

Plot Twist! Embedded U.S. Advantages Emerge in Time Changes- Rio 2016 Midnight Finals Scandal Builds

By Steven V. Selthoffer
Chief European Columnist
Swimming World

Rio de Janeiro, BRAZIL -- It was officially posted on the Rio Olympic 2016 Internet site that swimming preliminaries and finals times for the 2016 Olympic Games have been altered drastically to new times creating a global uproar among athletes, coaches and teams once again. The change was called for by the American broadcaster NBC.

NBC Olympics is the U.S. broadcast rights holder for all summer and winter Olympic Games through 2032. They are experts in the production, coverage and delivery of the Olympic Games opening and closing ceremonies and sport events.

The purported reason for the time switch was to better position the swimming events live for their American prime time market audience across the U.S. time zones and to augment their advertising revenue.

Sport Preliminary and Final Time Windows

Whether you're from the USA, The Netherlands, Germany, Australia, France, China or anywhere else, preliminaries and finals times for swimming are held during globally recognized sport norms.

The optimal time for an athletes' peak human performance to set national, world records and lifetime bests are in the time window from 4:00pm until 8:00pm with swimming finals usually being from 6:00pm – 8:00pm or many times beginning an hour earlier, starting at 5:00pm going to 7:00pm or 7:30pm. That is the most crucial and optimal time window when the athletes, whether swimmers or track and field athletes competing are tapered, psychologically ready and physically prepared to set world records and give life time best performances.

1 ►

Preliminaries are internationally recognized to be held between 9:00am or 10:00am to 12:00pm noon giving the athletes time to rest and recover during the afternoon, usually after a number of events in the morning. That is what the athletes know and have trained all their lives for.

Shock and Awe

In an email from USA Swimming it confirmed that the Rio 2016 Olympic Games morning preliminaries will not be held as anticipated at the globally respected sport norms of 9:00am or 10:00am – 12:00 noon, but will be moved to 1:00pm – 3:00pm in the afternoon at a time when athletes are usually resting and asleep in preparation for early evening finals.

And the finals? NBC has now moved the Rio 2016 Olympic swimming starting time for finals from 6:00pm – 8:00pm to **10:00pm!!! – 12:00am!!! Midnight!!!!** And beyond...

Immediate reactions from swimmers and coaches in Europe and abroad learning of the new Rio 2016 midnight finals imposed by the American television network NBC range from instant emotional shock and anger to despondency and disbelief.

"How could they do this to us?" "It's unfair." "The heats and finals (times) are bad." "This is insane." "They're doing it again. I can't believe it!" ...were some of the reactions earlier last week.



Championship meet finals many times last longer than planned. Many championships can last up to a half hour or longer each evening. It will be expected that some Rio event finals and relays to be swimming past midnight.

Anger has turned to silence and deep seated resentment among U.S. competitors believing that NBC is hijacking the sport for their own profit once again.

Rio is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. Swimming is an outside sport. Many were looking forward to holding the Olympic swimming events outside as anyone would normally do in Rio. However, outside finals for the Rio 2016 Olympics was nixed only a few years ago to the frustration and anger of national coaches and athletes. Why? According to FINA sources, it was because it interfered with "television cameras and lighting." Thus, burdening the Rio 2016 organizing committee with unnecessary costs in the hundreds of millions of Euros for the new enclosed venue.

Prior to that, ignoring the protests of the athletes and coaches going into the Beijing 2008 Olympics, NBC had moved the finals times to morning and the preliminary times to evening, upending the sport for the sole benefit of the American audience sitting in time zones nine (9) to twelve (12) hours behind, across the international date line- in a previous day.

Democracy and athletes don't count

Over 70 Olympic swimmers from nearly as many nations tried to stop it, led by Dutch great, triple Olympic gold, double silver and double bronze medal winner, Pieter van den Hoogenband, NED. Van Den Hoogenband met privately for over an hour leading up to the Games with IOC President Jacques Rogge, but the effort was in vain. Rogge had already made up his mind.

What many believe is that the midnight finals move has now turned the athletes into nothing more than public performers and commercial servants.

2 ►

The essence of sport is supposed to be about competing fairly against the best when they are at their best on a level playing field, when everyone is optimally prepared mentally and physically to give their lifetime best effort.

However, now there are new developments threatening those foundational principles once again.

