

Carl Lewis' 9.86 in Tokyo Leads August 25's Biggest Moments in Sports History

by Staff Report

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Carl Lewis' world-record dash in Tokyo stands as the most consequential August 25 moment in sports history. On this date in 1991, Lewis won the men's 100 meters at the World Athletics Championships in 9.86 seconds, lowering the world record and reclaiming the title of the world's fastest man from fellow American Leroy Burrell. The performance was not merely a fast time. It came in a final of remarkable depth, in which the first six runners broke 10 seconds. Lewis' victory remains a defining image of an era when track and field's biggest stars met on the sport's largest international stage.

August 25 has also produced milestones across endurance swimming, baseball, golf and the Olympic movement. The day's history stretches from a pioneering English Channel crossing in the 19th century to Tiger Woods' final triumph as an amateur golfer more than a century later.

On the morning of Aug. 25, 1875, Captain Matthew Webb reached the shore near Calais, France, to complete the first unaided swim across the English Channel. Webb had entered the water from Dover, England, the previous afternoon and spent nearly 22 hours fighting tides, cold water and exhaustion. His feet touched land at 10:41 a.m., making him the first person to accomplish what had seemed beyond human endurance. Webb's feat made him a national celebrity and established the Channel as one of sport's great long-distance challenges. His crossing remained unmatched for more than 30 years, underlining just how far ahead of his time the effort was.

Baseball added its own unforgettable entry on Aug. 25, 1922, when the Chicago Cubs outlasted the Philadelphia Phillies, 26-23, at Cubs Park. The 49 combined runs remain the most in a major-league game. Chicago appeared to have settled matters early, scoring 10 runs in the second inning and 14 more in the fourth. Yet Philadelphia rallied furiously, scoring eight runs in the eighth and six in the ninth before the Cubs escaped. The score looks more like a football result, but it is part of Cubs history and a reminder that even the dead-ball and early live-ball eras could produce offensive chaos.

Golf history turned on Aug. 25, 1946, when Ben Hogan won the PGA Championship at Portland Golf Club in Oregon. The event was then played as match play, and Hogan beat Ed Oliver, 6 and 4, in the 36-hole final. Hogan had trailed by three holes after the

morning 18, but he took command in the afternoon, winning four of the final five holes and closing the match with a birdie on the 32nd hole. It was his first PGA Championship and the first major title of a career that would place him among the game's enduring standards of precision, discipline and resilience.

On Aug. 25, 1960, Rome opened the Games of the XVII Olympiad. Italian President Giovanni Gronchi declared the Games open at Stadio Olimpico, beginning a competition that ran through Sept. 11 and brought together 5,338 athletes. Rome 1960 was the first Summer Olympics staged in Italy and became an important postwar gathering for international sport. The opening ceremony began weeks of competition in a city that used ancient and modern settings alike to frame the Olympic spectacle. The Games would go on to supply lasting athletic achievements, but Aug. 25 marked the start of the event itself.

New York Mets right-hander Dwight Gooden made history on Aug. 25, 1985, becoming the youngest 20-game winner of baseball's modern era. Gooden was 20 years, 9 months and 9 days old when the Mets defeated the San Diego Padres, 9-3, at Shea Stadium. He left after six innings with the win, and the victory extended his winning streak to 14 games. Gooden's landmark came in one of the greatest pitching seasons in Mets history: He finished 24-4 with a 1.53 ERA, led the majors in wins, strikeouts and ERA, and won the National League Cy Young Award unanimously. The August achievement showed that his extraordinary season was not simply a hot start but a sustained run of dominance.

Six years later, Lewis delivered the sprint performance that defines this date. In Tokyo, Burrell had entered as the world-record holder at 9.90 seconds. Lewis surged past him late in the race to win in 9.86, while Burrell finished second in 9.88 and Dennis Mitchell took third in 9.91. Linford Christie, Frank Fredericks and Ray Stewart also finished under 10 seconds. Lewis' time was the first ever below 9.90, and it gave him a third consecutive world championship in the 100 meters. The final raised the standard for what a championship sprint could be, with record speed accompanied by rare competitive depth.

Aug. 25, 1996, provided another landmark finish in golf. Tiger Woods defeated Steve Scott in 38 holes at Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club in North Plains, Oregon, to win his third consecutive U.S. Amateur championship. Woods had already won the U.S. Junior Amateur three straight times, and the U.S. Amateur victory completed a run of six consecutive USGA titles. Scott pushed Woods beyond the scheduled 36 holes in the championship match, but Woods prevailed in extra holes. Less than a week later, Woods turned professional. His victory over Scott therefore stands as the closing chapter of an amateur career that had already signaled the arrival of one of golf's most influential players.

From Webb reaching Calais to Lewis breaking the 9.90-second barrier, August 25 has repeatedly shown how sports history can be made in different ways: through endurance, through a record-setting performance, through a breakthrough championship and through the opening of a global stage. Each moment carried its own immediate drama, and each left a mark that lasted far beyond the day it happened.