

Hello 757swim Family,

There are many iconic moments in sports history. When you see that phrase, what pops in your head? Depending on your age and favorite sports, it could be many different possibilities. The miracle on ice, 'the shot' by Michael Jordan, Jesse Owens in the 1936 Olympics, the rumble in the jungle, and Michael Phelps winning 8 gold medals in a single Olympics all qualify to be mentioned. However, the last one, Michael Phelps' history Olympic run, would not have happened without my most memorable moment in sports, the 4 x 100 Free Relay at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing.

Let me set the stage. It was widely known and publicized that Michael Phelps was trying to win 8 gold medals, which would break the record for the most in a single Olympics. However, one of the biggest hurdles was the 4 x 100 Free Relay, an event the US hadn't won in 12 years and where the French team were favored to win. France was also publicly trash talking, with the 100m Free champion from France saying, "We're going to smash the Americans. That's what we came here for." This was an early event, and if the US were to lose, Michael Phelps' goal would be crushed at the beginning.

I'd like for you to click the links below in order, to watch the race and then to see a follow up story about it. Then, please join me back here afterwards:

The race: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chwxuUtnfUk>

Follow up story:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPOITGFK3_s&list=PLeOacjqnepRq4tAFrEt192QIaty1voQ4D&index=4&t=0s

I go back and watch this at least twice a year. The come from behind, upset victory set the stage for Phelps' historic medal run. There were 2 things that impacted me more and are often overshadowed by Phelps. The 1st is Jason Lezak.

Lezak was the oldest male on the US swim team that year. It was his 3rd Olympics and would be his 3rd time representing his country on the 4 x 100 Free Relay. His 1st two Olympics, his team failed to earn the gold. Being older, he knew that Beijing might possibly be his last chance to help win that event. Diving in, he knew he had to catch the world record holder for his team to win. Not only did Lezak beat him, he went the fastest relay split in history by nearly 6/10s of a second. I believe it is still the fastest split recorded. Sheer determination and willpower helped him overcome seemingly insurmountable odds. It really was a special swim that is often overlooked.

The other thing that made that race so memorable is the camaraderie, trust, and belief between the American teammates. They all had to swim faster than they'd ever gone to just have a chance. Even when they were falling behind, they kept believing and supporting each other.

Swimming is often thought of as an individual sport. I hate that notion. Relays are an obvious example of the team aspect of swimming. More importantly, everyday in practice teammates will push each other to become better. As the team gets better everyone pushes each other to even higher standards, continuously raising the bar. At meets, teammates come together to try to achieve team goals, like winning the meet or placing higher than the previous year. It has been amazing to be a part of the culture already set by 757swim. It really is a family, where everyone is not only trying to improve themselves, but trying to raise up those around them. Our mission statement is, "Working together to make everyone better." That mentality is going to keep raising this family and everyone in it to new heights.

It takes a lot to be considered a greatest moment in sports. Think about what makes a moment great. Think about the positives you can take away from that moment. That relay had so many positives for me, and I enjoyed sharing them with you. Keep working hard, working together, and always look out for your 757swim family. If you do, we're going to have some greatest moments of our own to look forward to. Take care!

-Mike