The Plot Twist- Embedded advantages for U.S. Team now emerge

What is now emerging after carefully studying the preliminary and finals time shift to 1:00pm for preliminaries and 10:00pm finals are grossly **unfair embedded advantages** unseen up until now that precisely benefit the U.S. swimming team and completely disadvantage all of their competitors.

The midnight finals scandal is now evolving into its own category, taking on global proportions as possibly one of the largest scandals in sport history.

If it's cheating, whether knowingly or unknowingly, we don't know. But, now the unfair embedded advantages are clear and undeniable.

However, in Europe, Australia and Asia and beyond, the blow back is beginning to build.

What's at stake?

The danger is two-fold. Some believe if NBC succeeds in upending the sport once again with midnight finals in Rio, morning finals might be imposed again by flipping Tokyo in 2020. Which is why many feel the rights of athletes to be able to perform their best must be protected and midnight finals must be stopped now.



What should happen?

This is important to know, especially for all athletes, coaches, teams and media.

When the Olympics are awarded to a city such as Rio de Janeiro, that city is the Host City for the Olympic Games. And *that Host City's time zone in that country* should be the governing time zone for the Olympic Games. Not the U.S. Olympic Committee's time zone. Not USA Swimming's home time zone and not the top California swim club's time zone three (3) and four (4) hours behind in a completely different country set by their own national television network. The USA was not awarded the Olympic Games.

When the host city's time zone like Rio de Janeiro's is the governing time zone for the Olympic Games and sport norms for prelims and finals are respected then it is 100% fair for everyone.

Swimming, like track and field events are not acting "performances." They are not "games" that can be played at any time of day where the only thing that matters is who wins. They are measurable events determined by absolutes down to the hundredth of a second or meter. They are measurable events of time and distance, per stroke or team event that are measured against history and the world's current top performances, along with world and Olympic records. They cannot occur at just any time of day.

If you don't think that is important, try holding one-on-one match ups with your favorite two swimmers at 10:00pm, 11:00pm, or 1:00am or 4:00am at a global location where it will be prime time for the television audience in the USA. What will happen? No one will care who wins. They won't watch.

It's not just about "racing." The Olympics are about measureable event results. Breaking world and Olympic records matter.

Athletes, Attorneys and Team Managers

This is professional sports. Millions of Euros are at stake for performance bonuses and world records. If anyone says, "This is not that big of a deal," hasn't done their homework and must be viewing it from the American perspective. On the contrary, it *IS* a big deal. As a matter of fact, it's huge. It's unfair to American competitors and it's damaging.

If anyone says, "It will be fair for everyone." That is a lie. It won't be. No matter how hard they try to spin the finals time change.

If anyone says, "We'll be ready for any final start time they tell us," coaches, athletes, and their attorneys and representatives should ask themselves, "How?" What's the plan for peak human performance when athletes are forced to do multiple time zone changes in a very short amount of time when other athletes have none? How is that a level playing field?

Americans can fool themselves with talk like that. But, they can't fool their competitors or their enemies.

What athletes, attorneys and their managers should know is, whenever you upend the sport and set a finals time that is contrary to the best interest of the athletes, that undeniably harms them first emotionally/psychologically, then with the change, it degrades them physically and places at risk their ability to achieve peak human performances and set records. They know they're disadvantaged. It is not what they've prepared for and what experts and team doctors have told them all their lives. Consequently, you have irreparably harmed the athletes on a number of levels.

In each individual sport, the sport prelims and finals times should be sacrosanct, held at globally recognized sport norms to protect the ability of the athletes to achieve lifetime best performances and to set world and Olympic records.



If it's not about sport excellence, creating the best environment and venues for optimal peak human performance and placing the welfare of the athletes first- then it's not Olympic. Period.

Post-Olympic Trials Training Camps

After all Olympic trials globally, when each country's Olympic team is finalized, a major part of the preparation is traveling and moving into training camps. Training camps are a refined science. National team coaches and team managers around the world know what to do and how to do it. It's planned out well in advance. It's about creating an environment without distractions that is as close to race conditions as possible getting the athletes psychologically and physically prepared to lay down the absolute best performances of their lives.

A national team coach's top priority is to hold the training camps in the exact time zone and climate where the Olympic Games are being held to fully acclimatize their swimmers to the time zone and environment of the host city.

When it comes to getting acclimatized and synced to the time zone, no two people are identical and it takes longer than many realize. Athletes arrive weeks early before the start of the Games to get comfortable and to readjust their biological clocks.

