

LONDON

2012



OLYMPIC GAMES PREVIEW

A Stunning Olympic Site

Even before the first athletes take the podium, this year's Olympic games have already set a record. London is the only city to host the Olympics three times in the modern era.

The fact that London has hosted the games more than any other city — it also hosted the 1908 and 1948 games — speaks volumes about its status as a world capital that embodies the Olympic spirit.

A GLOBAL ICON

Double-decker buses, tea time, the changing of the guard at Buckingham Palace. All these are symbols of London, a place that has been a center of wealth and political power for centuries.

London is believed to have been settled by Romans more than 2,000 years ago on the River Thames. Since then, it has been the site of some of history's most important moments, from the famous decisions of the British royal family to the influential plays of Shakespeare and the air raids of World War II.

Its status as a military, cultural and financial capital changed the entire Western world, especially as Great Britain's influence expanded around the globe. There was a time when, quite literally, the sun never set on the lands ruled from London.

A NEW CITY

London has changed a lot since its time as the capital of a far-flung global empire that reached its peak in the 19th century. It's still a city that embraces its important place in history, but it also has become more cosmopolitan and modern than many peo-

ple could have imagined just a few decades ago.

London's population has reached nearly 8 million people who come from all around the world. According to the National Centre for Language, more than 300 different languages are spoken in London, making it one of the world's most culturally diverse cities.

You can also see the face of the new London in its eye-catching modern architecture, including the London Eye — a giant Ferris wheel that has changed the city's skyline — and the skyscraper at 30 St. Mary Axe, commonly called the Gherkin.

A LASTING IMPRESSION

This year's Olympics are also going to leave their mark on the city. Part of the reason London was chosen to host the games for an unprecedented third time is that the city planned for how the Olympic Village and city infrastructure would improve life for London's residents and visitors for many decades to come.

Apartments built to house the athletes, for example, will become affordable housing for low-income residents of London, and the city's famous subway system — commonly called the "tube" or the "underground" — is being upgraded to deal with increased traffic loads both during and after the Olympics.



History Adds to Spectacle

With a city as rich in history as London, it only makes sense that the 2012 Olympics will take full advantage of their culturally significant setting.

From the Tower of London to Buckingham Palace and beyond, this year's Olympics will take place near some of the most famous landmarks in the world.

Here are a few historic sites with Olympic sports playing out nearby.

HADLEIGH CASTLE

Event: Mountain biking

History: In ruins today, the castle was built in the 13th century and was a symbol of royal power for hundreds of years. It served both as a fortification and a residence for generations of royals, and today it serves as a frequently photographed icon of romanticized British rule.

WINDSOR CASTLE

Event: Rowing and canoeing

History: Regarded for both its architecture and history, Windsor Castle is still used as a royal residence today. It is the world's largest inhabited castle, with more than 500 people who live on site to take care of the Queen and her property.

RIVER THAMES

Event: Equestrian

History: Prehistoric people settled on the River Thames thousands of years ago, and it has always been one of England's most important transportation hubs. London grew up around the river, and it has become a vital scenic and cultural part of London's identity.

DORSET COUNTY

Event: Sailing

History: Known for its outstanding



PHOTO: COURTESY OF LONDON 2012

Originally built in 1745, Horse Guards Parade is one of many historic sites that will form a backdrop for the 2012 Olympics, in this case for beach volleyball.

natural beauty, Dorset County is located on the southwestern coast of England. It is comprised mainly of small towns and villages. Modern tourists flock there to see its breathtaking outcrops of rocks, hills and

coastline.

HYDE PARK

Event: Triathlon

History: This massive royal park in central London is adjacent to

Kensington Palace and Kensington Gardens. It has been used for 400 years, including the site of the Crystal Palace in the Great Exhibition of 1851. Mass protests in Hyde Park have helped to shape modern British life.

LONDON 2012 VENUES



OLYMPIC STADIUM

Events: A total of 208 outdoor events will be held here

Design: Engineered to be the most sustainable stadium in history, it is built from low-carbon concrete and uses far less steel than similar buildings. It is located on an island and can be reached only by bridge.

After the Games: The stadium will continue under public ownership and is expected to host large-scale athletic and cultural events for London residents.



VELODROME

Events: Track cycling

Design: A glass wall extends 360 degrees around the Velodrome, giving spectators a clear look at the entire Olympic Park. It is engineered to be very Earth friendly, including the installation of a natural ventilation system that does not require air conditioning and extensive use of natural lighting.

