

# Absent: Dimas and 18 Other Medallists

Four years after, let us recall the glorious table of the medal winners at the last Olympic Games in Athens, including 24 men's and 21 women's names. Let us re-live the

exhilarating contests, the heroes, the performances, the results and the unforgettable battles. At the same time, we may muse on how much the avant-garde has changed since.



*In Athens, Rybakou was only silver medallist. Since 2004 he has won everything possible and stepped forward as a top gold-medal favourite. The podium of the 85kg in 2004 features in 2<sup>nd</sup> place Andrei Rybakou, BLR; champion George Asanidze, GEO and in 3<sup>rd</sup> place Pyrros Dimas, GRE*

## MEDAL WINNERS OF THE 2004 ATHENS OLYMPIC GAMES

### m e n

<b>56kg</b>			
1	MUTLU Halil	TUR	135.0 160.0 295.0
2	WU Meijin	CHN	130.0 157.5 287.5
3	ARTUC Sedat	TUR	125.0 155.0 280.0
<b>62kg</b>			
1	SHI Zhiyong	CHN	152.5 172.5 325.0
2	LE Maosheng	CHN	140.0 172.5 312.5
3	RUBIO Israel Jose	VEN	132.5 162.5 295.0
<b>69kg</b>			
1	ZHENG Guozheng	CHN	160.0 187.5 347.5
2	LEE Bae-Young	KOR	152.5 190.0 342.5
3	PECHALOV Nikolai	CRO	150.0 187.5 337.5
<b>77kg</b>			
1	SAGIR Taner	TUR	172.5 202.5 375.0
2	FILIMONOV Sergei	KAZ	172.5 200.0 372.5
3	PEREPETCHENOV O.	RU	170.0 195.0 365.0
<b>85kg</b>			
1	ASANIDZE George	GEO	177.5 205.0 382.5
2	RYBAKOU Andrei	BLR	180.0 200.0 380.0
3	DIMAS Pyrros	GRE	175.0 202.5 377.5
<b>94kg</b>			
1	DOBREV Milen	BUL	187.5 220.0 407.5
2	AKKAEV Khadjimourad	RUS	185.0 220.0 405.0
3	TJUKIN Eduard	RUS	182.5 215.0 397.5
<b>105kg</b>			
1	BERESTOV Dmitriy	RUS	195.0 230.0 425.0
2	RAZORYONOV Igor	UKR	190.0 230.0 420.0
3	PISAREVSKIY Gleb	RUS	190.0 225.0 415.0
<b>+105kg</b>			
1	REZAZADEH Hossein	IRI	210.0 263.5 472.5
2	SCERBATIHS Viktors	LAT	205.0 250.0 455.0
3	CHOLAKOV Velichko	BUL	207.5 240.0 447.5

Where are our heroes of four years ago? Where are those today?

Of the 45 Olympic medallists of Athens nine men and ten women have been absent from the three world championships held after 2004. They are:

#### Champions:

Mutlu, Berestov – Polsak, Chen Yanqing, Skakun and Tang Gonghong

#### Silver medallists:

Le Maosheng, Akkaev, Razoryonov – Li Zhuo, Ri Song Hui, Krutzler

#### Bronze medallists:

Rubio, Pechalov, Dimas, Pisarevskiy – Mosquera, Stukalava, Popova

At the 3 world championships that took place since Athens, two Olympic champions dared to face the new rivals as many as three times: **Shi Zhiyong** and **Liu Chunhong**.

**Shi Zhiyong** – in a new bodyweight category – captured 5 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze medal. **Liu Chunhong** also collected some

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honours, although her injury in Santo Domingo largely prevented her from sweeping the field the way she had used to do. Her balance of three gold and 4 silver medals can still be a target of envy for many. Two of the Athens silver medal winners deserve a special chapter.

**Andrei Rybakou, BLR**, added 13 kilos to his Olympic result. No-one else has been able to top his 393kg. On his way, he won seven gold medals and set four world records in snatch. He is most deservedly regarded as a top favourite for Beijing.

**Jang Mi-Ran, KOR**. She increased her Athens score of 302.5kg to 319kg (+16.5kg). In the three world championships of 2005, 2006 and 2007 she pocketed the maximum of 9 medals. In total she took the gold

all three times, in snatch she won the silver medals also three times. Following her Olympic vice-championship, she became six-fold world champion and three times runner-up. She set world records in snatch and total.

