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No, Michael! Just No!

By: Lemay Padrón Oliveros  
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The name Michael Phelps remains synonymous with excellence in world swimming, thanks to his 28 Olympic medals (23 gold) and multiple world records. His legacy seems untouchable.

However, in recent statements, the *Baltimore Bullet* has left a door slightly ajar that many believed was closed forever: the possibility of returning to compete at the 2028 Los Angeles Games.

In a recent interview on the *Final Kick* podcast, Phelps said, *"I never say never. The water still runs through my veins. If I feel I have something more to give, I wouldn't rule it out."* Naturally, these words immediately sparked speculation among fans and sports experts.

But is a comeback realistic? And more importantly, what for?

At 40 years old, Phelps has already had two official retirements (in 2012 and 2016) and one previous comeback for the 2016 Rio Games, where he proved he could still dominate the world stage. However, a new return would be an even greater challenge.

Beyond his age and the unstoppable emergence of new talent, competing at the highest level requires an almost superhuman dedication and a tremendous amount of time—time he wanted to spend with his family.

Yet, it seems the idea is starting to get to him, as the desire for his children to see him compete could be his motivation to at least try in his signature event, the 200-meter butterfly—considered more technical and less dependent on youthful explosiveness—or in the relays.

The latter could be a more palpable possibility, a way to "check the box." But let's be realistic: he has no need to do this.

Obviously, the world of swimming (and sponsors, who are surely *rubbing their hands together like hyenas on*

*payday*) would welcome his return with the same excitement as a child on Christmas morning... *but brother, don't bite off more than you can chew!*

It's a romantic thought that at 43 you could go head-to-head with 20-year-olds who *eat protein powder for breakfast, lunch, and dinner*, but you've never even seen that on Animal Planet.

You already have a legacy written in brighter ink than the gold of your medals, and you risk tarnishing it. Let's face it, *we're not as young as we used to be*, and you'd end up becoming *meme fodder*.

I know you'll never read these lines, but I hope that if this return is seriously on your mind, someone out there thinks like I do: *someone needs to give him a strong coffee and talk some sense into him!*

Keep swimming with the Masters, enjoy a life without excessive chlorine, and don't subject your body to a demand that would ultimately give you far less than it could take away.

You don't need the money, and you don't need the fame. Don't tarnish your legacy as the ultimate Olympic icon on a whim.

**Translated by Sergio A. Paneque / CubaSí Translation Staff**

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