After the Games: It will become a cycling hub for Londoners, with new courses added for both mountain biking and road cycling. It will also become an attraction for cycling enthusiasts around the world.



AQUATICS CENTER

Events: Swimming, diving, synchronized swimming

Design: One of the most visually spectacular buildings in the 2012 Olympics, it has a wavelike roofline and massive bridge that serves as a gateway to the Olympic Park. The vast majority of Olympic visitors will actually walk over the top of the venue to reach the Olympics.

After the Games: It will be converted into a community swimming center. Part of the building is designed to be temporary and will be removed. The rest will be used for clubs, schools, and family-friendly swimming activities.



BRANDS HATCH

Events: Paralympics road cycling

Design: A famous automobile racetrack in Kent, the Brands Hatch circuit has hosted the British Grand Prix — one of the most prestigious prizes in motorsports — 12 times.

After the Games: It will revert back to its traditional role as a racetrack for cars.

LONDON 2012 VENUES

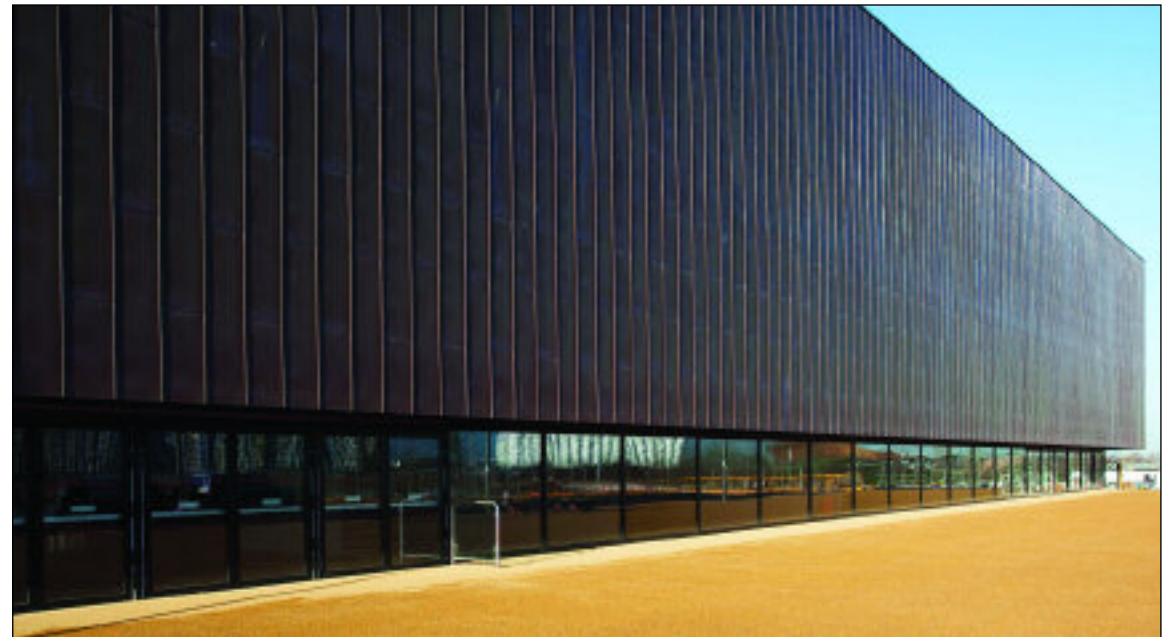


WATER POLO ARENA

Events: Water polo

Design: One of many temporary venues for the 2012 Olympics, the Water Polo Arena will have both competition and warm-up pools. It is located next to the Aquatics Center.

After the Games: It will be removed from the site. Event organizers expect it to be used elsewhere in Britain for temporary sporting events in the future.



COPPER BOX

Events: Handball, goalball, fencing

Design: Like its name suggests, the Copper Box is covered in copper metal sheeting, most of which is recycled. Over time, it will change from a rich brown to a metallic green to give it a natural patina.

After the Games: It will be converted into a community sports center where athletes can train and indoor sporting events can be held.



RIVERBANK ARENA

Events: Field hockey, soccer

Design: One of the world's most unusual soccer fields, the Riverbank Arena has a blue playing surface. Soccer players will use a yellow ball that should show up well against the blue field.

