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A GUIDE TO THE
**SUMMER
GAMES**
TOKYO



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Gymnast Simone Biles

Simone Biles' journey to her status as the most decorated U.S. women's gymnast ever started off quite simply.

"I went to Bannon's on a day care field trip," she said, according to USA Gymnastics. "While there, I imitated the other gymnasts, and Coach Ronnie noticed. The gym sent home a letter requesting that I join tumbling or gymnastics."

Biles appears more than ready for

the Tokyo Games — set for July 23 to Aug. 8 — after a record seventh U.S. All-Around title in June.

RARE AIR

Biles, 24, is vying to become only the third woman to win back-to-back All-Around gold in Japan and the first in more than 50 years, since Vera Caslavskaja of then Czechoslovakia in 1964 and 1968 in Tokyo and Mexico City. Larisa Latynina of the Soviet Union was the first, in 1956 and 1960.

Winning at the U.S. Gymnastics Championships in Fort Worth, Texas, seemed to only confirm what we already knew: Biles is the best gym-

nast in the world. Biles, a resident of Spring, Texas, has won every all-around competition she has entered since 2013.

In Rio in 2016, she won four of the possible six gold medals — team, all-around, vault and floor exercise — losing only on bars and beam. Can she do better than that in Japan? It's very possible.

THE DOUBLE PIKE VAULT

Missing from her routine in the floor exercise at the U.S. championships was the Yurchenko double pike vault, which amazed onlookers at the U.S. Classic. The move is so difficult

and potentially dangerous that no other woman has attempted it in competition. In that move, Biles starts with a back handspring then flips twice in a pike position before landing.

It is expected that Biles will bring back the Yurchenko double pike in Tokyo.

Biles will be looking to add on to a legacy that is secure. She has won 25 World medals, the most in gymnastics history, as are her 19 World gold medals. Biles is also the first woman to win five World all-around titles, 2013-15, 2018-19. In total, Biles has won 30 World and Olympic medals.



New Olympic Sports

Four sports will make their Olympic debuts in Tokyo, while baseball and softball make their returns after being absent for the previous two Olympiads.

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The Games are scheduled for July 23 through Aug. 8.

KARATE

Karate, a martial art that originated in Okinawa during the Ryukyu Dynasty, makes its Olympic debut, fittingly, in Tokyo. The discipline joins judo, taekwondo and wrestling. It consists of two disciplines for both men and women: kata (forms) and kumite (sparring).

SKATEBOARDING

There will be Acid Drops in Tokyo and none of them will precipitate a

drug test. Skateboarding, along with the notable maneuver, takes its place among the legacy of the Greeks as an official Olympic sport.

Men's and women's Olympic skateboarding will consist of two events: park and street. The street course is designed to replicate street skating, with stairs, ramps and rails that riders can use to put together a series of tricks. Athletes skate individually on three timed runs and are scored on things like the difficulty of their tricks, speed, height and originality.

The park event takes place on more of a bowl-shaped course. Riders use

the inclines within the course to build momentum and perform tricks. They're judged on difficulty and originality.

SPORT CLIMBING

Men's and women's sport climbing will consist of three disciplines: speed climbing, bouldering and lead climbing. In speed climbing, two athletes secure themselves to ropes and race each other on a fixed route to the top of a 15-meter high wall.

Bouldering involves climbers — without safety ropes — individually trying to ascend as many fixed routes

on a 4-meter high wall as they can within 4 minutes. And in lead climbing, athletes will try to climb as high as they can on a 15-meter high wall within 6 minutes, again using safety ropes. If two people reach the same height, the person who did it fastest wins.

SURFING

This one could be epic, dude. Instead of being judged on how many waves they catch, the athletes are judged on the difficulty of the maneuvers they perform, with masterful execution on large waves bringing the highest scores.

Sprinter Allyson Felix

Sprinter Allyson Felix, 35, a Los Angeles native, is the only female track and field athlete to win six Olympic gold medals.

During her fifth Olympic Games, in Tokyo, she can become the most decorated U.S. track and field athlete ever. That will make your head spin, considering a USA track and field history that includes Jesse Owens, Carl Lewis, Jackie Joyner-Kersey and Florence Griffith Joyner. But, with nine total medals, including three silver, all she needs is two more to overtake Lewis.