Having the human body's internal clock adjust and reset to that time zone in that part of the world is not an exact science. Jet lag, training exhaustion, tiredness from traveling from different points on the globe without a long enough rest can devastate an athlete's performance.

The length of time necessary to adjust yourself to a different time zone is different for each individual and different when moving from one side of the planet to another. It is also not easy going from the northern hemisphere to the southern hemisphere.

4 ►

With the Olympics and a life time of training on the line, no officials or national coaches will risk anything. They will get the athletes there in plenty of time.

Under normal conditions, no one after holding Olympic trials has training camps moving away from the optimal time zone the Olympics are in- on the contrary they move *into* it.

Nothing is left to chance. They know they must arrive at a minimum of a couple weeks in advance to the host city of the Olympic Games to adjust to the host city time zone. They know anything less would harm the athletes and their performances.

Before the Sydney Olympics many teams arrived three to three and a half weeks early to acclimatize themselves to Australia and the Sydney time zone. For the Athens 2004 Olympic Games many national swimmers from around the world flew in a month early to southern Europe to get acclimatized to the Athens time zone and heat, staying in training camps scattered around various European cities.

Time Zone Certification

To confirm the time zone differences between different cities during the Rio 2016 Olympics we sent an email to Mr. Erik (E.F.) Dierikx, Director Timing, Dutch Metrology Institute, Delft, Netherlands requesting his assistance to confirm the time zones and their time differences for the month of August during the Rio 2016 Olympic Games.

VSL is the Netherlands' Metrology Institute and is an authoritative knowledge institute in the field of metrology (measurement) internationally, as well as in the management and development of national primary measurement standards VSL experts provide.

There were a number of factors to consider, such as the difference in time zones for winter in Rio de



Janeiro and summer in the USA and Europe, one hour time zone shifts from or to day light savings time between now and August in Brazil.

Mr. Dierikx stated, "Considering that Brazil is in the southern hemisphere, August is the winter time for Brazil. In this time of year Brazil is on its standard time. This means that Rio de Janeiro will be at UTC – 3 h (Coordinated Universal Time) from GMT (Greenwich Mean Time). Argentina and Chile are in the same time zone as Rio de Janeiro.

New York and Miami are UTC -4 h. Chicago and Houston are UTC -5 h. Denver (Colorado Springs) and Salt Lake are UTC -6 h, Los Angeles and San Francisco are UTC -7 h."

He also said, "Most European countries are on Daylight Savings Time. Portugal and the UK will be UTC +1 h. The Netherlands and Central Europe will be UTC +2 h, Finland, Turkey and Eastern Europe will be UTC +3 h."

Now, follow carefully. Here comes the plot twist...

Midnight Finals gives U.S. swimmers the maximum advantage

The midnight finals favors U.S. swimmers not harming them at all (or the *least*) and completely disadvantages their competitors the *most*.

This is the way it will work. For example, European athletes will first *leave their home time zone* and move into a training camp let's say with only one time zone change. Then they will arrive in Rio de Janeiro in *another time zone* with about four, five or six hours difference to get acclimatized. They will arrive two or more weeks in advance before the opening ceremonies for the Olympic Games to adjust to the Rio time zone which should be the Olympic time zone, but, it's not.

5 ►

But, then *after* they adjust to the Rio time zone, then they will have to kill that and *readjust again* at some point (nobody knows how and when to do it) for the *American time zone* **four** hours behind in order to swim finals from 10:00pm – 12:00am midnight.

It totally deprives all American competitors of sleep and wipes them out. No one will be happy about it once they learn that they're forced to change time zones arriving in Rio a **minimum** of *two (without a training camp) or three times* before the Games while the Americans... **don't have to do it at all**.

And some teams combined with their training camps may have *more* than three time zone changes. Every team can calculate their own changes.

The first undisclosed U.S. embedded advantage

What this means is the 10:00pm – 12:00am finals time in Rio is perfectly ideal for the Americans to swim personal bests and set world records in. Why? Because for them it's really only 6:00pm to 8:00pm, the *optimal* time (zone) for peak human performance in the USA.

The midnight finals time shift will cause *all* of the American competitors sleep deprivation from making mandatory multiple time zone changes over the weeks in Rio and trying to hold an artificial time zone change that they can't maintain.