After the Games: It will be moved to a different area called Eaton Manor. There will be permanent seating for 3,000 people to watch athletic events, and the seating can be expanded for up to 15,000 spectators when necessary for larger events.



EXCEL

Events: A wide variety of events, 143 in all, will be held here

Design: ExCel was designed to host huge conferences and exhibitions in London. It won't need any additional construction to host sports ranging from boxing to wrestling and weightlifting.

After the Games: ExCel will once again become a conference and exhibition center. It has enough square footage to host some of the largest trade shows and events in Europe.

More Live TV Coverage

For many people, the biggest appeal of the Olympics is the thrill of watching history unfold in front of them. As records are broken, national pride is stoked and countless athletes watch their dreams come true, there's nothing like watching the action take place in a live video feed from across the world.

For the London 2012 games, more events will be broadcast live than ever before.

NBC, which owns the exclusive Olympics broadcast rights in the United States, has said that it will make every single event — 302 in all — available to watch live, either broadcast on their television network or streamed online. That makes the 2012 Olympics the first in which every single event can be viewed live via video here in America.

NBC has even struck a partnership with YouTube, the world's largest online video site, to provide the technology that will allow all these live video feeds to take place.

NBC plans to stream the video at its website, NBCOlympics.com.

"We'll also include replays of Web-exclusive events, all television broadcasts, interviews with the athletes and exclusive daily segments about London 2012," a press release from NBC stated. "Live streams will be available across our mobile platforms, providing an extraordinary 360-degree coverage of The Games."

The use of new technologies, from tablets to mobile devices and online video, will make the 2012 games the most connected ever.

For true Olympics fans, that's a great thing.



The Greenest Games Ever

The Olympic games have long been about bringing nations and cultures together in one place. For the London games, that also means doing so in the greenest way possible.

London's Olympic Organizing Committee has taken steps to make the 2012 games environmentally friendly, from the construction of the venues to use of resources such as water and electricity.

Here are some ways the London games are taking extraordinary steps to minimize their impact on the planet.

CONSTRUCTION

One of the biggest goals of this year's Olympics was to reduce the carbon emissions required to hold the games.

That was partially achieved by re-purposing many existing buildings to be used during the Olympics. A great example is the giant ExCel center, which normally houses some of the biggest trade shows and conventions in Europe, being renovated to hold more than 140 different sporting events. That means fewer new buildings had to be constructed.

Many events are also being housed in temporary venues that will be removed after the games are finished.

The new buildings that were constructed for the 2012 Olympics were all designed to be useful long after the games are over. They were also designed using the most sustainable practices possible, including reduction of the dust, debris and carbon output during the building