Now, briefly on other Athens 2004 medallists:

**Halil Mutlu, TUR** – After a long break he returned victorious to the stage at the European Championships of 2008. His 269kg total proved to be sufficient for a win. This, however, is really very far from Mutlu’s 305kg world record and the 295kg he had won the third Olympic gold with. He was aiming – as told to **World Weightlifting** – to capture,



*Olympic champion of 58kg, Chen Yanqing has since pinned five world records, yet she was not entered to any of the world championships*

**MEDAL WINNERS OF THE 2004 ATHENS OLYMPIC GAMES**  
**w o m e n**

<b>48kg</b>			
1	TAYLAN Nurcan	TUR	107.5 112.5 210.0
2	LI Zhuo	CHN	92.5 112.5 205.0
3	WIRATTHAWORN A.	THA	85.0 115.0 200.0
<b>53kg</b>			
1	POLSAK Udomporn	THA	97.5 125.0 222.5
2	RUMBEWAS Raema	INA	95.0 115.0 210.0
3	MOSQUERA Mena	COL	87.5 110.0 197.5
<b>58kg</b>			
1	CHEN Yanqing	CHN	107.5 130.0 237.5
2	RI Song Hui	PRK	102.5 130.0 232.5
3	KAMEAIM Wandee	THA	102.5 127.5 230.0
<b>63kg</b>			
1	SKAKUN Natalia	UKR	107.5 135.0 242.5
2	BATSIUSHKA Hanna	BLR	115.0 127.5 242.5
3	STUKALAVA Tatsiana	BLR	100.0 122.5 222.5
<b>69kg</b>			
1	LIU Chunhong	CHN	122.5 153.0 275.0
2	KRUTZLER Eszter	HUN	117.5 145.0 262.5
3	KASAEVA Zarema	RUS	117.5 145.0 262.5
<b>75kg</b>			
1	THONGSUK Pawina	THA	122.5 150.0 272.5
2	ZABOLOTNAIA Natalia	RUS	125.0 147.5 272.5
3	POPOVA Valentina	RUS	120.5 145.0 265.0
<b>+75kg</b>			
1	TANG Gonghong	CHN	122.5 182.5 305.0
2	JANG Mi-Ran	KOR	130.0 172.5 302.5
3	WROBEL Agata	POL	130.0 160.0 290.0

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*The best of the 69kg in Athens (from left): Lee Bae-Young, KOR, Zhang Guozheng, CHN, Nicolai Pechalov, CRO. Since the Games Lee and Zhang attended the world championships once; Pechalov went to Santo Domingo but got injured in the warm-up and did not lift*

as the first weightlifter in the world, a fourth Olympic gold medal. Unfortunately, in July he decided to give it up. What a pity!

#### **Zhang Guozheng, CHN**

– He cleared the stage in Doha and Santo Domingo for his countrymen and fellow Olympic champions. But in ChiangMai he came back and won. He jerks always as much as is needed to win on the overall.

#### **Sagir Taner, TUR**

– He had won the Olympic Games before winning the world championships. Back in Athens (as a junior still) he arrested the world by a 375kg total and a glorious victory. With the Olympic champion title already in his pocket, he went on winning in world championships once in total, plus taking silver and a bronze medal. In the last three years his best result was 361kg.

#### **Pyrros Dimas, GRE**

– He was last on stage in Athens... He resigned with the wonderful collection of three Olympic gold medals and one bronze. His name was called at the medal ceremony in Barcelona, Atlanta, Sydney and even in Athens, and the whole world loved him. The Olympic Games will be strange without him.

Photos: József. Szaka, IWF

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Out of the +75kg medallists only Jang Mi-Ran will be seen again in Beijing. The Korean title holder piled up 6 WC gold medals in three years, putting 16.5kg on her result. Tang Gonghong never came back after the Games, Agata Wrobel left the sport

#### Hossein Rezazadeh, IRI

– He continued to dominate even after capturing the second Olympic title. Following triumphs in 2005 and 2006, he was injured in a car accident in 2007 which put him out of competition for a long time. If he is all right, he has no match. He can go for the third Olympic gold in Beijing. Nobody ever has done the hat trick in the heaviest category.

#### Taylan Nurcan, TUR

– The Olympic champion reappeared at the 2007 World Championships, when she took bronze medal in snatch. In the jerk, however, she made zero. At the Games in Athens she was the best of the lightest category with a world record of 210kg. Since the Olympics she has registered one official result: at the 2005 European Championships 195kg in the 53kg class.

#### Chen Yanqing, CHN

– The story of the 29-year old Olympic champion can tell us much about China's richness in weightlifting. Chen won the gold medal in Athens with a 237.5kg total in the 58kg. Ever since, she has not been entered to any of the world championships in spite of the five world records she established in 2006 in Doha, at the Asian Games. In total, for instance, she recorded 351kg!

#### Pawina Thongsuk, THA

– It was at the Olympic Games in Greece that she fooled the world and stunned us when, as top favourite of the 69kg, she chose the 75kg class instead – and won with a total of 272.5kg. Next year in Doha, another twist in her story: Thongsuk took part in the 63kg and won again, this time with a marvellous new world record total of 256kg. Amidst the celebrations, we did not realize that it was the last time we saw her on the world stage. Recently, she announced her retirement.

Jenő BOSKOVICS

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