THE GOLD BRICK ROAD

Felix enters the Tokyo Games tied with Merlene Ottey, who represented both Jamaica and Slovenia, for the most Olympic track and field medals by a female athlete. Felix made her Olympic debut in 2004, winning silver in the 200 meters. Four years later, in Beijing, she won another silver medal in the 200 and added her first gold as a member of the 4x400 team. In London, she racked up three gold medals, including one in a solo event, the 200, and two more in relays in the 4x100 and the 4x400. In Rio she won silver in the 400 and two more gold medals in the 4x100 and 4x400.

A CULTURAL INFLUENCER

Felix, who studied at Southern California and has a degree in elementary education, was selected to TIME magazine's list of the 100 Most Influential People of 2020 for speaking out about pregnancy discrimination. Felix had asked for — and was denied — a contractual guarantee from Nike that she wouldn't be docked pay based on performance in the months after giving birth. As a result of her public outing, Nike changed its policies.

Felix also took to TIME to pen a message of hope in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, and not simply for athletes.

“We are facing tremendous challenges and loss of an unthinkable proportion,” she wrote. “But as a global community, we have to commit to waking up tomorrow morning and finding a new way to relentlessly pursue our audacious dreams.”





Lost Tales of Olympics Past

In advance of the Tokyo Games, scheduled for July 23 through Aug. 8, Olympic anecdotes that will make you go hmmmmm.

VIVA LA REVOLUCION

Most gold medalists, particularly boxers, use Olympic gold as a platform to riches. Cuban boxer Teofilo Stevenson, a heavyweight gold medalist in 1972, '76 and '80, took a different route as boxing promoters, who pegged him as the Cuban Muhammad Ali,

begged him to turn pro. But, he was a passionate advocate of Fidel Castro's revolution and preferred only to fight for country.

After retiring, Stevenson earned about \$400 a month, a generous wage at the time by Cuban standards, as a boxing consultant in his native country, according to the Washington Post.

FROM INTERNMENT CAMP TO GOLD MEDAL

Tamio "Tommy" Kono, once a scrawny, asthmatic child, found his weightlifting physique in a World War II Japanese internment camp after he and his family were forced from their home

in San Francisco. However, Mental Floss noted, the desert air agreed with Kono's lungs, and he began lifting weights to pass the time.

Within a decade, he was the linchpin of the U.S. national weightlifting team. He proudly lifted for the Americans, winning his first gold medal as a light-weight in his Olympic debut in 1952, his second as a light heavyweight in 1956, and then a silver as a middle-weight in 1960.

A LEG UP

At the 1904 Olympics in St. Louis, American gymnast George Eyser won a bronze, two silvers, and three gold

medals in one day, all while competing with a wooden leg, which he had been wearing since losing his leg when he was run over by a train.

A LIFESAVING LOSS

In the 1988 Games in Seoul, sailor Lawrence Lemieux of Canada was well on his way to a medal when he heard the cries of two Singaporean sailors competing in a different event nearby. One of them was clinging desperately to his boat, which had capsized under the 6-foot waves. The other had drifted 50 feet away. Lemieux set course for the sailors and pulled them out of the water, his hope for a medal dashed.

The Tokyo Games: Q&A

Answers to some frequently asked questions about the Olympics in Tokyo, the Games of the XXXII Olympiad, from Kyodo News and The New York Times.

WHAT WILL THE ATHLETES' EXPERIENCE BE LIKE IN THE COVID ERA?

Under the current plan, athletes from overseas need to test negative for the virus within 72 hours of their departure but will be exempt from Japan's 14-day quarantine rule. Facemasks are mandatory at the athletes' village, where they will be tested for the virus daily. Athletes can only go to their venues and other limited locations using designated vehicles. Sightseeing or visiting restaurants and bars will not be allowed.

WILL FANS BE ALLOWED AT VENUES?

Event officials are waiting until June to make a decision. There won't be any overseas fans. They've been forbidden to attend. Many speculate that a limited number of domestic fans will be allowed in venues, though visitors will be asked to stay off public transit.

WHERE ARE THE VENUES?

There are about 40 in total, though the main venue is National Stadium in Tokyo, the 157 billion yen (\$1.4 billion) facility designed by Japanese architect Kengo

Kuma. The stadium has five stories above ground level and two floors below and replaces the previous National Stadium used as the main venue of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics. This stadium features multilayered eaves using wood from all 47 of Japan's prefectures.

WHAT IS THE OLYMPIC MASCOT?