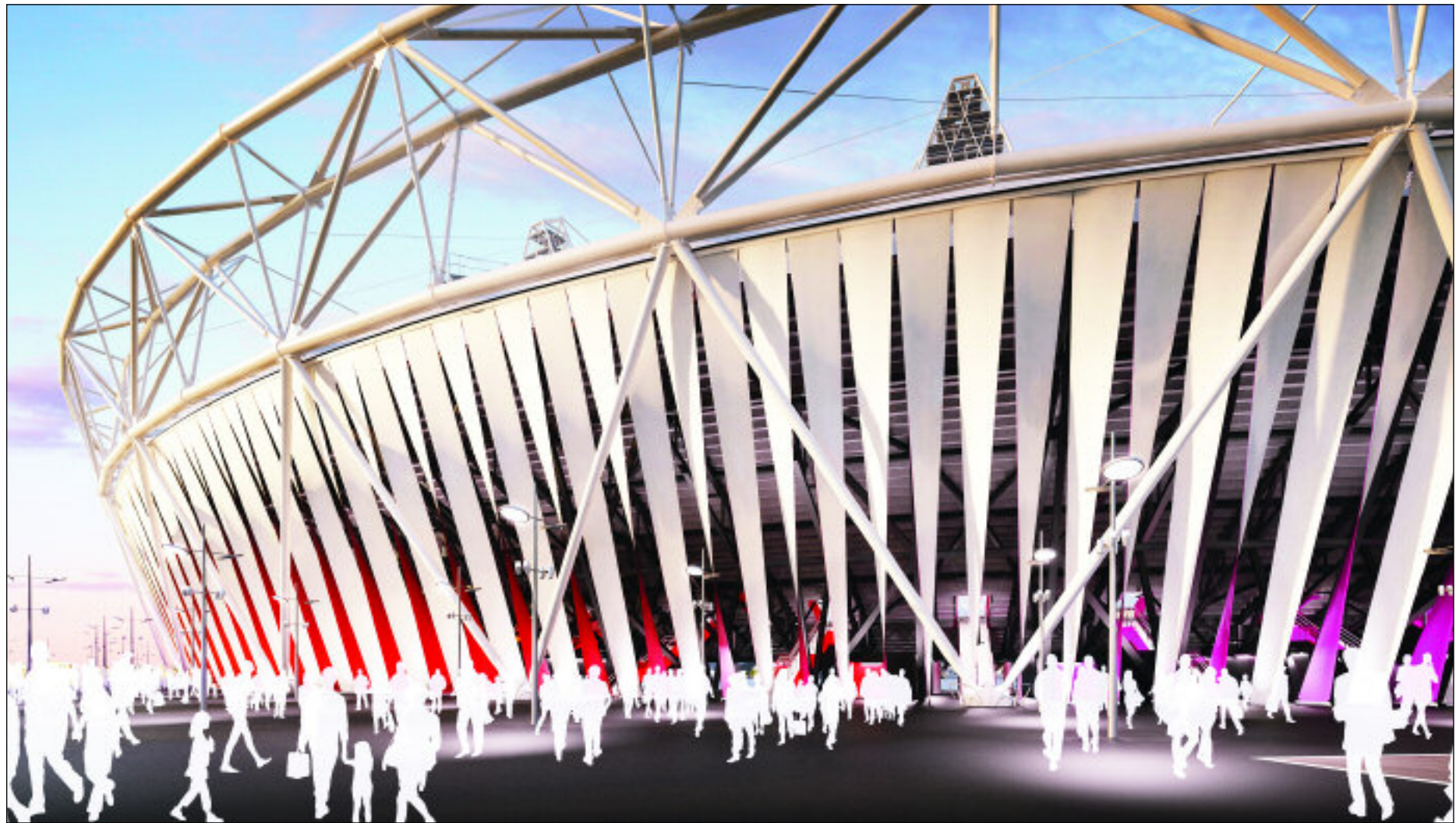


PHOTO: COURTESY OF LONDON 2012

Dow Chemical is producing a "wrap" made of special fabric that is designed to be sustainable, one of many green initiatives in the 2012 games process.

CONSERVATION

As part of the games' commitment to conserving natural resources, around 250 acres of green spaces have been constructed in and around the Olympic Park. The goal is not only to beautify that part of eastern London for many years to come, but

also to minimize the chances of flooding in the area and increase London's biodiversity.

Extensive efforts were made to reduce both the water and electricity consumption during the games. Many events will make use of the sun's energy to provide natural lighting, minimizing the need for power-hungry television lights.

Waste will also be removed by barge from the Olympics site, and event organizers say 90 percent of the waste will be reused or recycled.

HEALTH AND COMMUNITY

Finally, the 2012 games were designed to improve the community in and around

the Olympic Park in east London.

More than 30 bridges, for example, are being constructed over waterways in the area to connect communities that were previously separated by water. This encourages more interaction between Londoners, makes outdoor exercising more convenient and beautifies the area at the same time.

Symbols of the Olympics

MEDALS

Gold, silver and bronze medals are awarded to the top three finishers of every event. The design of each medal is decided by the Olympic organizers before each of the games, and the front side of each medal has traditionally shown the Greek goddess of victory, Nike.

FLAMES

Moving an Olympic flame from Greece to the site of the Olympic games is a longstanding tradition.

Since 1936, when the games were held in Berlin, a ceremonial flame has been lit in Greece and then carried to the location of the games. A torch is carried in a relay often by celebrities, but also by ordinary people, to represent the games' historical connection to ancient Greece.

RINGS

The interlocking Olympic ring symbol is among the most recognizable emblems in the world.

Conceived in 1912 by Pierre de Coubertin, who was the principal founder of the Olympics as we know them today, the rings represent the five continents from which athletes gather to compete. It's a visual symbol of inclusiveness.

FANFARE

In the United States, today's most recognizable Olympic music is the "Olympic Fanfare and Theme" by John Williams. Its fast-paced, trumpet-heavy melody has been broadcast with each Olympics since he wrote it for the 1984 games in Los Angeles.