Colorado Springs, Colorado, home of the U.S. Olympic Committee and their U.S. Olympic Training Center is also the home of USA Swimming, and along with the entire west coast of California, they now are in the *perfect time zone window* for peak human performance to set world records with late night finals in Rio. ([See: USA Time Zone Map](#)).

The late 10:00pm starting time for finals in Rio will feel like 6:00pm for California swimmers and only



7:00pm for USA Swimming, home of their U.S. national team and pool in Colorado Springs, Colorado. It's just perfect.

Take a look. If you examine a map of those time zones you will see Los Angeles and San Francisco home to many of the top U.S. training groups and Olympians. Now, glance at Colorado Springs, CO, home of USA Swimming, their national team and facilities. All there is for the Americans to be concerned about are few swimmers in Vancouver and the Canadian Eskimos up north and Baja Mexico and the deep blue Pacific Ocean all the way down south to the first penguin in Antarctica. ([See: Time Zone Map Rio to California](#)).

None of the American's major competitors share the same time zone as the 6:00pm/10:00pm window of the American "prime time" time zone.

Absolutely none.

It completely favors the U.S. team.

It's ingenious. It's a real work of art.

The second undisclosed U.S. embedded advantage

And the prelims? The most ideal time for prelims globally is 9:00am or 10:00am until 12:00pm noon. So with a 1:00pm start time, prelims are now scheduled to last until 3:00pm. That set up comes with another embedded advantage for the U.S. team.

A 1:00pm start time will feel like a favorable 9:00am start to the California swimmers and a 10:00am start time for the home pool of USA Swimming and their national team. That is totally ideal for them. They will be able to move more athletes up into the semi-finals more easily than anyone else. Which means a chance for more medals.

6 ►

US swimmers will not have to adapt to *any* time zone change at all going into Rio if they have done the math correctly, while their European and Australian competitors are looking at a minimum of *two or three* time zone changes and the necessity of holding an artificial time zone change when in Rio.

It would be hard to believe that USA Swimming would risk their performances after Olympic Trials by *moving out* of the optimal time zone for the prelims and finals of the Olympic Games. Feigning anything else just wouldn't be legitimate. Perhaps now there may be a reevaluation of preparations by many federations going into Rio.

And guess what? At the end of swimming on the eighth day of the Olympics they then have to *change back* to the Rio time zone *immediately* for the final week of just *being* in Rio. That's **three** or **four** time zone changes on athletes in a very short amount of time.

Doping has a far less effect on an athlete being able to win, than imposing a full three weeks of sleep deprivation and exhaustion caused by multiple time zone changes has upon opponents causing them to lose.

Worst scandal ever?

You see, it's reverse engineering. It is emerging as something possibly worse than the current Russian doping scandal. Why? Russia and their athletes are only from one country. If only one athlete makes the final from that country, you can only dope one person in an event to have an advantage over the rest of the field.

However, now in a globally sweeping demand for changing Rio finals times from 6:00pm to starting at



10:00pm – 12:00am midnight, along with prelims at 1:00pm, that disadvantages *all* of the American opponents with multiple time zone changes, sleep deprivation and exhaustion for commercial purposes, highlighting and benefiting their own American swimmers at the expense of *all* of their Olympic competitors hindering their record-setting performance ability and health. It's reverse engineering. What is better? Making one "faster" or making everyone else "slower?"

It also harms European television rights holders' revenues- again. Upending the sport in Beijing 2008, with morning finals and evening prelims wasn't enough. Now they want more.

And forcing U.S. competitors to test and carry out ill-conceived laboratory time zone change tests on their own Olympic swimmers and minors before Rio and expecting each opposing team and individual athlete to do it perfectly in Rio in imperfect conditions for eight days straight is worse than a bad idea- it's a disaster.

The sleep deprivation, the emotional roller-coaster, the agitation, exhaustion and physical lethargy will accumulate and build-up harming the athletes and be progressively and exponentially more damaging to their performances and their emotional and physical health as the week progresses.

Do They Respect Child Labor Laws?

And minors? Many women swimmers are 15, 16, and 17-years-old. There are also young men who are minors also. Should they be exploited for sake of midnight finals? There are also Child Labor Laws to consider. It is hard to believe that anyone can overlook this fact and the negative effects it will have on athletes preparing to go into Rio.

What will they do if a truthful, young 15 or 16-year-old girl, emotionally breaks down at the side of the pool saying she can't do it? She can't do her best time in 100m or 200m swims at 10:00pm or 11:00pm at night, five days out into the week of time zone training in her own country before the Olympics?

