first Michael Phelps," he explained.

Phelps, 19, won both individual medley and both butterfly finals as well as two relay golds. He got a bronze in the 200 freestyle behind Ian Thorpe and Pieter van den Hoogenband and another in the 4x100 freestyle relay surprisingly won by South Africa.



Reuters

He broke his own world record to win the 400 individual

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medley, the first of the 32 finals, and was still going strong at the end, beating his team mate and world record holder Ian Crocker in the 100 butterfly final.

Phelps gave up his spot in the medley relay final to Crocker who repaid him by ensuring the US won the gold in world record time. Although he didn't swim the final, Phelps got a medal because he raced in the heats.

Medal Count

The US topped the swimming medal count with 12 golds. Australia were second with seven followed by Japan with three and the Netherlands and Ukraine with two each.

Otylia Jędrzejczak gave Poland their first Olympic swimming champion then announced she would donate her medal to charity while Kirsty Coventry provide her troubled homeland of Zimbabwe with their first champion.

Teenager Laure Manaudou became the first French female swimming champion while Kosuke Kitajima won the breaststroke double for Japan.

China won a single gold in the pool but were the dominant force in diving, winning six out of eight titles and prompting speculation about a clean sweep when they stage the Games in Beijing in 2008.

Hungary beat Serbia and Montenegro 8-7 to win the men's water polo title for the eighth time since 1932 while Italy beat Greece in the women's final.

Russia won the team gold in synchronised swimming while Anastasia Davydova and Anastasia Ermakove got a second gold after teaming up to win the duet.

Eight Records

There were just eight world records set during the eight days of swimming competition, the lowest count since Mexico City in 1968, with six coming in the relays.

The most surprising was the US women breaking the 4x200 freestyle mark, which had stood for 17 years, to erase the last of the East German records from the books.

Aaron Peirsol broke the 100 backstroke world record as the lead-off swimmer in the medley relay to finish with three golds although he almost lost one to a disqualification that was overturned on appeal.



Reuters

Australia's Jodie Henry, the outstanding female swimmer in Athens, was involved in three world records.

She lowered the 100 freestyle to 53.52 in the semi-finals then returned to win gold the next day, winning the hearts of her nation with her laid-back approach and giggling her way through her first Olympics as though she was racing at a school carnival.

"It's just been a dream. My first Olympics and three golds and three world records. I never imagined I'd do that," Henry said.

Australia's Petria Thomas also finished with three golds, teaming up with Henry in the two winning relays as well as taking out the 100 butterfly.

Thomas had almost given up on ever winning an elusive gold after years of serious injuries and near-misses, but struck it rich at her third and final attempt.

"You work for these sort of moments your whole life so now I'm going to enjoy this for the rest of more life," she said.

Great Champions

Athens also marked the end of the Olympic trail for a host of other great champions including Alexander Popov and Jenny Thompson.

Popov, who won the 50-100 freestyle double in Barcelona and Atlanta, slipped out almost unnoticed after failing to make it past the heats.

Thompson won two relay silvers to finish her Olympic career with a total of 12, one more than Spitz and Matt Biondi and the most by any swimmer.

Thorpe, who won three gold medals in Sydney as a 17-year-old, got another two in Athens by claiming the 200-400 double. He also won a relay silver and a bronze in the 100 freestyle in his first attempt at that event.

Van den Hoogenband proved he is still the fastest man on water by winning the blue riband 100 freestyle for the

second time while his Dutch team mate De Bruijn lost two of the three titles she won in Sydney, retaining just the 50 freestyle to earn a fourth Olympic gold.

Ukraine's Yana Klochkova also claimed her fourth by completing the medley double for the second Games running, while Californian Natalie Coughlin won five medals including two golds at her first Olympics.