Opening Ceremonies

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM DANNY BOYLE'S BIGGEST SHOW EVER

The opening ceremonies are among the most anticipated parts of any Olympic games. It is estimated that roughly one billion viewers, or 15 percent of all people on Planet Earth, witnessed the opening of the Beijing games four years ago.

Shrouded in secrecy until they're shown in front of hundreds of millions of people around the world, the opening ceremonies are a chance to showcase the host country's culture and also set the tone for the games themselves.

While the specifics of the show will be kept secret until the ceremonies take place, we can piece together some details about what viewers can expect from London's opening ceremonies on July 27.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Award-winning filmmaker Danny Boyle will take charge of the opening ceremonies for 2012.

Boyle's most famous film is *Slumdog Millionaire*, which won him an Oscar for best director and made him one of the most well-known British storytellers in the modern era.

The finished product is expected to be spectacular given Boyle's track record of films filled with suspense, drama and nuanced charm.

Other people on the production team include:

— Stephen Daldry, who directed film and stage versions of "Billy Elliott."



PHOTO: COURTESY OF LONDON 2012

The Olympic Stadium in east London will be the centerpiece of the 2012 opening ceremonies. James Bond, played by Daniel Craig, is expected to play a role in the event.

— Mark Fisher, the production genius behind Pink Floyd, Rolling Stones and U2 concerts.

— Hamish Hamilton, a broadcast video specialist who works with big-name musical acts including Madonna and Jennifer Lopez.

— Catherine Ugwu, a specialist in large-scale live events including the Asian Games, Commonwealth Games, and the Vancouver Olympics.

JAMES BOND?

The British press has wide-

ly reported that James Bond, played by Daniel Craig, along with the Queen of England herself will play a role in an opening ceremonies film. According to numerous British tabloids, Boyle directed a short Bond film featuring Craig that was filmed inside some of the most private rooms in Buckingham Palace. The film is rumored to be shown as part of the ceremonies, with Bond embarking on a mission to open the 2012 games and arriving at the main Olympic stadium by helicopter.

TRADITIONAL FORMAT

The opening ceremonies routine is quite predictable, even if the visual and entertainment portions behind it are not.

Every opening ceremony must include the same basic pattern. The head of state — in this case, the queen — will be recognized at the beginning of the event. Then the athletes will parade in alphabetical order by country with two exceptions: Greece will be first, and the host country will be last.

The Olympic anthem will be played and Olympic flag raised before the event's biggest highlight, which is the lighting of the cauldron. The cauldron will burn during the duration of the games, a symbol of the historical path from the ancient Greek games to today's.

Lesser-Known Sports

Everyone knows about the traditional sports that make the summer Olympics famous. The 100-meter dash, gymnastics, tennis, swimming and beach volleyball will all draw huge TV ratings.

Those aren't the only Olympic sports, though. There are 39 different disciplines in all, including some you may not have realized were part of the Olympics.

Here's a look at some of the lesser-known games.

BADMINTON

Yes, the favored game of many backyard barbecues is also an Olympic sport. Badminton involves hitting a shuttlecock back and forth over a net, only with a lot more intensity than those backyard games here in America. The Olympic shuttlecocks are also made from real goose feathers, a far cry from the plastic ones many people buy at the discount store.

CANOE SLALOM

An exciting sport to watch, the canoe slalom involves maneuvering a canoe or kayak through rapids and between poles in the water. Each set of poles is called a "gate," and participants are timed to see how quickly they can get through the course.

Hitting a gate costs a 2-second

penalty. And if an athlete misses a gate entirely, they're penalized a whopping 50 seconds.

EQUESTRIAN DRESSAGE

One of the most elegant Olympic sports is equestrian dressage, which tests how well a horse and human can work together. In this sport, each participant goes through a series of tests that push their ability to ride gracefully. At first, all horses and riders go through the exact same tests and are scored by a panel of seven judges. Freestyle rounds allow riders to perform a routine set to music.

FENCING

Fencing brings to mind the centuries-old tradition of settling arguments with swordfights. It became a sport in the 19th century, and it's more complicated than you may think. There are three types of weapons involved. Two of them, the foil and the épée, score points by striking an opponent with the tip. The third weapon, called a sabre, can also score when striking opponents on the edge.

HANDBALL

Americans might see handball as a combination of basketball and soccer. Teams dribble and pass a ball on a court, basketball-style, but their goal is to toss the ball into a soccer-style goal. It's a high-scoring sport, with as many as 50 goals being scored during a game. Handball was originally played in northern Europe in the 19th century and has been a part of the Olympics since 1972.