7 ►

The NOC (National Olympic Committee) team doctors on the sport federation medical commissions know and understand these points. Many have already expressed that they are against midnight finals.

When all the elements and consequences are placed on top of the table in the full light of day in front of the whole world, holding events like that, it's worse than cheating, it also harms the physical health, well-being and performances of the athletes.

Now, no one can say they don't know that.

Australian and Asian swimmers are disadvantaged the most

And Australian and Asian swimmers? They're the most disadvantaged. They'll most likely go from their country to training camps somewhere else then to Rio with anywhere from 12 to 22 hours flight time difference and once they land putting flip-flops on the ground, they have to adapt to the Rio time zone also.

Then they will prepare somehow for another time zone change to the artificial American time zone **four (-4)** hours behind before the first swimming event.

The FINA President and South America

All of South America is disadvantaged also. The hosts Brazil along with Argentina, Chile and the other countries have to adapt and experiment with sleep deprivation experiments/time zone changes on their athletes also.



FINA President is Dr. Julio Maglione from Uruguay. And Uruguay? What will happen to them? They're not exempt either. Unless the madness is stopped, they will have to adapt and experiment with time zone changes/sleep deprivation also to be able to swim in the American time zone four hours later.

The effects are obvious. The longer it takes to reverse the decision, the more it hurts the athletes.

Team USA who jets in customarily late to the Olympic Village in the last week, days before opening ceremonies will not have to make any time zone change now once they re-crunch the numbers doing the time zone addition and subtraction.

Team USA will have the most inordinate, unprecedented and clearest advantage over all of their global competitors for the entire eight days of swimming events.

It looks like the creation of the midnight finals concept, upending sport norms in this way is one of the most egregious forms of favoritism and/or taking advantage of opponents that we've ever seen in sports. The time change of this size and scope that results in dramatically favoring one country while disadvantaging all competitors is unprecedented as far as we know.

Right now this is the way it will work.

The NBC network will say it's all about money and USA Swimming will say they have nothing to do with it, it's the network.

National coaches don't like it

Preeminent national head coach Mark Schubert, USA, wrote, "I agree with you regarding this situation. I don't think it is good for anyone, especially for the Europeans." He then went on to explain other points in his email.

8 ►

Talented national head coach, Henning Lambertz, GER, saw the ramifications for his team instantly when learning of the NBC midnight finals, "It's unfair! Money rules the world. Let me know if I can help to do something against these times. I will!"

Jacco Verhaeren, NED, and Australian national head coach, in the Australian ABC News interview, Sunday, December 7, 2014 criticized the decision to hold midnight finals in Rio calling it a "lack of respect" not only for the athletes and the sport, but for the Brazilian hosts as well. Brazil is one of the top five global swimming powers also.

He then went on to say, "We are not swimming for America. We are swimming for the world. Clearly the choice is not made for performance reasons. There is only one reason and that is television and money and only American television and money and that to me is not really fair."

It isn't. Why? All athletes are not competing under the same conditions.

Internal body clock has huge and dramatic impact on sporting ability

Dr. Thomas Kantermann, Researcher at the University of Groningen, Netherlands is an expert on chronobiology studying the times athletes go to bed and their best hours for peak human performance the next day.

In the recent BBC article "*Bedtime has a Huge Impact on Sport*," by James Gallagher, January 30, 2015, it focuses on some of Dr. Kantermann's work stating that "*Our internal body clock has huge and dramatic impact on sporting ability that it could alter the chances of Olympic gold say researchers.*" The article goes on to state that personal body clocks differ in individuals and missing their window for peak human performance can cause a performance variation of up to 26%.

When Dr. Kantermann was informed of the mandated midnight finals at the upcoming Rio 2016 Olympics and the starting times of 10:00pm with finals possibly lasting past midnight Dr. Kantermann stated in an email, "The uproar is more than understood."

Later that afternoon the phone conversation began:

Dr. Kantermann: "This is crazy. Who is doing this?"

Selthoffer: "NBC."

Dr. Kantermann: (after a short pause for thought he said directly) "This will result in sleep deprivation and compromise performances."

Dr. Kantermann then went on to explain further about the differences in individual body clocks and the challenges European athletes will have to make with *two* time zone changes. First leaving the European time zone they are naturally in, going into the Rio de Janeiro time zone during the two week period upon arriving. Then, having to change to an *artificial* time zone (not under lab conditions) of four hours earlier to accommodate and sync with the prime time American time zone.

