

Male Athletes to Watch in the Beijing Olympics

Each edition of the Olympic Games showcases some of the finest athletes in the world doing what they do best while representing their home countries. This year's Games in Beijing, China, will be no different. There are so many great athletes, both male and female, that it can be hard to know who to look out for. Here's a few of the athletes on the male side that you'll want to keep an eye on during the Beijing Olympic Games.

Yao Ming is a Chinese basketball player who has blossomed to one of the best players in the entire world, and most likely the best player at his position anywhere. Yao has succeeded in the NBA, becoming the first Chinese player to do so, and has experienced international success in the past, being named to All-Tournament teams at the Olympics and World Championships. Yao's ultimate goal is to bring a gold medal to China, and the fact that this year's Olympics are in his own home country only intensifies this desire. At over seven feet tall, Yao possesses uncommon agility, shooting ability, and passing, and will be playing his best basketball when the Olympic Games begin in Beijing. Don't miss a moment of Yao and company on the court!

While we're talking basketball, we have to discuss United States basketball superstar Kobe Bryant. Bryant is arguably the most exciting player in the world, and is in the prime of his career. This year, he won the NBA MVP Award for the first time in his career, while taking his team, the Los Angeles Lakers, to new heights. Able to soar in the air for acrobatic baskets as well as playing great defense and getting teammates involved, Bryant is the ultimate basketball weapon and is devoted to getting the United States back to the top of the international basketball world. Bryant has proven his dedication by refusing to get surgery on his injured finger until after the Olympic Games. Bryant is not only one of the most exciting athletes in the Olympic basketball tournament, but in the entire Olympic Games.

You would be hard pressed to find a more inspirational athlete than South Africa's Oscar Pistorius. Pistorius was born lacking fibulas in both of his legs, and as a result has been a double-amputee basically all of his life. However, Pistorius never let his setbacks define him, as he's competed in many sports throughout his life, most at a very high level. During rehabilitation from a rugby injury years ago, Pistorius fell in love with running, and with carbon fiber blades that allow him to run like an able-bodied athlete, he's shattered Paralympic sprinting records, and even competed favorably against able-bodied athletes. If Pistorius can either beat the qualifying time he needs for the 400 meters or be invited to be on the South African relay team, he'll be possibly the biggest story of the entire Beijing Olympics.

This may seem like a cop-out, but it's impossible to really single out any of them, so make sure to watch the entire Brazilian soccer team. Team Brazil came in second place in the 2006 World Cup, then finished first in the 2007 Copa America, and seem primed for success in Beijing. An extremely fun team to watch, their team includes some of the most exciting players in the world, such as Ronaldinho and Robinho.

Again, there are many more athletes that you'll want to watch this summer during the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, but this list is a good start. Every athlete that reaches the Olympic level is worth watching and will amaze you with their athletic ability, but some athletes always rise above the top with their skill, natural ability, hard work, dedication and perseverance. If you get a chance to watch these talented and inspirational performers, make sure you take advantage of it!

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