SHOOTING

More than 400 marksmen from all around the world will be competing for Olympic gold this year. In pistol and rifle events, the marksmen shoot at fixed targets from various lengths and in different positions — kneeling, prone or standing. In shotgun events, the competitors shoot at moving clay targets that are launched into the air. Women's shooting has been an event since 1984.



America's Best Moments

The Olympics are as much an exercise in patriotism as they are an individual achievement. It just feels good to root for athletes from your own country.

The United States is fortunate to have some of the most thrilling victories in the history of summer Olympics. Here's a look at a few of them.

JESSE OWENS

Adolf Hitler had plans to make the 1936 Olympic games a demonstration of the superiority of the Aryan race.

Jesse Owens had other ideas.

Owens, a black man from America, won four different gold medals in Berlin in one of history's greatest athletic accomplishments. It would take nearly 50 years — until the 1984 games — before any runner equaled his Olympic four-gold-medal performance.

Hitler is said to have been embarrassed that a non-German could dominate the Berlin games so completely. Owens showed that it's talent and training, not a particular set of genetics, that leads to victory.

MARY LOU RETTON

In 1984, when the Cold War was still simmering between the United States and the Soviet Union, a young American girl did what many people thought was impossible: winning the Olympic all-around gymnastics title.

Eastern European countries had dominated the sport of gymnastics for decades before Retton took the stage. There were 14 countries from the Eastern Bloc that boycotted the Olympics that year in Los Angeles, but that didn't take away from Retton's spectacular performance. She scored perfect 10s on the vault and floor exercises — an exceptionally rare feat — to beat a Romanian athlete for Olympic gold.

THE DREAM TEAM

Widely considered the most talented Olympic team to compete in any sport, the 1992 United States men's Olympic basketball team consisted of the biggest stars in the National Basketball Association. Consisting entirely of basketball icons — including Michael Jordan, David Robinson, Patrick Ewing, Larry Bird, Scottie Pippen, Clyde Drexler, Karl Malone, Charles Barkley and Magic Johnson — the Dream Team soundly defeated every opponent in the games.

They beat their competition by an average of 43 points per game, making it look easy to win a gold medal.

MICHAEL PHELPS

He stunned the world by winning eight gold medals in a single Olympics, setting a new record and dominating his sport like no man before him.

Michael Phelps became a household name after the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. He won a stunning eight Olympic gold medals in swimming events, bringing his total collection of Olympic medals — gold, silver and bronze — to 16.



The Buckeye Bullet: Jesse Owens, one of the greatest runners of all time, brought home four gold medals to America at a time when Adolf Hitler wanted to show the superiority of the German people.

Olympics by the Numbers

The 2012 London Olympics are set to become one of the largest and most technologically complex events in human history. Here are a few of the numbers behind them:

THE GAMES

- 34 venues
- 8.8 million tickets
- 10,500 athletes
- 21,000 media personnel
- 3,000 technical officials
- 5,000 anti-doping samples

AQUATICS CENTER

- 2.6 million gallons of water
- 4 skeletons found on site
- 525-foot wave-shaped roof with bridge
- 180,000 tiles in pools

HEALTH

- 375 doctors
- 150 nurses
- 400,000 gloves
- 150,000 condoms

TEMPORARY VENUES

- 200,000 temporary seats
- 7,500 broadcast lights
- 350 miles of cable
- 76 miles of fences
- 10,000 temporary toilets
- 16,500 telephones

EQUIPMENT

- 510 adjustable hurdles
- 600 basketballs
- 541 life jackets
- 26,400 tennis balls
- 2,700 soccer balls
- 712 boxing gloves

VISITORS

- 20 million spectator trips
- 3 million trips on busiest day
- 800,000 spectators plan to use public transit
- 600,000 pieces of luggage
- 14 million meals served
- 1 billion visitors expected at London2012.com

THE TORCH

- 8,000 torchbearers
- 8,000 miles traveled
- 1,000 cities visited
- 110 torchbearers per day

OLYMPIC STADIUM

- 3 years to complete
- 10,000 tons of steel
- 75 percent lighter than similar stadiums
- 174 feet high

OLYMPIC PARK

- 608 acres in size
- 1,000 picnic benches
- 4,000 bins for trash, recycling, composting