He then contrasted the negative effects the Europeans would experience against the benefits the U.S. Team will have who do not have to make any time zone adjustment.

"Humans cannot perform equally well at any time of day. I thought it (Olympics) was supposed to be a competition of different nations on even ground under the same conditions?" Kantermann asked.

9 ►

Olympic athletes are not lab rats

After analyzing things from different angles Dr. Kantermann summed up his thoughts, "Look what we have here even with individual sleep patterns, if you lose a little sleep, these can alter your performance significantly. That can really make a difference in sports. Your body clock determines your performance window. You can't change that... You are talking about accommodating two time zone changes over a short period of time. It's not tested (in major competitions) that I'm aware of. Sleep deprivation will compromise performances. It will be a challenge sticking to the new time zone change for eight days there."

The Olympic Village is not a laboratory. The Rio 2016 organizing committee is not building "time zone areas" with bright lights and dimmers (and sound proof rooms) for competitors to live in, to adjust to the American time zone for the midnight finals.

The truth is, it's not possible. It will harm the athletes.

U.S. coaches and team doctors should tell the athletes the truth. They will not be able to hold to an artificial time zone under those conditions perfectly either.

Accessory Events

Coaches know under normal conditions when championship finals end at let's say 8:35pm, then the athletes must go to anti-doping, then a swim down, after that they face media and personal demands in the Mixed Zone, then go through the medal ceremony... see family, then transition into the venue media area, after that they do the television interviews... Then from there it's more people and team mates in the hallway making your way back to family. After all that comes the private celebration dinners with family and friends and sponsor commitments. Later it's dancing your brains out at the Holland House, the Deutsche Haus or in your own country's Olympic Committee house area. Those are solid, in place

commitments. Every athlete knows it and does them. They usually don't get home after finals until 1:30 - 2:30am or later. That's about five or six hours later! That is a fact. And anyone thinks with midnight finals returning home at 5:00am, 6:00am or 7:00am in the bright morning is OK? That they can sleep in the light of day?

Jacco Verhaeren, stated, "I think the biggest concern is the life in the Village because athletes return to the Village after a swim down and drug testing maybe after 2:00am (under normal conditions). They still need to have dinner because their whole time shifts. How to deal with that in an Olympic Village where other sports wake up in the morning and you are trying to go to bed, that is a disturbing factor for other sports as well." (Source: ABC News interview, December 7, 2014).

The entire Olympic Village and all of the accessory events, meetings, phone calls, media and sponsor demands, eating times, etc., (not to forget sun rise and sun set) will all be on the normal Rio time zone.

Then after the swimming competition ends, it's instantly back to Rio time (four hours later) that they will do immediately for the last week of the Games. Then home to *another* time zone. That is a total of **four (4)** or **five (5)** time zone changes on European and other competitors for the Olympic Games.

And the Americans think that's good to do to their competitors?

Pre-Olympic Tests

The best thing about midnight finals going into Rio is the ability to test it. Doing it yourself in your own country under conditions as perfect as you can make them. Go ahead. Put all the athlete's reactions on video. Post them on YouTube® and put the test results down on top of the table. Make the test results and data public and open for the whole world to see.

Try running the FINA 2015 World Championships in Kazan, RUS on the same Rio 2016 format. Why not? Shouldn't you have test events? Or try running other meets or workouts at 1pm - 3pm and 10pm - 12 midnight or later for eight days in a row. Like any novelty it might be fun at first. You can play basketball at midnight under the lights, or tennis or football very late.

10 ►

But, this is different. This is about precise *measureable* results of time, per stroke and distance. **This is about putting a lifetime of training and preparation on the line.** When it comes down to peak human performance and a stop watch over a 50m pool, it won't be fun. It really screws an athlete and their performances. Holding an artificial time zone change doesn't work even under the best conditions.

This time USA Swimming won't be able to spin the results like they did with Beijing 2008 Morning Finals. When it's late at night the splits, stop watch and timing system don't lie.

Beijing morning finals was a bad movie for the Europeans. Now it's Beijing Morning Finals 2- "The Sequel"

The negative results will accumulate and the athletes will see they are being used, endangering their lifetime best performances placing them at risk for the privilege of one country's television audience and one country's advertising revenues.