The blue-and-white Olympic mascot is called Miraitowa, whose name is based on the Japanese words for future "mirai" and eternity "towa." The pink Paralympic character's name is Someity, which comes from a popular variety of cherry tree. The mascots, designed by illustrator Ryo Taniguchi, were selected through votes by elementary school students. Miraitowa is described as having the ability to "instantly teleport anywhere it wants."

ANY OTHER CONCERNS?

The summer heat and humidity. According to the Japan Meteorological Agency, the average daily temperature in Tokyo topped 84 degrees Fahrenheit in August last year and there were 11 days that logged 95 degrees or above.



By the Numbers

Interesting data, according to literature published by Tokyo 2020 and Statista.

- 0 women competitors in the first modern Olympic Games in 1896. In 2021, 49% of all competitors will be women.

- 33 sports will take place in Tokyo in 2020.

- 41 Olympic gold medals won by the Chinese table tennis team since the sport debuted in 1988. To put in perspective, only four golds have been awarded to non-Chinese players during that time.

- 42 venues will be used to host the 2020 Games.

- 50% of all sports will have male and female events, making Tokyo 2020 the most gender-balance Games in history.

- 80% of athletes expected to be vaccinated by July.

- 1,000-plus gold medals won by U.S. athletes since the beginning of the modern Olympics in 1896. U.S. athletes have won 2,500 medals cumulatively.

- 1964 the last year Tokyo hosted the Olympic Games. Those were the first Games held in Asia and even bigger than that symbolized Japan's return to the global stage as a peaceful and economically stable nation. The Soviet Union won 96 medals, including 30 gold. The U.S. won 90 medals, including an



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Olympiad-high 36 gold medals. Smokin' Joe Frazier won gold in heavyweight boxing.

- 11,091 athletes will participate in the 2020 Games. In 1964, 5,150 participated.

- 68,000 capacity of the Tokyo National Stadium. The venue will host the Opening

and Closing ceremonies, as well as track and field, and soccer competitions. Not all the seats will be filled. Officials will put an as-yet-determined limit on capacity because of Covid-19.

- 79,000 overseas officials, journalists and support staff

on hand for the Tokyo Games.

- 420,500-plus and counting signed a petition on Change.org to cancel the Olympics. In another call to action, 6,000 Tokyo doctors recommended canceling.

- 6,210,000 mobile phones donated to create the gold,

silver and bronze medals for Tokyo 2020 – that's 87,000 tons of small electrical devices!

- 3.6 billion TV viewers turned into the Rio Games in 2016 or just under half of the world's population of 7.4 billion in 2016.

Basketball Free-for-All

Many analysts consider this Olympic men's basketball tournament to be the most wide-open since Sydney in 2004, when the Americans disappointed with bronze. Is that type of letdown probable in 2021? Nah.

THIS IS AMERICA'S DOMAIN

Basketball is a purely American invention, created by Dr. James Naismith in Springfield, Mass., as an alternate indoor activity for college students during cold winters. It has come a long way since in gaining global participation, but all the others still bow to American mastery of the sport.

U.S. Olympic men's basketball teams have medaled in each of the 18 Olympics they have participated in, winning 15 gold medals, one silver and two bronze medals. The Americans lost to the Soviets in a controversial ending in 1972 and didn't participate in 1980.

Owning a 138-5 overall win-loss record, the USA in 2021 will look to claim a fourth consecutive Olympic gold medal.

Since the Seoul Games in 1988, after a disappointing bronze medal, the Americans have sent their best: the NBA professionals.

That first "Dream Team" coached by Chuck Daly, the greatest ever assembled on any court, won the gold medal in Barcelona in 1992 with an average winning margin of 44 points. The team never called a timeout.

THE WORLD HAS CLOSED THE GAP

The basketball international community has closed the gap on the

United States' dominance, but they're still not to the Americans' level. However, winning is not as automatic as it used to be. Argentina won gold in 2004, defeating the U.S. in the semifinals. The Americans lost three times in the tournament after losing only twice

in the history of basketball in the Olympics.

And in 2019, France bounced the U.S. from the FIBA Basketball World Cup. A loss to Serbia followed in a seventh-place finish.

Yet, the Americans, with a roster yet

to be set, will enter the heavy favorites even without LeBron James and Anthony Davis, who are both expected to opt out.

Argentina, Australia, France, Serbia and Spain are all expected to vie for the other two podium places.

