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Michael Phelps is just one of the many swimmers praising Speedo's new LZR Racer swimsuit. Already 46 world records have been broken by swimmers wearing the suit. (AP PHOTO)

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## Speedo steals spotlight at Olympic trials

**By: Ryan A. Podges, Daily Sports Writer**

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OMAHA - After setting a world record and winning three events, Michael Phelps was not answering questions about his races or his times during his fourth press conference of the U.S. Olympic swimming trials.

Instead, he was talking about his swimsuit.

Phelps was one of many swimmers at the trials who wore Speedo's new LZR Racer swimsuit. Since the suit debuted in February, 46 world records have been set by swimmers wearing the LZR. Speedo teamed up with NASA to develop the suit which is made mostly of a water resistant and highly compressive lightweight woven fabric. To make the suit even more hydrodynamic, the seams are welded, not sewn, creating a more streamline shape that reduces drag.

The suit has become such a craze that even swimmers with endorsement deals from Speedo's competitors want to wear the LZR Racer at the Olympics. Nike has agreed to let their sponsored swimmers wear any suit they want in competition. At the Olympic trials, Speedo provided an LZR Racer to any swimmer who wanted one.

When asked what impact the suit had on his world record-setting race in the 400-meter individual medley, Phelps said it definitely helped him.

"The suit really is amazing," he said. "It does give you that extra tenth or hundredth (of a second) you need to break a record or win a race. And I'm definitely confident and comfortable wearing the fastest suit in the world."

**On a Qwest:** The trials are being held in a temporary pool for the second straight Olympic year. The Qwest Center, best known for hosting Nebraska-Omaha hockey and Creighton men's basketball, was

transformed into a natatorium by adding a temporary pool, to host the meet for the first time. A temporary competition pool was also constructed in a parking lot in Long Beach, Calif. for the 2004 trials.

The competition pool at the Qwest Center was 50 meters long, 10 lanes wide, three meters deep, held one million gallons of water and weighed approximately eight million pounds. The warm-up pool was even larger.

The pools were manufactured and constructed by Myrtha Pools. Once the parts were delivered to the Qwest Center from Myrtha's factory in Genoa, Italy, the competition pool was constructed on the floor of the arena and the warm-up pool was built in the convention center over the course of eight days. The pool parts were delivered in six containers, each weighing 30,000 pounds, by six semi-trailer trucks. The project required more than 200,000 bolts and 1,947 feet of pipes between the two pools. Both pools were filled by the Omaha Fire Department, and the water was kept between 80 and 81 degrees. After the meet is over, the pool will be taken apart and sold for reuse by other facilities.

**Working west:** Just one day after the U.S. Olympic swimming trials ended, the 43 swimmers who qualified for the 2008 U.S. Olympic team flew today from Omaha to Palo Alto, Calif., where they will train as a team at Stanford University for the next three weeks. After their domestic training camp ends July 25, the Olympic team will fly to Japan and conduct an Asian training camp before finally arriving in China. The Beijing Games begin Aug. 8, and the swimming competitions will be held Aug. 9-18.

Typically during the Olympics, the preliminary swim races and gymnastics events are held in the morning and the finals of each event are held at night. This year, however, the preliminary races and events will be held at night and the finals of each will be held in the morning. This change was made with American TV viewers in mind. Because of the time difference between China and the United States, having the swimming and gymnastics finals in the morning will allow these sports to be broadcast live during prime time in the United States.

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