The Rio 2016 Olympics combined with the midnight finals is a bad format. It's more than irresponsible making competitors do psychological and physiological time zone experiments, damaging the lives of Olympic athletes before and during the Games.

Who is going to pay for all of the new chronobiology experts needed now in each swimming federation? What are the recommended standards, procedures and formats for training? Holding tests? How viable are the methodologies?

Right now, there is no political “resistance” because there are no Olympic athletes yet. They are too busy training. They still have to post FINA A or B qualifying times this year and next. Then, they have to remain as one of the top two positions from their own country. They will not know they made the cuts until a couple months before Rio.

Consequently, maybe teams should reconsider. In order to be best acclimatized to the Olympic midnight finals time zone, maybe U.S. competitors should think about changing their training camps from the Caribbean or South America to the American home pools of some of their top Olympic team members from Los Angeles? Or San Francisco? Or possibly sharing space at USA Swimming’s home pool in Colorado Springs?

Ummm... OK. Maybe not.

Where it stands

As it stands now:

- 1.) The Preliminaries are scheduled from 1:00pm – 3:00pm every afternoon. Finals are scheduled from 10:00pm - 12:00am midnight every night. With other accessory events, media and sponsor obligations, things will last much longer than midnight every night.
- 2.) The American time zone windows selected for prelims and midnight finals are perfect for peak human performance for the **American team** giving them a **clear, undeniable and unfair** advantage.
- 3.) It gives the Americans an unfair embedded advantage over their competitors every night for eight days during finals.
- 4.) It gives the Americans an unfair embedded advantage over their competitors every afternoon for eight days during preliminaries.
- 5.) The midnight finals hurts American competitors with experimental sleep testing preparations before the Rio Olympic Games.
- 6.) The Europeans, Australians and others do not support the preliminary or finals time changes.
- 7.) Human beings cannot perform equally well at any time of day.
- 8.) This will result in sleep deprivation and compromise performances.
- 9.) The midnight finals harms the American team the *least* and disadvantages Team USA’s opponents the *most*.
- 10.) Doping has a far less effect on an athlete being able to win, than imposing three full weeks of sleep deprivation and exhaustion caused by multiple time zone changes has upon opponents causing them to lose.
- 11.) Many athletes are minors. Child Labor Laws should be considered and respected.

11 ►

The big questions

The main questions everyone has now are: How do the national team doctors prepare athletes in non-laboratory conditions? Who will be held responsible for harming the athletes and their performances when it doesn’t work out during the year and a half of testing leading into the Games? How does anyone hold an artificial time zone during the Rio Games perfectly for eight days straight?

As more experts analyze the consequences of midnight finals this may be one of the largest scandals in sport history. The advantage one team has been given by their own television network over *all* of their global competitors is clear, undeniable and unprecedented.

The Rio Olympics should not be about NBC, television rights, midnight finals, afternoon preliminaries, sleep deprivation, multiple time zone changes, compromised performances or anything else. It should be about the athletes.



Fair play and sport excellence, creating the best environment and venues for optimal peak human performance and placing the welfare of the athletes first, should be respected and be non-negotiable.

It's not over yet. This movie is just beginning.

As the weeks progress moving forward this places the IOC, NBC, FINA and others at cross road. Let's see what is more valuable... The money? Or the lives of athletes and the fair play and integrity of Olympic sport competition.

* Notes — We would like to thank the following people for their generous assistance and contributions:

Mr. Brad Barnhart, USA

Mr. Erik (E.F.) Dierikx, Director Timing, Dutch Metrology Institute, Delft, Netherlands.

Dr. Thomas Kantermann, Chronobiology Unit, University of Groningen, Netherlands.

Henning Lambertz, GER. National Head Coach, Germany. DSV Deutscher Schwimm-Verband.

Mark Schubert, USA. Distinguished U.S. National Head Coach, USA Swimming.

Jacco Verhaeren, NED. National Head Coach, Swimming Australia.

*** All data subject to change. Please consult your own experts for time zone verification and effects in your region.

For more information on these topics, please go to:

VSL, Dutch Metrology Institute, Delft, Netherlands

VSL.NL

University of Groningen, Netherlands

RUG.NL

International Olympic Committee

Olympics.org

Rio 2016 Olympic Games

Rio2016.com

NBC Sports

NBCOlympics.com

USA Swimming

USASwimming.org

12 ►



