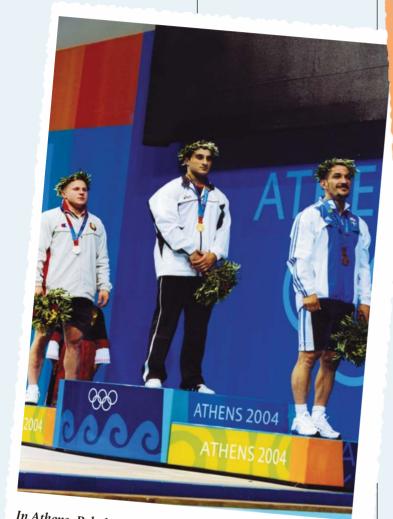
Absent: Dimas and 18 Other Medallists

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 relive the exhilarating contests, the heroes, the performances, the results and the unforgettable battles. At the same time, we may muse on how much the avantgarde 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 2nd place Andrei Rybakou, BLR; champion George Asanidze, GEO and in 3rd place Pyrros Dimas, GRE

MEDAL WINNERS OF THE 2004 ATHENS OLYMPIC GAMES							
	n n						
M.	e n			295.0			
6 kg MUTLU Halil	TUR	155.0	100.0	293.0 287.5			
and a set of the set o	CHN	150.0	101.00	287.5			
2 WU Meijin 3 ARTUC Sedat	TUR	125.0	155.0	200.0			
62kg			172.5	325.0			
1 SHI Zhiyong	CHN	152.5	172.5	312.5			
2 LE Maosheng	CHN	140.0	162.5	295.0			
3 RUBIO Israel Jose	VEN	132.5	162.5	295.0			
69kg		160.0	187.5	347.5			
1 ZHENG Guozheng	CHN	160.0	190.0	342.5			
2 LEE Bae-Young	KOR	152.5	187.5	337.5			
3 PECHALOV Nikolai	CRO	150.0	107.5	551			
77kg	CT ID	172.5	202.5	375.0			
1 SAGIR Taner	TUR	172.5	200.0	372.5			
2 FILIMONOV Sergei	KAZ	172.5	195.0	365.0			
3 PEREPETCHENOV O.	RU	170.0	195.0				
85kg	CEO	177.5	205.0	382.5			
1 ASANIDZE George	GEO BLR	180.0	200.0	380.0			
2 RYBAKOU Andrei	GRE	175.0	202.5	377.5			
3 DIMAS Pyrros	GKE	175.0	_				
94kg	BUL	187.5	220.0	407.5			
1 DOBREV Milen	_	185.0	220.0	405.0			
2 AKKAEV Khadjimourad	RUS	182.5	215.0	397.5			
3 TJUKIN Eduard	Ruo						
105kg	RUS	195.0	230.0	425.0			
1 BERESTOV Dmitriy	UKF		230.0				
2 RAZORYONOV Igor	RUS			415.0			
3 PISAREVSKIY Gleb	Ruc						
+105kg	IRI	210.0) 263.5	472.5			
1 REZAZADEH Hossein	LAI) 250.0				
2 SCERBATIHS Viktors	BU) 447.5			
3 CHOLAKOV Velichko	Du						

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

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 sixfold 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 –

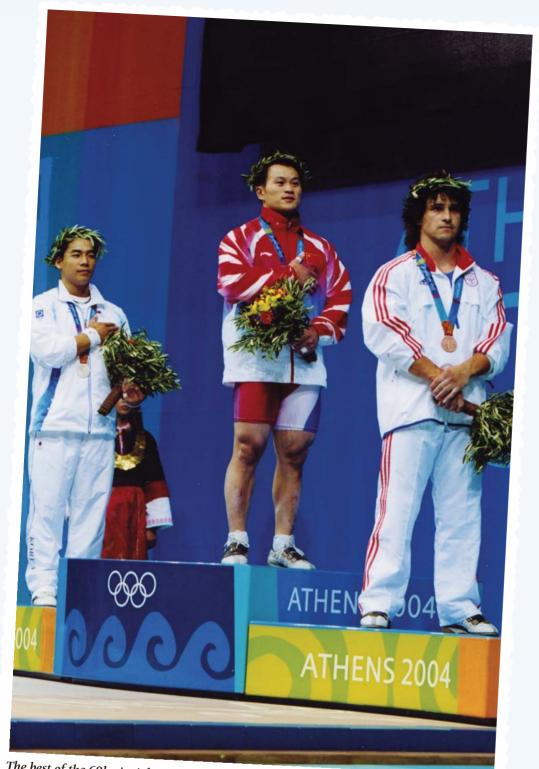
After a long break he returned victorious to the stage at the European Championships of 2008. His 269kg total proved to be sufficient for a win. This, however, is really very far from Mutlu's 305kg world record and the 295kg he had won the third Olympic gold with. He was aiming - as told to World Weightlifting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

MEDAL WINNERS OF THE 2004 ATHENS OLYMPIC GAMES

W O N		n	1105	210.0
48kg T 1 TAYLAN Nurcan U Zhuo	UR 1 CHN THA	.07.5 92.5 85.0	112.5 112.5 115.0	205.0 200.0
3 WIRATTHAWORN A. 53kg 1 POLSAK Udomporn 2 PUMBEWAS Raema	THA INA COL	97.5 95.0 87.5	125.0 115.0 110.0	222.5 210.0 197.5
 MOSQUERA Mena MOSQUERA Mena S8kg CHEN Yanqing RI Song Hui KUMPdee 	CHN PRK THA	107.5 102.5 102.5	130.0 130.0 127.5	237.5 232.5 230.0
 KAMEAIM Wandee KAMEAIM Wandee KAKUN Natalia BATSIUSHKA Hanna STUKALAVA Tatsiana 	UKR BLR BLR	107.5 115.0 100.0		242.5 242.5 222.5
69kg 1 LIU Chunhong 2 KRUTZLER Eszter	CHN HUN RUS	1 117.	5 145.0) 262.5
75kg 1 THONGSUK Pawina 2 ZABOLOTNAIA Natalia	THA RUS RUS	5 125	.0 147	.5 272.5
+75kg 1 TANG Gonghong 2 JANG Mi-Ran	CH KC PC	DR 13 DL 13	.0.0	2.5 302. 0.0 290
3 WROBEL Agata	-	N. 65	a cal a ko	well & Kanas



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



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



ATHENS 2004 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 Yanging, 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