

# [Qwertyuiop](https://assignbuster.com/qwertyuiop/)

Heading into the 2012 London Olympics the expected battles of Michael Phelps and Ryan Lochte were one of the bigger story lines for the U. S. Olympic team. Now that competition in the pool has finished, Lochte is little more than a footnote in the Phelps story. Perhaps that is harsh treatment of a swimmer that will leave London with five medals, two of them gold. But fans and analysts were so quick to find someone that could be better than the greatest swimmer–the greatest Olympian–ever that they pinned their hopes on Lochte. The effort was misguided. During the month of July it wasn't hard to find articles proclaiming that Lochte would better Phelps in London. While they would only face off in the pool in two events, there was talk of Lochte winning both finals and having a more impressive medal haul. Speculation was fueled when Phelps struggled early in competition. He lacked the conditioning to make a late push and medal in the toughest event in swimming and one of the hardest events in the Summer Games. He came in fourth in the 400-meter individual medley.  Lochte's win spurred the early critics and had them ready to replace Phelps with America's next swimming sensation. Lochte's reign didn't last long. After the opening gold-medal performance, Lochte was given the opportunity to anchor the men's 4x100 freestyle relay team on Day 2. Phelps was moved up to the second leg and helped open up a big early lead. This time it was Lochte that couldn't fire on the last lap, though, surrendering the lead to Yannick Agnel and France. Agnel would better Lochte again on Day 3, this time in the 200-meter free. Lochte wouldn't even medal. The surest sign that Phelps was still the best swimmer on the men's team came when they stepped up to the pool for the 4x200 free relay. Phelps had replaced Lochte as the anchor. Agnell couldn’t close the gap on Phelps. Agnell would have a third chance in as many days to pass the U. S. for gold. Instead, Phelps put a few strokes between him and the French team and secured a very important win. This one race seemed to again curry favor for Phelps. He showed heart and excellence in rebounding from a disappointing open to his games. More importantly, this medal made him the most-decorated Olympian ever. He would add three more medals in London, including becoming the first male swimmer to win a gold medal in the same event in three consecutive Olympics. More precisely, he was also the first to do it twice with wins in the 200 IM and the 100 butterfly. Lochte has had a great run as an Olympian, and he claims it isn't over. His 11 medals ties him with Mark Spitz and Matt Biondi on the all-time list.   But he was out-swam by Phelps three of the four times they participated in the same event, either as competitors or teammates. Phelps won more medals overall and doubled Lochte's gold tally.  There are many stories from swimming in the 2012 Olympics. But relative to the men, the lasting image will be Phelps rebounding to become the greatest Olympian ever. Lochte will get a citation as a teammate and as one of the competitors that kept Phelps from reaching 23, but little more. Lochte will have one last opportunity to carve his legacy at the 2016 Rio Games. Two medals would push him to second-place all-time for the U. S.. It isn't that Lochte's accomplishments so far aren't great. They are. Lochte just pales in comparison to the greatest.